

**Price of a Gift: Lives and Work of Professional Musicians  
in St. John's, Newfoundland**

by

© David Bruce Chafe

A dissertation submitted to the

School of Graduate Studies

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Department of Sociology**

Memorial University of Newfoundland

February 2017

St. John's, Newfoundland

## **ABSTRACT**

Musicians' work has been generally omitted from sociological literature on work and occupations because it is difficult to trace. Musicians are usually self-employed on short-term contracts that are often verbal and paid in cash that is usually quickly expended on ongoing costs. Furthermore, their work in music is commonly obscured by portfolio employment within and outside of music to supplement income and cover costs. Portfolio employment is characterized by concurrent multiplicity of sources of employment and income from outside of one's primary skills. In order to illuminate the true experiences of local professional musicians and to lend some definition to music-making as an occupation, this study traces and examines the complete career trajectories of 54 wage-earning rock, traditional and classical musicians based in St. John's, Newfoundland. In so doing, it is possible to reveal a network of support essential to their commitment to the music profession. The network usually develops from early childhood and includes family, friends, educational institutions, funding institutions, fellow musicians, other industry professionals, and audiences. The weakening or disappearance of any support can compromise the career and cast doubt onto its viability.

Music work stands in contrast to other occupations in at least three key ways. First, participation in music is not restricted by license, age, or experience. Professional and amateur musicians often co-exist in the same events or settings, performing music as a community activity, clouding distinctions between amateurs and wage-dependent professionals. Second, musicians in St. John's tend to be highly educated yet with a tradition of adapting to and accepting portfolio employment as the norm and, for some, as a measure of employment security. Musicians' familiarity with balancing personal life and portfolio employment can

inform the literature on work and occupations as a longstanding example of adaptability to employment and income instability. Portfolio employment may result in a sense of either employment precarity or employment satisfaction, depending on individual circumstances and career goals.

Third, competition among musicians is carefully managed so that their work can continue unimpeded and they can present publicly as a unified collective group with a common cause. Furthermore, there are numerous bureaucratic and educational organizations and ensembles that purport to serve musicians' interests but that might also obscure some harsh realities of attempts to establish music careers.

Underlying these characteristics of the music occupation is the interrelationship between cultural, social, symbolic and economic capitals. Economic capital is not by itself the determinant of career commitment in music. All of these forms of capital intermesh, are influenced by one another, and contribute to artistic commitment at different career stages.

Given the dearth of representation of the work of income-dependent musicians in work and occupations literature, my research—which confirms the co-existence of these forms of capital, the significance of understanding music professions in the context of relational sociology, the importance of family, and the ways in which musicians adapt to portfolio and precarious employment—may serve as a basis for additional future research that might include other genres and other locales so as to provide increasingly meaningful realities of musicians' work.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Memorial University of Newfoundland's Department of Sociology for taking a chance on a middle-aged musician. I am especially grateful for the support of Dr. Stephen Riggins, Dr. Karen Stanbridge, Dr. Liam Swiss, Dr. Lisa Kaida, Dr. Linda Cullum, and Dr. Barbara Neis. My dissertation committee members, Dr. Mark Stoddart and Dr. Ailsa Craig, have been welcoming, helpful and supportive throughout this process. My deepest appreciation is for my supervisor, and former piano student, Dr. Judith Adler. She has been in continuing contact with me through every step of this journey with outstanding advice, constructive critique, limitless patience, and incredible insight and knowledge. Thank you, Judy.

I am profoundly grateful to the 54 musicians who opened their hearts and minds to this project, providing astonishingly frank, poignant and detailed experiences that collectively serve to achieve the goals of this research. This dissertation is ultimately their story. They deserve to take considerable ownership in helping to illuminate the work of musicians and to set a precedent for future research in this area.

I wish to extend my thanks to the many young musicians with whom I have had the honour of working over the course of my career in music. I derive tremendous energy and motivation from observing and participating in their determination to succeed and thrive in one of the most challenging yet rewarding occupations.

There are several people to whom I wish to dedicate this research and final manuscript. The great music professor, Kjellrun Hestekin, who befriended and mentored me through my undergraduate music degree and my career in music, passed away before I completed the first

draft of my thesis. Kjellrun was deeply interested in my progress both professionally and personally, regularly checking in, always curious about my findings, and just to see how I was doing. She was a dear friend who offered words of wisdom from her world as a music educator and musician.

My parents, Bruce and Elizabeth Chafe, have been in the audience of practically every musical event in which I have ever participated. I failed out of Memorial University as an aimless 19-year-old student. My parents stood beside me through my toughest academic times and were my moral and emotional guides as I slowly and surely climbed back to gain a foothold on my eventual career path in music.

My wife, Joan, has made my entire music career and this research possible by giving me her unquestioning love and support and enabling me the freedom to delve into the kinds of work that interest me the most. One key finding of this research is the importance of a social network that includes family and friends. Joan, my parents and my closest friends, especially Tom Dunne, have been cheering me on from the start and I certainly would not be writing these words without them.

Thank you all.

## Table of Contents

Price of a Gift: Lives and Work of Professional Musicians in St. John's, Newfoundland

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iv
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Tables.....	x
Chapter One: The Work of Musicians.....	1
1.a Overview of Musicians' Work.....	2
1.b The Research Location: St. John's, Newfoundland.....	6
1.c Context: The Insider-Researcher.....	10
1.d A Life of Exchange: The Careers of Local Musicians.....	13
1.e Relevance and Potential Contribution of this Research .....	15
1.f Thesis Overview.....	17
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature.....	20
2.a Parents, Teachers and Peers.....	22
2.b Advanced Education and Career Preparation – University and the Real World..	27
2.c Going to Work.....	37
2.c.i Portfolio Careers and Precarious Employment.....	38
2.c.ii Portfolio Careers and Self-employment .....	40
2.c.iii Precarious, Atypical and Non-standard Employment.....	42
2.c.iv Portfolio Work and Musician Identity.....	47
2.d Public Policy, The Status of the Artist Act, and The Creative Industries.....	49
2.e “Are they any good?” – Success and Worth.....	54
2.f Musician Health.....	57
2.g Emotion Labour.....	59
2.h Career Crossroad.....	61
2.i Professionals, Amateurs and the Music Industry.....	62
2.j Networks and Exchange.....	66
2.k Theoretical Framework of the Research.....	68
2.l Relevance of the Literature to this Research.....	72
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	75
3.a Study Rationale and Design.....	81
3.b Inclusion Criteria and Recruitment.....	83
3.c Data Collection.....	92
3.c.i Qualitative Analysis.....	95

3.c.ii Quantitative Analysis.....	97
3.d Conclusion.....	98
Chapter Four: Becoming a Musician.....	100
4.a Earliest Recollection of Music.....	103
4.a.i Childhood (up to and including 12 years of age).....	104
4.a.ii Adolescence (High school years – Ages 13 to 18).....	112
4.b Confirmation of skills in Childhood.....	115
4.c Confirmation of Skills in Adolescence.....	120
4.d Self-taught Musicians.....	122
4.e Considering the Career.....	123
4.f Considering the Career in Adulthood.....	128
4.g “What am I?”.....	129
4.h Conclusion and Summary.....	131
Chapter Five: Starting Out.....	134
5.a Parents.....	135
5.b Balancing Act: Education, Work and Audiences.....	137
5.c Dealing with Rejection.....	149
5.d Day Jobs.....	153
5.e Working for Free.....	157
5.f Fitting In: The Music Industry and the Music “Community”.....	163
5.g The Amateur Conundrum.....	168
5.h Hoping Someone Shows Up.....	170
5.i Castaway.....	171
5.j Summary and Conclusion – Visibility and Viability.....	174
Chapter Six: Costs, and Rewards.....	177
6.a Income.....	177
6.a.i “It’s a good profile”: Paying to Play.....	182
6.a.ii Income and Relationships.....	193
6.b Costs.....	195
6.c Employment.....	201
6.d Perspectives on the Music Industry and the Professionalization of Music.....	210
6.d.i Professionalism.....	216
6.e Summary and Conclusion.....	222
Chapter Seven: Relationships and Risks: The Rhythms of Work and Life.....	225
7.a “There is no typical day”.....	225
7.b Musicians and their Families.....	231
7.b.i Married/Common Law, With Children.....	231
7.b.ii Couples Only.....	234
7.b.iii Single, Never Married.....	237

7.c Gender.....	239
7.d Taking it Personally: Borrowing, Lending, Friendship and Competition.....	250
7.e The Intersection of Work and Leisure.....	266
7.f Musician Health.....	275
7.g Conclusion and Summary.....	283
Chapter Eight: Taking Stock and Taking the Next Step.....	286
8.a Career Highlights.....	287
8.b St. John's.....	293
8.c Career Goals.....	305
8.d Success.....	309
8.e Conclusion.....	315
Chapter Nine: Turning Points and Transitions.....	317
9.a Turning Points.....	318
9.b New Directions.....	327
9.c Age and Career Commitment.....	335
9.d Professional Amateurs: Musicians Who Quit the Music Career.....	338
9.d.i Career Change and Friendships .....	339
9.d.ii Career Change and Family .....	344
9.d.iii Value and Evaluation .....	348
9.d.iv Transition: From Hobby to Career to Hobby .....	354
9.e Conclusion.....	362
Chapter Ten: Conclusion and Recommendations.....	364
10.a Research Question: What roles to parents, other family members, private and classroom music educators and peers play in musical development and pursuit of a music career? .....	365
10.b Research question: What conditions lead musicians to think about career alternatives, and how are those conditions different from those of musicians who commit to their music careers over the long term?.....	370
10.c Research question: How do musicians navigate the uncertainty and precarity of their chosen occupation? .....	373
10.d Coda – The Music Profession.....	376
10.e Recommendations.....	378
10.f Limitations of this Study.....	381
10.g Potential for Future Research.....	382
10.h Contribution of the Research.....	384
10.i Postscript.....	386
Bibliography.....	391



Appendix 1: Research Instruments.....	422
Appendix 1.a: Call for Research Participants.....	422
Appendix 1.b: Revised Call for Research Participants based on initial responses....	423
Appendix 1.c: Consent Form.....	424
Appendix 1.d: Scripted Interview Questions.....	430
Appendix 2: Summaries of Participant Demographic Data and Interview Responses.....	433
Appendix 3: Canadian Federation of Musicians, Local 820 - Schedule of Minimum Fees for Live Engagements.....	437

**List of Tables**

Table 1: Demographic Data.....433

Table 2: Participant Interview Responses..... 435

## **Chapter One: The Work of Musicians**

This thesis explores the careers of 54 musicians based in St. John's, Newfoundland who rely at least in part on income from music performance for their livelihood. No two music careers are identical, as each musician relies on his/her own target audiences, work partnerships, career goals, and often holds down music and non-music jobs to supplement performance income. To better understand the effects of the intersections between life circumstances and key moments along music career trajectories, I examine the changing influence over time of family, music educators, peers, audiences and money on musicians' key career decisions by tracing their involvement in music from their earliest recollection of music to their present commitment to music making. I argue that even though musicians frequently say they are in their careers for love of the craft, key career decisions are centred on money or other kinds of exchange, which in turn is closely connected to relationships in their social and professional networks. Those decisions serve to variously confirm, re-affirm, or disconfirm their commitment to the music career.

The thesis will aim to answer the following questions:

1. What roles do parents, other family members, private and classroom music educators and peers play in musical development and pursuit of a music career?
2. What conditions lead musicians to think about career alternatives, and how are those conditions different from those experienced by musicians who commit to their music careers over the long term?
3. How do musicians navigate the uncertainty and precarity of their chosen occupation?

### **1.a Overview of Musicians' Work**

Musicians' career paths are tied closely to family, education and money through all career phases. Work in music is often initiated by parents purchasing instruments and private music lessons, and music careers often cease because of income and employment instability. A music career involves high costs including tuition, instruments, travel, recording projects, and living expenses that usually far outweigh income at least in the first years. Yet, many musicians are well educated in music with a lifetime of training and experience dating back to early childhood. From their initiation to acquiring music skills, musicians often prioritize passion for the work over earning an affordable living (Umney & Kretsos, 2015; Vaag, Giæver & Bjerkeset, 2014). Remuneration in music often involves monetary and non-monetary exchange. Musicians frequently work for free, borrow and lend instruments and equipment, take on additional work in other areas of music and non-music to offset costs, and engage in informal, short-term, verbal performance contracts resulting in a constant state of networking flux with each performance (Abbing, 2002; Throsby, 2001; Fletcher & Lobato, 2013).

In addition to talent, viable music careers demand strategizing and securing numerous career support from personal and professional relationships (Bridgstock, 2011; Vaag, Giæver & Bjerkeset, 2014) including family, peers, the music industry, managers, venue owners, and media. Musicians and non-musicians often refer to the music "community." Is this a reality or merely a public impression that disguises underlying tensions and competition for career survival? An analysis of music career realities will provide a greater understanding of relational imperatives behind their work.

There are five common themes that unify the experiences of my research participants. The first pertains to Bourdieu's concepts of social, symbolic, economic and cultural capitals as means of acquiring and retaining the skills required to establish and advance the career in a fluid and competitive field of players vying for a share of support from audiences, sponsors and funding institutions. Many participants in my research commonly suggested that they have considered no other occupational alternative to music, using phrases such as "it's all I know" or "it's who I am." Their identity as musicians was usually bestowed upon them at an early age through interaction between them, their parents or other family members, and their music educators. Their potential as musicians, everyday music work, and the incorporation of practice, lesson and performance regimens in their daily lives as young children come to be representative of Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), and their social world would mesh with their world of "work" (so-called for the purpose of my research even in childhood, as their early music learning would come to shape their future employment in music).

The second theme is emotion in musicians' work. Musicians convey the meaning of music in practice and performance through physical movement and facial expression. But performance presence is only one facet of music's emotion work. My research will explore a multitude of circumstances demanding emotional expression and management, ranging from evolving family interests, relationships with music educators from early childhood through university and college, and relationships with peers and colleagues. It will be seen that an image of the music "scene" or "community" of St. John's is carefully protected, but often belies a quiet undercurrent of competition and careful consideration of what is appropriate or

inappropriate to express aloud about fellow musicians. In the context of wage-dependent work in music performance in the medium-sized city of St. John's, emotion management is evident in many ways and supports Hochschild's (2012) concept of emotional labour - the portrayal of prescribed appropriate emotions for the work at hand in order to present what customers expect, and to masque work reality. An example among St. John's musicians would be outward expressions of mutual respect and support between those with competing interests, with any negative feelings about one another's personalities or work suppressed.

The third theme pertains to portfolio employment whereby musicians undertake additional, usually part-time jobs to supplement their performance income, while pursuit of a career in music remains the primary focus. Much has been written about portfolio employment in general (Clarke, Lewchuk, DeWolff. & King, 2007, 2008; Cranford, Vosko & Zukewich, 2003b; Olsthoorn, 2013; Quinlan, 2012; Shuey & Jovic, 2013; Woolfson, 2010; Mallon, 1998; Mietzner & Kamprath, 2013; McDowell, 2009) and portfolio employment particular to the work of musicians (Bennett & Bridgstock, 2015; Smith Conway & Kimmel, 2012; Forkert, 2013; Bain, 2005). Portfolio employment, depending on one's circumstances and goals, can be deemed as a kind of safety net, permitting flexibility in scheduling while providing alternative career potential. But it can also be a form of precarious employment in terms of lack of permanence, low income, and reduced focus on music work out of economic need. Musicians who have, for example, opted for careers as classroom teachers with stable, predictable income and work but who also perform for pay may not be in precarious employment, but income-dependent performers who work as private music educators, in retail, or in other employment may.

The fourth theme arising from the interviews is the changing influence of family in musicians' key career decisions. Parental support of their children's musical interests has been seen as essential to commitment to or departure from music (McPherson, 2009; Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Romer, 1993; Bloom, 1985; Freeman, 1985 & 1991; Sosniak, 1990). The extent to which parents provide the means of music initiation (especially buying instruments and paying for lessons) and maintain their support for their children through adolescence and adulthood may be essential in decisions to continue the pursuit of a music career. Later in life, personal relationships and support of their own families may factor significantly in deciding whether to continue or abandon their earnest pursuit of a music career.

The final main theme relates to the various influences that emerge as musical and career interests develop, and employment in music begins. Musicians' preliminary approval from parents shifts towards seeking approval of other agents who can determine the fate of a music career. The social and cultural networks of musicians expand well beyond family to include dependence on media, arts-specific funding institutions, music educational institutions, and audiences. The gig-to-gig, short-term nature of much of musicians' work means that there is continual movement through their networks depending on who best can support the event or project at hand. Inevitably, as in any social network, there will be variability in outcomes ranging from cooperation based on shared interests, effective communication and mutual benefit to competing interests, and relatively unproductive outcomes (Castells, 2009). The subjective nature of music, and art in general, complicates matters even further for artists and their networks, especially when it comes to potential disagreement among artists or between

artists and their sponsors on matters of intrinsic and extrinsic value of their work (Becker, 1982).

### **1.b The Research Location – St. John's, Newfoundland**

St. John's is where I was born, raised, educated and have made my living as a freelance performing musician and private music educator. My experience as a musician in St. John's and familiarity with local participants across the local music industry will enable a more nuanced understanding of the narratives provided by my participants. Musicians in St. John's include those who work exclusively as performers and those who perform part-time while working in other fields of music and/or non-music. The musicians of my research have all worked either in part or in whole in music performance for remunerated employment. There are many others outside of the scope of this study who have chosen not to pursue music as a career but continue to perform regularly. The precise number of income-dependent musicians is difficult to determine. The publicly available database of The Music Industry Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (MusicNL, a musician-dedicated agency that presents funding and performance opportunities to its members) lists 229 members from throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, including bands and soloists across numerous genres. It is not possible to determine how many of those members are based in St. John's or the exact proportion of their music work and other work. Nor is it possible to determine how many income-dependent musicians are not members of MusicNL. Twenty participants of this research are members of MusicNL, while 34 are not.



St. John's is a modest-sized city (population 214,285 inclusive of the greater metropolitan area<sup>1</sup>, 106,172 exclusive of greater metropolitan area<sup>2</sup>) well known for its vibrant, active and diverse live-music scene, and documented as having among the highest concentration of artists of Canadian municipalities<sup>3</sup>. The "downtown" segment is widely popular, with numerous restaurants, bars, pubs, shops and assorted other venues for live music performance ranging from small pubs to an auditorium seating nearly 200, and an arena with seating for approximately 6,000. Most downtown performance venues are within close walking proximity of one another. Downtown St. John's is normally the site for non-classical music, most popularly rock, traditional, folk, and numerous other genres and subgenres.

There is a highly active classical music scene located only a few minutes drive from downtown but in a setting that is decidedly distinct from the downtown scene. Classical music in St. John's consists of several acclaimed choirs, the province's only symphony orchestra (The Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra, with membership consisting of professional musicians, amateur community musicians, and university music students), an opera company, several other smaller ensembles, and many soloists. The usual site of rehearsals and performances of classical music is on or near the campus of the province's only university, Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN). MUN is home to a classical-based School of Music with approximately 150 students, two concert halls (seating capacity 120 and 296

---

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. Retrieved from [http://www.stats.gov.nl.ca/statistics/population/PDF/Population\\_Estimates\\_CDCMA.pdf](http://www.stats.gov.nl.ca/statistics/population/PDF/Population_Estimates_CDCMA.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> City of St. John's. Retrieved from <http://www.city-data.com/canada/St--John-s-City.html>

<sup>2</sup> City of St. John's. Retrieved from <http://www.city-data.com/canada/St--John-s-City.html>

<sup>3</sup> Artists and Cultural Workers in Canadian Municipalities: Based on the 2011 National Household Survey. Retrieved from: <http://www.hillstrategies.com/content/artists-and-cultural-workers-canadian-municipalities>

respectively) and several large rehearsal spaces. Immediately adjacent to the campus is the Arts and Culture Centre (seating for approximately 1,100), well known for performances of all styles, but is the main stage for NSO concerts. Smaller ensembles from within the NSO also perform up to seven concerts at the MUN School of Music. Several churches in downtown St. John's are also the setting for several NSO concerts each year. Churches are also often the venue of choice for choir performances. Some musicians whose primary genre is classical music cross over to other genres, while non-classical musicians are sometimes invited to participate in orchestra and choir performances. Even though the MUN School of Music predominantly promotes classical-based music, many musicians whose primary performance genre is non-classical studied there.

St. John's is also of interest because of its location. It is on the easternmost tip of Newfoundland and Labrador, the easternmost province of Canada. The island portion of the province overlooks the North Atlantic Ocean. The next closest city of comparable size in population is Halifax, Nova Scotia, accessible only by two-hour flight, or overnight drive and lengthy ferry crossing. Therefore, it is costly for St John's-based musicians to tour their music elsewhere. With a limited audience base, musicians in turn rely heavily on funding from arts-based agencies, various levels of government, or local audience support to derive enough revenue to travel abroad for additional exposure. Newfoundland's abundance and diversity of music is both a blessing and a curse for its musicians. Audiences have a great deal of choice. But with a fairly small population to draw on, musicians have to work that much harder to be noticed among throngs of fellow amateur and professional musicians for paying performance opportunities.

The relative isolation of St. John's from other Newfoundland communities as well as from other cities in Canada permits an up-close study of an interesting, diverse network within a dense local music scene that includes family members, fellow musicians, music educators, education institutions, funding and other support agencies, government, and artist-supportive corporations, all with changing degrees of influence on career decisions depending on genre, career phase and career goals. The location of St. John's may be atypical. Many other Canadian music communities, for example, enjoy far easier mobile access to larger cities in Canada and the United States than Newfoundland musicians could. This is not to suggest that the daily costs of living of musicians in other communities is any different than musicians of St. John's, but their ability to travel more easily and quickly abroad enables more frequent access to potentially lucrative markets and other funding sources. However, an upside in Newfoundland's location for St. John's and other Newfoundland musicians is that touring musicians from outside the province may find it challenging to come to Newfoundland, potentially creating more opportunities for local, resident musicians.

Even though the cultural landscape of St. John's and of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador makes this place unique in many ways, there is tremendous opportunity for this research to lay the foundation for future studies into the work of musicians elsewhere. The fairly small population of St. John's is offset by a high concentration of musical activity and large population of musicians with a wide range of interests and types of work. This collectively makes St. John's the ideal location for a detailed study examining the processes of music career development and decision-making.

### **1.c Context: The Insider-Researcher**

At age 32, I changed careers after seven years of work as an accountant for various employers. I found that work to be dissatisfying and unrewarding. I never felt loyalty towards or from most of my employers, as I moved from one job to another, feeling less secure in employment and pay, increasingly stressed about my future, and not in control of the volume and kind of work I was doing.

I studied piano privately from ages eight through nineteen. I stopped taking lessons and consciously chose to not pursue a career in music at that time because I did not know other musicians, did not come from a family of musicians, and because my high school friends headed for careers in commerce, medicine, or engineering. When I eventually quit my last accounting job to audition for Memorial University of Newfoundland's School of Music, there were two reactions from people in my social and professional circles at the time. One was admiration. The other was that this was a phase and that I would eventually return to more serious work sometime later on. Often – and even to this day – I received comments like, “Are you still into music?” “What will you do after? Go back into business?” I was 32, an old new entrant by music standards, and I knew then that I was on my way to a career of self-employment. I made the career leap before I felt I would be too old to be taken seriously or noticed among younger, more talented and equally ambitious emerging musicians. I was leaving my weekly salary and nine-to-five work in favour of work that would prove to be financially riskier but more gratifying because I would be in greater control and doing something I love. Things went well for the first several years. I graduated, recorded albums,

and garnered some media attention and awards. I felt successful in the year I made as much money from music as I was making in accounting.

But soon after, my work plateaued and then went into decline. My applications for funding to record and tour were denied, the calls stopped coming to adjudicate music festivals, and my private piano studio dwindled. Because I come from a family financial situation that would allow me to withstand this downturn, I believed I could return to levels of my peak year. But that did not happen. I was working harder than ever but earning no more money than before. I had gone from having to turn work down to asking for work, and those old feelings of insecurity and dissatisfaction from my accounting years returned to confront me in my music career. I was starting to worry about whether my playing was good enough. My last couple of CDs were released with concerts that were sparsely attended in spite of heavy promotion and media coverage. Along the way, I was observing other musicians to see if my story was unique. In casual conversation with a prominent musician, I asked what he had coming up next. His response: “Same as always. Writing songs, looking for gigs. That’ll never change.”

Workers in any occupation need to work hard to keep their jobs and advance in their careers. But musicians have always stood out to me. Highly skilled and educated, their pay is rarely commensurate with age or experience. As I started to doubt my commitment to this career, I also was questioning what keeps any musician relying on music as a livelihood. Where is the satisfaction in having to work two or three part-time jobs just to stay afloat in music? Where is the satisfaction in having to work as hard for attention after ten or more years in the career as when we started out? My musician colleagues often point out how little sense

it makes to pursue music as a career in practical terms, but also how much music is a part of who they are and how much they enjoy it in spite of its pitfalls.

For this research, I wanted to get to the essence of the music career by tracing musicians' journeys from their earliest recollections to the present, and the ways their commitment to music has changed over their lives. I wanted to discover what they have in common and to find out what draws musicians to and from their work. The work of musicians has been framed in the sociologies of art and cultural production, notably in Richard Peterson's (1978, 1997) work on the ways in which country music in the U.S. developed into a commercially viable industry, and Bryson's (1996) work that compared authenticity of various genres on the basis of class and education. There are at least three areas, however, where music careers are largely misunderstood or uninformed. The first is in the literature of work and occupations (for example, McDowell, 2009; Braverman, 1998) where there is a significant dearth of coverage of the work of artists generally and of musicians in particular. Strangleman and Warren (2008) note the potential to study music as an element of other forms of work, but not as work itself. I believe there is much in musicians' experiences that can usefully inform this literature, in particular musicians' acceptance of and adaptation to a career defined by portfolio and short-term employment.

The second area is in what young, pre-career musicians understand about the career. It is my experience, and I believe the experience of many others in our field, that young people are taught only the instrument they learn but are largely left uninformed about how to earn a living in music. The third area is in what active, wage-earning musicians know about each other's experiences. While on the one hand there may be risk of presumption attached to my

deep-seated place on the St. John's music scene, my engagement as a researcher with local musicians will lead to a deeper, more informed understanding of the work of St. John's musicians. I entered this study believing I already knew a great deal about living as a musician in St. John's and that my informants would only confirm my knowledge. This proved not to be the case at all. My informants have led me to utterly reformulate all I thought I knew about this career and the lifestyle that goes along with it.

#### **1.d A Life of Exchange: The Careers of Local Musicians**

Prior to my doctoral work, I noticed a number of trends among musicians that would direct me towards my research interest. I began noticing the role and influence of money and how it weaves in different ways throughout music involvement from childhood through adult career. Young musicians in my circle of colleagues who were from less-than-wealthy families seemed at least as likely to continue their music career pursuit as young musicians with greater economic capital. Artists who were denied funding from local agencies were often forced to modify, delay or cancel their projects because they were otherwise unable to meet costs. In a former leadership role with MusicNL, I observed that many musicians who had been both successful and unsuccessful in funding applications over the years were no longer professionally active.

Over the course of my career, I have observed that money's meaning changes as musicians become professional and their social and career networks change. Musicians often help each other out by making free appearances on each other's shows and by lending instruments and gear. Those kinds of exchanges in lieu of cash help preserve and enhance their

good reputation and maintain and strengthen work relationships. These relationships come to represent the totality of a network, insofar as monetary and non-monetary remuneration, power, friendships, information and emotions are intertwined (Hollstein, 2014). Low pay seems somehow to be built into their work in part because money is not always the medium of exchange (Abbing, 2002). Could the long tradition of low income for musicians be in part a result of how they interact in this way among each other, setting low financial expectations from the outset and defining performance as a freely offered “gift”?

This research invited musicians to tell their stories of their careers and the relationships that shape them. Narratives guide our knowledge of social and professional networks including how they can form and adapt to changing circumstances (Lejano, Ingram & Ingram, 2013). Music work is difficult to define and measure because interest in music typically begins casually at an early age and gradually shifts into a career interest, and that timing is individually unique. It is also commonly characterized by part-time work, combined with other sources of more measurable income and regular, more predictable work. Furthermore, income-dependent musicians commonly work alongside musicians of comparable calibre who have no interest in a music career. It might be assumed that such vagueness has an impact on funding in terms of who the holders of the proverbial purse strings determine is most worthy of financial support. Consequentially, lack of definition of a music career could have an impact on career longevity. The 54 musicians who inform this research provide clear evidence of the intermingling of personal and professional relationships throughout the trajectory of their careers and therefore shed much clearer light on this complex occupation.



### **1.e Relevance and Potential Contribution of this Research**

Musicians' work has been studied with attention to the relationship of amateur (non-professional) musicians and community culture (Finnegan, 2007). Professional musicians' work has been studied against the backdrop of their family, social and professional networks and capital formations to better understand their choice of career, work-life balance (MacNamara, Holmes & Collins, 2008), and the meaning they derive from work, which often seems to be prioritized over income (Umney & Kretsos, 2015; Vaag, Giæver & Bjerkeset, 2014; Hammell, 2004, 2009; Primeau, 1996; Hagedorn, 1995). Other research has emphasized the influence of parents, teachers and peers in musicians' early lives (Davidson, Howe, Moore & Sloboda, 1996; Howe & Sloboda, 1991; Sosniak, 1985; Sloboda & Howe, 1992; Moore, Burland & Davidson, 2003; Gabor, 2011; Freeman, 1985; Sosniak, 1990).

A vast majority of professional musicians who attend university or college music schools do so to enhance their artistic skills and to maximize employment opportunities both in and outside of music (Burland & Pitts, 2007; Pearce, 2000). I have known numerous university music school students who undertake university music degrees as a first degree towards a non-music career, or who attempt a music career and later leave it. This suggests that university-based music education has a variable relationship with subsequent music career realities (Bennett, 2009; Carey & Lebler, 2012; Carey, 2008; Renshaw, 2004; Bolan, 2002; Hoverman, Kuuskoski, Weingarten & Zeisler, 2010; Thom, 2015; Juuti & Littleton, 2012; Bennett, 2007; Bauer, Viola & Strauss, 2011; Bauer & Strauss, 2015). Given the realities of their labour market, most musicians anticipate and accept portfolio employment as a chief characteristic of their careers. For some participants, it will be seen that such an arrangement

can result either in high levels of stress as their attention is drawn away from music-making towards earning other non-music sources of income, or in a sense of freedom because of the way some portfolio employment yields dynamic, diverse work, relatively secure income, and time that can be planned and afforded for music.

It appears that few if any studies have comprehensively investigated the full trajectory of music careers in a particular community. A general complete picture of musicians' career trajectories from earliest exposure to music can be assembled by combining the works noted above with research on musicians' physical duress (Thom, McIntyre & Winters, 2005; McCready & Reid, 2007; Guptill, Zaza & Stanley, 2000; Park, Guptill & Sumsion, 2007), performance anxiety (Vuust et al., 2010; Kenny, 2006; Boucher & Ryan, 2011; Cooper & Wills, 1989), and income and employment plights (Throsby & Hollister, 2003; Malenfant, LaRue & Vézina, 2007; Ross, 2003). All of these studies have some relevance to my community-based research that concentrates on professional musicians who live in close proximity and who represent a wide range of age, genres, and personal and professional experiences. This study will thus endeavour to present music careers as uniquely complex, characterized by structured learning and strategic networks, short-term often informal contracts, a wide range of revenue per service, high costs, low pay, long hours, late nights, low annual income, long-term career unpredictability, slow career growth and establishment, and portfolio employment outside of and within the music profession.

I hope that my research will contribute to a greater public understanding and appreciation of the work of musicians by revealing key factors in all of their major career decisions, including the reliance on a shifting network of relationships including family,

friends, educators, and music professionals. I also hope that these outcomes will fill some voids in literature on work and occupations. As portfolio employment increasingly proliferates in many occupations, musician careers that have long been characterized by multiple job-holding can serve as a prime example of the ways in which portfolio work can be embraced by some, and adapted to life and career goals.

Finally, I hope that this research informs musicians of each other's work in the community. This compilation of the experiences of 54 St. John's musicians may formally confirm what many musicians have long suspected, and might even enlighten them further about their work and their community. It will also provide what I expect will be some highly useful information for young musicians aspiring to a career in music. Young musicians may not be fully informed on managing work that is intrinsically rewarding to them but highly subjectively appraised by its consumers. Real-world narratives of the importance of maintaining support from family, educators, peers and professionals may inform how and whether musicians proceed with their careers in music.

## **1.f Thesis Overview**

The next chapter will present a review of some of the existing literature pertinent to much of the information gleaned from my interviews. In particular, the literature review will make reference to findings on the influence of parents, teachers and peers in artists' lives; the extent to which a university or college music education prepares musicians for practical realities of their forthcoming careers; an overview of portfolio employment and its place in the work of musicians; observations on how public policy has responded to artists' work;

determinants of career success; the effects on music careers of health and employment stress; the co-existence of professional and amateur musicians on the professional scene; and on the impact of money on their work.

Chapter three presents the methodology employed throughout this research, including the criteria and processes for recruiting participants, interview processes, data collection and recording, and data analysis.

Chapters four and five explore the first two phases of musicians' careers, starting with their first exposure to music and the evolving role of families, teachers and friends, to the point where musicians declare that music is their primary career interest and they begin work as professionals.

Chapter six is a transitional chapter between descriptions of starting out and of becoming established. This chapter focuses on participants' income, music and non-music employment, and the role of music industry agencies.

Chapters seven and eight resume the career progression with the income and employment context laid out. Chapter seven focuses on the musicians' work after their initial career declaration and university education, when they are routinely working in music for their livelihood. Chapter eight examines the conditions that cause professional musicians to reflect on their careers and decide whether to commit more fully or begin a move away from their work in music.

Chapter nine presents revelations pertaining to musicians' self-assessments of their work, in particular examining career processes and events that lead musicians to question their

future in music. The experiences of the nine participants who left professional music for non-music careers are also examined.

Chapter ten draws conclusions from the findings and presents recommendations and areas for potential future research.

## **Chapter Two: Review of the Literature**

There are few exhaustive studies that have traced the career and life paths of career musicians. Vaag, Giæver and Bjerkeset (2014) explored how workers in creative occupations, musicians in particular, are able to manage some of the more concerning health and social issues they face, including risks to mental and physical well-being, and family and social conflicts. They interviewed twelve freelance musicians in Norway and found that balance between work and life is achieved mostly because of continuing support from family, strong business skills, and requires a large emotional and mental capacity to withstand the strains that accompany self-employment.

There is some literature on music scenes and musicians' work in communities. Barry Shank (1994) wrote an extensive ethnography of a particular genre of music scene in Austin, Texas and interviewed musicians as well as fans, writers and industry professionals to understand identities of musicians in the context of the historical development of that city's music culture. Ruth Finnegan (2007, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) wrote an ethnography of the vibrant genre-intersecting scene of Milton Keynes in the U.K., concentrating on amateur musicians and the ways in which music intersects with daily life and local commerce, noting at the community's commitment to music in spite of the time, money and organizational resources it involves. Vaag, Giæver and Bjerkeset (2014) interviewed twelve Norwegian freelance musicians and appear to come closest to specifically uncovering some of the realities discussed in my study, though their participants were all established award-winning artists whose livelihoods were primarily gained through music performance. A study by Umney and Kretsos (2015) proved to

be the most relevant to my research, as they interviewed thirty London jazz musicians who were trying to become established as professional musicians. The authors examined in particular the extent to which portfolio and precarious employment was a deliberate choice. The high value musicians accord to passion over income is found to be a key trait in their and my study, as is the blurred distinction between playing music for enjoyment and working in music as a commercial undertaking. The authors found that the prioritizing of passion and enjoyment over income at the start of music careers results in an aversion towards thinking of their music-making as business. Creative workers, they find, are better able to adapt to employment precarity because of more positive attitudes towards it, aided by their family economic background and strong social network.

Musicians' work is described in ways, and takes place in settings, that can obscure the true nature of their work. They "play" their instruments, they often refer to their occupational group as a music "community," many accept work for little or no pay, and their work as performers is for the leisure of their audiences. There is a growing volume of research into a new concept of "occupation" that is more inclusive of personal meaning and less delineated by traditional distinctions of whether activity is work or leisure. Hammell (2004, 2009) Primeau (1996) and Hagedorn (1995) examined how occupations have meaning to workers not just for its contracted duty but because they hold some meaning to the workers in terms of self-worth, belonging, and personal and professional development.

Throughout this dissertation references are made to various forms of capital and the ways in which these are intertwined with musicians' careers. Furthermore, the chapters are organized according to career stages, described in participants' narratives. The literature

reviewed here will thus be presented in the context of how the different forms of capital contribute to commitment to the music career at various stages spanning the ways in which engagement in music is initiated and evolves throughout the career. Literature pertaining to additional issues that emerged from the interviews will also be reviewed.

### **2.a. Parents, Teachers and Peers**

Musicians' career paths cannot be easily outlined by pointed, benchmarked stages of achievement, but rather as overlapping transitional phases with variable timing and circumstances unique to the individual. In their interviews with four musicians transitioning from student life to career, Juuti and Littleton (2012) find that musicians' identities, commitment, and relationship of their work with their daily lives are constantly shifting over time, and that successive phases can be traced to their earliest experiences and influences, the timing of their eventual career pursuit, and other key career and life events.

Music teachers have been shown to have lasting impacts throughout the lives and careers of musicians, particularly if their work with young musicians is paired with support at home for musical interests (Pitts, 2009; Pruett, 2004; Zwaan, ter Bogt & Raaijmakers, 2010; Moore, Burland & Davidson, 2003). Hirvonen (2004), however, found in his study of Finnish university music students that relationships with music educators at that level of training can be compromised if the student and teacher are in disagreement over the rationale for music competitions and whether students' best interests are being served.

Coulson's (2010) interview-based research on musician learning and development shows that becoming a musician is an endless process aided by nurturing, supportive music



educators. She adds that this has a legitimizing effect for young musicians' efforts but is more prevalent in the experiences of classical musicians than in non-classical musicians. She recommends more inclusive and supportive music education experiences in all settings and genres of music learning

MacNamara, Holmes and Collins (2008) find that life and skills stages overlap and that musicians are on a multidimensional path of talent development that includes an array of psychological characteristics that change over time and impact their determination to succeed, their commitment to the career, and their focus on challenges associated with each stage. They suggest that musicians are best able to realize their fullest potential for success in music if transitions through successive stages are facilitated by someone close to them — usually parents, teachers or peers — who are able to help them adapt their skills to their learning and performance environments. One example of this kind of transition is from student to occupational musician, which the authors say is characterized by learning how to deal with rejection, changing goals to suit particular employment circumstances, and developing strong interpersonal skills.

Other research gives considerable weight to the influence of parents and teachers in young musicians' initial attachment to music and their desire to further their musical skills (Davidson, Howe, Moore & Sloboda, 1996; Howe & Sloboda, 1991; Sosniak, 1985). There is also evidence that children's musical commitment is influenced by parents' consistency of financial and moral support throughout their learning, and by how well they respond to the music teacher's personality (Sloboda & Howe, 1992; Moore, Burland & Davidson, 2003). Gabor's (2011) study on the effects of musician parents' career experiences on their children

shows that young people are heavily influenced by their parents' work in music, though not always positively. She finds that music students' parents who unsuccessfully attempted a music career were more likely than career musician parents to induce doubt in their children's music career aspirations. She also confirms that music careers are differentiated from other occupations in that training can begin in childhood when it already tends to be strictly directed, highly specialized, and guided by strong adult influences.

McPherson (2009) finds that among musicians whose practice begins early in childhood the continuing involvement and support of their family, educators and peers determine their success in transitioning through career phases. Crossley (2011) in his study of punk music scenes in the U.K. notes that musicians' high-density networks and high-frequency interactions result in reassuring support and solidarity for their careers. Manturzevska (1990) found that as young musicians mature and gain experience, their network of support shifts to suit new expectations and challenges associated with later career phases. She also found that musicians who attempt to advance their careers independently of managers tend to show signs of emotional and physical fatigue by the time they are in their mid-40s, especially when faced with severe distractions to their music, including alternate employment and physical and emotional distress.

Hallam (2010) writes that music teachers should avoid imposing teaching methods that worked best for them and instead offer training appropriate for the unique needs, musical ability, and goals of their students. In this way, says Hallam, the music teacher can tailor the student's musical development to particular individual and social factors rather than enforcing a uniform standard of expectation for all students regardless of background and career

interests. Kirnaskaya (2009), on the other hand, finds that parents and instructors do not play decisive roles in musical development. She adds that some parents who invest heavily in enhancing their children's musical experiences become decreasingly supportive when their children begin to tend towards a career in music.

Mantie (2012) found in his research of university-level recreational musicians that involvement in music is due not only to music teachers' influence but also to what he calls a "complex, objectified" (p. 54) field of social, economic and cultural capital that is underappreciated in music education in understanding career choices and musical practices of young musicians. Young musicians are objectively committed to music by parents who may or may not be knowledgeable or well informed about the music world. Parents invest substantial financial resources into what would become their child's tools of the trade, including instruments and private education, thus defining music participation from the start as something more than merely a casual interest. Nash (1990) and Perkins (2013) endorse Bourdieu's (1986) theory that multiple forms of capital converge and are convertible from one to another. In the context of music, careers can result from the convergence of cultural capital (for example, a diploma or degree in music, artistic interpretation acquired from a music educator, an award for musical achievement), social capital (for example, peers, parents, and teachers), symbolic capital (prestige from having acquired cultural skills and an impressive social network) and economic capital (the means to afford access to music learning and career development). Coulson (2010) refers to all types of capital collectively as musical capital, and found that musicians with the greatest amount of musical capital stand the best chances of realizing careers as professional musicians. Brynner (2005) notes that capital accumulation

over time combines with identity capital, (which includes creativity, adaptability and sense of teamwork) to collectively enhance employment prospects.

With respect to genre, Green (2001) finds that non-classical musicians are more likely to pursue music longer because they are more familiar with studying independently of a teacher. Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Romer (1993) examined the separate as well as combined roles of parents, teachers and friends in musical development and long-term commitment and success. Extensive solo practising contributes a great deal to higher levels of musical expertise and commitment, but research into predictors of musical excellence increasingly includes other societal factors. Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde and Whalen (1993) identify the importance of a nurturing and stable family environment in encouraging and enabling independence in realizing new opportunities and experiences in all disciplines. Burland and Davidson (2002) find that commitment to music is closely connected to relationships of musicians with their parents and teachers throughout their lives and careers. Parents invest heavily of their time and money in instruments, driving to lessons, attending their children's performances, and giving moral support (Bloom, 1985; Freeman, 1985 & 1991; Sosniak, 1990). Parents continue their moral and practical support through adolescence and early career. Teachers tend to become more demanding as young musicians age, their artistic skills become more advanced, and they begin considering a music career (Moore, Burland & Davidson, 2003). Freeman (2000) has shown that ongoing provisions and encouragement are beneficial for enhancing artistic skills and can have benefits for life skills beyond the arts, including creative thinking, planning, and problem solving.

Receiving relatively little coverage in the literature is the influence on musicians' work of their peers/friends. Nevertheless, some literature pertinent to my study was uncovered. Confidence and moral support of friends is shown to have mutually beneficial impacts on success in academics. As young people mature, they can aid and motivate one another through key life transitions and early emergence of career interests (Jehn & Shah, 1997) with particular implications for peers among young musicians (Sosniak, 1990; Urberg, 1999; Hartup, 1996). Peers have been found to be influential in young musicians' transition from student life to occupation (Freeman, 1985; Sosniak, 1990). Michael Farrell (2001) explores the ways in which friendships form the basis of professional collaborations and important social networks in creative work and how each member of these "collaborative circles" comes to take on an expected role, but also demonstrates that these relationships last formally for only the duration of the project at hand.

## **2.b Advanced Education and Career Preparation – University and the Real World**

If it is accepted that the real "work" of musicians begins in childhood, then university represents their first early-adult experience with a true career focus. The university music school yields varying degrees of confidence depending on feedback and experiences throughout musicians' studies. University music school students are in close confines with fellow musicians of approximate calibre where critical comparisons are inevitably made. This phase calls for a strong teacher-student relationship and constructive preparation for gainful employment in the new economic reality of portfolio (multidisciplinary) employment, including help in becoming aware of skills that are transferrable to other kinds of work

(Burland & Pitts, 2007; Pearce, 2000). For most students, university music school represents more than a transition into adult learning and career preparation. It is the first site of formally laying claim to the label of musician (Roberts, 1991), is the scene in which students affirm or disconfirm their commitment to music (Burt & Mills, 2006), and is the site where many young musicians develop their self-concept as professional musicians (Jørgensen, 2015). The change in focus on music from extra-curricular childhood and adolescent endeavour to full-time academic pursuit can be jarring for many young musicians. Research has suggested that university music schools can ease students through this transition by being more sensitive to each student's strengths and incorporating career preparation and practical life skills in their continuing learning (Dockwray & Moore, 2008; Pearce, 2000).

Low pay, lack of confidence, and competition are key challenges faced by musicians in the earliest stages of their career and often throughout (Kirschbaum, 2007; Weller, 2013). Formal training and education in the arts has potential to yield higher income for more highly educated artists, but not nearly to the same extent as for highly educated workers in other occupations. However, artist income has been found to increase more with work experience than income of workers in other fields, suggesting that learning on the job is at least as valuable to artists as formal education is for other occupations (Filer, 1990). Filer finds that artists choose to undertake higher education not necessarily to gain higher earnings in the arts but as a kind of insurance in the event that they change careers. Mason, Williams and Cramner (2009) similarly conclude that employable skills are better learned in employment than in the classroom, adding that it is in the best interest of university music schools to incorporate

employable skills into curricula. However, their study does not address portfolio work, self-employment or other related concepts relevant to 21<sup>st</sup> -century employment.

There is substantial literature on apparent disparities between university music school training and career experiences following graduation. For example, some students of a university music program that focuses principally on classical or “new” music later work in other genres including rock, folk, traditional and jazz. Research has recommended changes to curricula so that skills including popular instruments, other genres and songwriting be incorporated to enhance career prospects (Randles, 2011). Research is also advocating that university music schools modify curricula to better prepare recent music graduates with essential skills to realize the best possible employment outcomes, particularly in the context of fast-changing global economies affecting even local musicians (Bennett, 2009; Carey & Lebler, 2012; Carey, 2008; Renshaw, 2004; Bolan 2002).

Musicians’ work is steeped in a tradition of low pay and multiple revenue streams. For musicians, a globalized marketplace can mean easier access to potential markets well beyond the local scene, but with no more assistance or training in dealing with vastly more competition. More than ever, musicians are required to undertake careful career planning and possess entrepreneurship skills (Thomson, 2013; Pettipas & Jagoda 2012). Hoverman, Kuuskoski, Weingarten and Zeisler (2010) find that U.S university music graduates similarly have experienced disconnect between their arts training, preparedness for arts entrepreneurship, and ability to secure jobs in or closely connected to their specialized fields. The same has been shown in the U.K. where Comunian, Faggian and Jewell (2014) find that while music graduates of higher education music schools (university music departments,

conservatories) are better positioned than most artists in non-music fields to enter creative careers, opportunities are not readily available, necessitating portfolio/multiple-job careers. Such an adaptation risks diverting them from establishing professional networks needed to further their music careers. The participants of the Comunian et al. (2014) study noted value in educational institutions adapting their programs to help student musicians establish social and professional networks relevant to their work. But rather than focus entirely on preparing for employment, Beckman (2011, 2007) urges that it is incumbent on higher music education to encourage emerging professional musicians to become arts leaders and innovators.

Thom (2015) compares university curricula and mandates of U.K. and German schools to real-world realities of working musicians. He and others (Juuti & Littleton, 2012; Bennett, 2007; Bauer, Viola & Strauss, 2011; Bauer & Strauss, 2015) find that core skills of career management are largely absent from arts school curricula, leaving emerging professionals poorly equipped for self-management, employment, or starting their own new initiatives. Management techniques and knowledge of media and technologies are examples of key skills that could prove essential for music graduates for employment on their local scene and beyond, once it is recognized that arts and commercial skills co-exist in self-employment (Bauer, Viola & Strauss, 2011). One music college in Newfoundland actively encourages young musicians to think of their work in the arts as a business in order to realize the most promising prospects of music-related employment (Clarke, 2010).

Perkins (2013) finds that musicians learn considerably more about employment and coping with its demands on the site of employment than they do as students. Brown (2007) agrees that student employment prospects are enhanced when employment placement is part



of the curriculum in addition to development of business skills relevant to music careers.

Weller (2013) finds that participants of her study who began seeking paid work while studying in a university were career-advantaged upon entry into the profession over those who waited until after graduation. Weller also found that the degree to which her participants were able to achieve balance between artistic and financial sustainability is closely related to individual circumstances, personality and temperament – further suggesting the importance of family and educator input in career preparation.

Research shows that university music schools and conservatories that prepare new graduates for employment in music would serve emerging occupational artists well by helping them realize in a meaningful, direct way how their skills can be applied across a broader employment spectrum (Bauer & Strauss, 2015; Beeching, 2010). Dawn Bennett (2008b) finds that musicians are unlikely to achieve performance-only careers and that success is best measured in terms of how well and for how long they are able to manage many roles within and outside their chosen field. She especially supports the need for higher education to incorporate practical career management skills into curricula, including teaching skills. She adds that music schools should take on greater responsibility for assisting young musicians in managing their careers in performance and non-performance work. She also claims that attention to the issue of demands of work and daily life so familiar in the music profession can serve as a useful precedent for other fields of labour, and that the example of music careers can have implications for wider labour policy.

Burke, FitzRoy and Nolan (2008) identify a positive relationship between higher education and entrepreneurship persistence, while Patel and Thatcher (2014) find that

individual characteristics are positively correlated with persistence in self-employment, openness to change and desire for autonomy. Passion to succeed has been found to be as important for success as talent, with implications for parents and educators who are encouraged to provide material resources and moral support for young musicians' interests (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews & Kelly, 2007).

Entrepreneurship in arts education could enable commercial creativity by locating new target audiences. Harding (in Beckman, 2011) argues that there is an oversupply of musicians in relation to work available, particularly for full-time single-job arts employment as, for example, performer, a member of a professional (salaried) classical ensemble or tenured professor. But, he argues, if music employment prospects are viewed realistically in the context of how most musicians work – holding multiple jobs within and outside of music – and if they are prepared in their education accordingly, they would be better prepared emotionally and practically to adapt to a career defined by portfolio employment. Smith, Comunian and Taylor (2008), meanwhile, caution against turning attention too much towards practical employment skills at the expense of artistic skills.

Some studies (Myers, 2008; Pitts, 2009) have recommended that advanced-level music education be made relevant to career realities by showing how music plays a significant role in communities, with skills applicable to many kinds of interactions and work. Gaunt, Creech, Long and Hallam (2012) and Creech et al. (2008b) note positive impacts of combining individual mentoring and peer collaboration to develop artistic, professional and interpersonal strengths into new careers and efficiently manage portfolio work.

There is a long history of university student musicians entering music schools with strong aspirations for performance careers, but shifting towards other non-performance work as they near graduation (Mills, Burt & Moore, 2005). But this is not a trait unique to musicians. Other academic disciplines have been examined to determine to what extent student career goals match employers' expectations and employment realities. Particular attention has been given to how well university schools in general equip their students with "hard business" skills to effectively and efficiently manage careers as well as "soft" skills that include creativity, effective interpersonal skills and the ability to work under pressure (Andrews & Higson, 2008; Fallows & Stephen, 2000). Other studies have recommended that universities give more attention to soft skills and their importance in managing careers at a time when many occupations are now subject to precarity (McKeown & Lindorff, 2011; de Villiers, 2010). Literature on general employment prospects for recent university graduates of other disciplines sheds light on the closing gap between the long-known experiences of musician graduates and those in other disciplines.

Students enter a university music school or conservatory already bearing significant strengths that could help position them for viable careers. Perkins (2013) notes congruence between her findings and Bourdieu's (1986) theories pertaining to field, capital and *habitus* in terms of how students and educators co-exist and interpret aspects of the school environment and mandates according to their own particular goals. In order for music students to inhabit the field or social space of the music school, they must first compete for placement. Perkins says that successful candidates enter the school armed with a lifetime of cultural, social and economic capital. Abbing (2002) similarly notes that social and cultural capital collectively

shape the *habitus* of young musicians and define the ways in which they respond to their peers (with whom there is often unspoken competition) and to their music educators (who wield the power to assign them privileged roles in music). But he also finds that young musicians persist almost blindly in their pursuit of a career in the arts, with a lack of realistic information about a viable career in the artistic marketplace.

Bennett and Bridgstock (2015) trace the trajectory of 58 music and dance students in Australia from their university education into their work as artists. They determine that music is characterized by portfolio employment that involves episodic, unpredictable, self-managed work. They add that there are far fewer permanent jobs in music than there are musicians, leading to underemployment (less than full employment) in musicians' specialties but employment in other areas of music and non-music. Their follow-up research of the same musicians a few years after graduation revealed employment experiences that were decidedly different from earlier hopes and expectations of a vast majority who expected performance to represent a more significant portion of their income than it did. Some others of their participants, however, never expected to succeed in their field, even while studying in a specialized university music program, and braced for employment challenges. Struggles in trying to locate niche markets and operate self-managed careers were exacerbated by what the authors call "poor career preview" (p. 274) on the part of educational institutions. The authors discuss the potential merits of a comprehensive arts education program that presents realities of the careers and prepares students for transitioning into the workplace, with potential positive outcomes, including reducing job-related stress and reliance on social security programs.

Perkins (2013) recommends that music schools strive to treat all students fairly, with realistic career information and equal opportunity regardless of their social and cultural capitals. Doing so can be of benefit to the school by turning out increasingly satisfied graduates who are better- and more equitably-equipped to manage life after graduation. Preparing students for precarious employment as part of their education can help them to realize the best possible career outcome and improve student performance (Fallows & Steven, 2000).

While it can be argued that it is not commercially in schools' interests to tell musicians how tough it is to establish a viable music career, to ignore or gloss over the reality might be at the schools' peril as well as its graduating musicians. A music school that devises a program of study that assures the best possible career success for their students can also heighten its reputation as a truly comprehensive preparatory school (Carey & Lebler, 2012). Bennett and Bridgstock (2015) note that this is not to suggest that music schools reduce attention to artistic training, but rather should embed into the curriculum realistic employability potential that includes preparation for self-management as small business entrepreneurs and advice on balancing multiple roles and jobs as a normal part of a music career.

Tolmie (2014) recommends introducing "degree maximization" (p. 79) into the music school curriculum to allow for the full range of realistic career options for music degrees. Rogers (2002) finds that musician training and education have not yet adequately addressed realities of employment prospects. He adds that there is an overlooked and far-reaching application of many skills acquired in music to non-performance music careers and employment in other industries. Rogers says that there are significant strengths of the music

industry that can be easily missed by labour and economic measures because musicians' lives are commonly characterized by serial short-term contracts, verbal agreements and cash transactions that are difficult to trace with respect to musicians' real contribution to economy and culture. It is therefore important to devise a way to track musicians' work in order to better understand and appreciate how readily adaptable they are, and how transferrable their skills are, to fast-changing employment circumstances, with implications for their pre-career education.

Mietzner and Kamprath (2013) have shown that artistic creativity can be meaningfully transferred to non-music professions and that these additional or alternative employability options should be presented to emerging musicians as well as to non-music industries with the aim of making employers aware of the value of creative "competencies." The implications here for arts education are clear. In the current age of portfolio employment, when increasing numbers of workers in many disciplines are undertaking diverse tasks outside their primary skills, musicians have long been positioned to serve as examples of working in such conditions, even though they have yet to be adequately informed as to how to apply their skills either to arts and non-arts employment. Throsby and Zednik (2011) have shown that employers, students and arts schools benefit when employment potential and broader applicability of arts-related skills are incorporated into learning.

Other research cautions against too much focus on pragmatic education. Music performance majors at university music schools have been found to choose their careers primarily for enjoyment and because they feel emotionally that they are musicians. Factors like income and job prospects are placed lower in priority (Parkes & Jones, 2011; Abbing,

2002). A comprehensive survey (Ball, Pollard & Stanley, 2010) of graduates in the U.K. determines that artists place higher priority on making full use of their creative talents than on income and work. With respect to working within and outside of their artistic field, artists come to expect this lifestyle and show high degrees of job satisfaction in spite of earning little income. Ball, Pollard and Stanley (2010) find that while employability and earning a livelihood have obvious significance, it is important to concentrate on other skills artists bring to their field that could be beneficial to workers in other disciplines. These include being flexible, resourceful, adaptable and agreeable. As portfolio and self-employment become increasingly prevalent in other fields, these are traits that can aid new portfolio workers in starting out and settling into new work arrangements.

### **2.c. Going to Work**

Regardless of the duration, type or level of music education, musicians tend to enter their working lives with performance central to their activity but with other forms of employment necessary to supplement low, infrequent pay and costly projects (Menger, 1999). For several decades, much has been written on portfolio and precarious employment and its proliferation in many occupations. Precarious employment does not refer only to job insecurity endured by low income-earners. It is a state of employment increasingly experienced in occupations once thought to be permanent and full-time but which are becoming displaced by short-term contractual work with fewer benefits and fewer

opportunities for training and career advancement<sup>4</sup>. This is distinguished from non-standard (also known as atypical) employment that may be characterized in terms of precarity, but may also imply flexibility and therefore some measure of security.

This section will review some of the literature pertinent to occupational concepts and experiences with which many musicians are familiar. These include precarious employment, self-employment, atypical or non-standard employment, portfolio employment, and the effect these experiences have on musician identity.

### **2.c.i Portfolio Careers and Precarious Employment**

Music and other creative work are undertaken by many amateurs and professionals alike for reasons having little to do with earning income (Fletcher & Lobato, 2013). That prioritization, the freedom to make music anywhere, and undertaking several kinds of temporary jobs, makes the work of musicians difficult to trace and quantify (Butler, 2000). E.C. Hughes' writing (1970) remains relevant to musicians' work on local music scenes where boundaries between professionals and non-professionals and relationships between musicians and their clientele shift throughout the career. Though he does not reference the work of musicians, music work can be viewed as such an occupation, characterized by lifelong learning, love for the craft, and determination of its occupants to endure in the work for as long as possible, in addition to ever-changing workplaces and interactions necessary to

---

<sup>4</sup> Grant, T. (2015 May 21). Precarious employment still rising in Toronto, Hamilton. *The Globe and Mail*. "The longer-term trend points to more insecure employment, said Prof. Lewchuk. 'Each time there's a recovery, the level of security is a little bit lower than the previous boom. I think this is because the competitive pressures are greater – firms are looking to cut costs ... technology has changed, and there's an infrastructure where they can go to temp agencies, and get not just unskilled workers, but they can get CEOs now.'" Retrieved from: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/jobs/precarious-employment-still-rising-in-toronto-and-hamilton/article24531959/>



achieve completion of a given event or project. The work of musicians has variously been compared to service work, characterized as intangible, consumable, non-standardized (Fisher, 2010), autonomous, specialized and wholly dependent on the opinions of consumers (Becker, 1951). Faulkner (1973b) observed orchestra settings where musicians' work is likened to service industry work, where employees experience kinship based on shared meaning about their work and career objectives, and are directed by a team leader, while remaining protective and proud of their individual expertise.

Musician career trajectories are characterized by numerous traits depending on each musician's professional networks and the extent to which they are able to transition through career stages. Giuffre (1999) refers to artists' career opportunities as "sandpiles," implying that opportunities and networks are fragile, shift easily and quickly, and that artists who are able to make it to high status points remain vulnerable to falling to lower points and different statuses through their careers. Her work also supports Bourdieu's (1989) field theory. Bourdieu defines fields as networks of relations between objectively defined positions but which prioritize social and economic objectives differently depending on the field. Those in artistic fields, for instance, tend to prioritize friendship and love over economic gain, whereas the reverse seems to be true for those employed in economic fields (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Giuffre additionally notes the competitive nature of field theory insofar as artist careers are subject to comparison to other artists in a fluid field in which networks are continually adjusted to best suit needs in various situations.

Further highlighting the fragility of musicians' work in the context of professional networks, Faulkner (1971) notes in a series of interviews with professional musicians that

colleagues are competitors and thus are “the performer’s most supportive and critical audience” (p. 150). Musicians need one another for career advancement at least as much as they need their audiences, and their relative success depends on many factors that change over time, including income, number of gigs, reputation and so on. Faulkner set musician work apart from most other occupations, noting that musicians’ careers are non-linear, unstable, and difficult to classify in a convenient package of standard occupational measures. Randle and Culkin (2009) argue that the paradox of instability and uncertainty in portfolio and project-based employment is that it represents a “structured uncertainty” (p. 112). This means that most freelance artists undertake the career with knowledge and acceptance of the risks of unstable employment, and therefore prepare to live accordingly. Antcliff, Saundry and Stuart (2007) find that professional networking in arts industries establishes cooperation, mutual trust, and competitive advantage, especially in the context of self-employment where collegiality and support are essential for future employment opportunities and career longevity.

### **2.c.ii Portfolio Careers and Self-employment**

Portfolio employment has long been understood by musicians as a normal characteristic of their careers. Even musicians who manage to earn a livelihood working only in performance hold portfolio jobs within performance, as they alternate between different bands and work as soloists, command different fees per service depending on the work at hand, and negotiate their pay. Furthermore, they are often paid in cash that is quickly

expended, their work is often based on informal verbal agreements, they work in many different settings, and their studio or office is usually in their homes.

Other types of work once not previously considered as labour in the traditional sense (including care for children and elderly, sex work, and acts of leisure) and have been excluded from employment statistics are increasingly gaining attention as occupations. These forms of work are considered more relevant in the era of deindustrialization, portfolio work, and the emergence of precarious employment (McDowell, 2009). Citing Ulrich Beck, McDowell believes that some of the most successful workers in the post-industrial world are those who have formed portfolio careers that enhance one's sense of individuality, style and confidence.

Owing to the proliferation of social media giving new opportunities for fans to interact directly with their favourite musicians, fans whose opinions can immediately influence music careers are becoming increasingly significant in musicians' work (Baym, 2011). Howard Becker's (1982) invitation to consider the full "art world" of workers in the arts draws attention to all agents in such "worlds." It is his assertion that works of art are the product of collective action and cooperation among all actors in artist networks. Becker discusses relative perspectives of divisions of labour in music depending on genres. For example, he writes that classical musicians focus on either composition or performance but not usually both, jazz performance and improvisation are given more weight than composition, and in rock both composition and performance are given equal weight often by a singular composer/performer. Self-employment in music therefore involves musicians' awareness of all possible players in their social and professional networks, and the need to focus on particular areas of expertise within their specialized genre in order to gain exposure and attention.

### **2.c.iii Precarious, Atypical and Non-standard Employment**

Precarious employment is sometimes but not always represented by portfolio employment. Precarious employment implies insecurity, unhappiness, high levels of stress, and can influence key life decisions (Quinlan, 2012; Lewchuk & Lafleché, 2014). While portfolio employment generally describes the kind of work, precarious employment refers to work quality. Precarious work has been defined as consisting of “atypical employment contracts, limited social benefits and statutory entitlements, job insecurity, low job tenure, low earnings, poor working conditions and high risks of ill health” (Cranford, Vosko & Zukewich, 2003a, p. 455). It has further been described as a long continuum of precariousness that takes into account other factors including age, gender, ethnicity, location, various types of full time and part time work, and whether self-employment is voluntary or involuntary (Cranford, Vosko & Zukewich, 2003b; Albo, 2010), while noting that precarious work is marked particularly by deteriorating quality of work and low pay (Clement, Mathieu, Prus & Uckardesler, 2010). Clement, Mathieu, Prus and Uckardesler (2010) highlight that part time work is becoming increasingly ambiguous, as some work can be both permanent and precarious, or part-time but not precarious, while some full-time work, initially promising long-term security, stability and higher income increasingly bears traits of precarity.

The degree of precariousness and how it is managed varies according to how much control workers have over their work and the nature of their contracts (Kalleberg, 2009). Kalleberg’s association of precarious work with a state of threatening insecurity were criticized by others who recommend a more nuanced examination of precariousness by considering individual circumstances such as education, age and gender, in addition to

employment factors (Olsthoorn, 2013). While Woolfson (2010) calls for labour laws to protect the most vulnerable workers, an examination of the broad spectrum of possible ways to measure precarious work shows the challenge in applying standard labour laws and devising protections for precarious workers. Quinlan (2012) writes that precarious employment is not an employment trend of just the past few decades but has been present for at least two centuries and has been influential on the development of employment policy and labour protections in other fields, with a historical context that can inform present day realities. Precarious employment has become common in many occupations through the late- 20<sup>th</sup> and early-21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Mitchell and Muysken (2008) argue that government employment policies globally have neglected goals of full employment and have effectively shifted responsibility for employment to the individual. They say that the worker has been implicated for not acquiring appropriate skills or not trying hard enough to be employed.

Throsby and Hollister's (2003) study of the livelihood of 120 Australian artists divided their careers into four stages: uncertainty, becoming established, established practice, and continuing but less intensive commitment. Half of their survey participants declared income of less than \$30,000 from all sources, a figure resembling a 1980s survey of musicians in Australia. They write that most artists try to persevere by taking on additional jobs, but in so doing are left with less time to dedicate to their art. Of the Throsby and Hollister survey, 78 per cent of musicians said their work in music is inhibited either by lack of music work opportunities, lack of financial return or lack of time due to other responsibilities. Even the work of some of the most seasoned, active musicians is derived from series of variable short-term contracts (Towse, 2000).

Musicians' self-employment income is generally not pensionable, and is sometimes undeclared or unknown even by the wage-earning musicians. Yet in some ways music offers employment assurances independent of the wider economy. They remain in demand for their services, are unrestricted in terms of licensure and education as to when and where to make music, and therefore are less precarious than other professions once thought to be more secure because of their rank and status. Even after they change career or retire, musicians can play music whether for income or not. This contrasts with some well-educated, highly-paid senior executives whose careers are dependent on unpredictable markets<sup>5</sup>.

The literature on precarious work describes quality of life, whereas non-standard work (sometimes used interchangeably with "atypical" work), like portfolio employment, describes the type of work, including whether it is characterized, for example, as part-time, temporary, self-employed (Heery & Noon, 2008) or involves holding multiple jobs simultaneously (Gibson, Murphy & Freestone, 2002; Vosko, Zukewich & Cranford, 2003). Atypical/Non-standard work therefore seems often to be built on aspects of precarity, but all such work does not necessarily result in the same outcomes. If the risk of unhappiness and job dissatisfaction are markers of precarious employment, then musicians' work may be more precisely categorized as non-standard rather than as precarious. Throsby (1994) suggests that musicians who hold non-music jobs continue to identify as musicians even if their income from that

---

<sup>5</sup> Cryderman, K. (2015, September 24) TransCanada slashing a fifth of senior staff jobs: warns of more cuts *The Globe and Mail*. "... the cuts to senior staff positions will be made through layoffs and retirements – although it will not be clear for several weeks how many jobs will be affected. Mr. Millar said this round will include about 20 per cent of vice-president and senior vice-president positions. The cuts will even include a member of the executive leadership team..." Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/transcanada-warns-layoffs-coming-as-oil-downturn-squeezes-customers/article26516786/>

other work is greater than from music. They prefer, in spite of the risks, to break from traditional employment, which might at least partially explain the omission of the work of artists from sociology of work literature.

Assessing the precariousness of music careers is complicated by the invisibility of much of their work (for example, private and unpaid rehearsal time, cash or non-cash remuneration, and undocumented hours of labour). It is also difficult to discuss their work in the context of a general labour market given the subjective way in which musicians' output is assessed by consumers. Some research has explicitly identified the performing arts as a form of precarious employment, while cautioning against attempts to apply general labour policy that often neglects distinguishing non-standard and standard employment (Frade & Darmon, 2005). Attempts to over-regulate artistic work could result in protecting the relatively few best-known performers while barring and discouraging the majority trying to start out in the profession (Benhamou, 2011).

Although much of the literature on precarious employment does not explicitly reference the arts, some of its findings are applicable to musicians' work. Lewchuk, Clarke and DeWolff (2008) show that certain challenges related to precarious employment (for example, scheduling and general efforts to remain employed) were associated with poorer health outcomes while other characteristics, including dealing with ongoing income uncertainty, were not. They add that workers in precarious employment who experience high levels of support among their social and professional networks showed better overall health. Clarke, Lewchuk and DeWolff (2007) find that health of workers in precarious employment is associated with the degree to which they accepted their employment. They include musicians

as examples of workers who are working on a “real future career” path, deliberately engaged in portfolio employment for as long as they are reasonably able until conditions improve. The authors find this “on a path” group to be younger, willing to endure short term health issues for the hope of long term gain, and able to benefit from multiple income sources and social and professional networks. Malenfant, LaRue and Vézina (2007) similarly find that although some musicians are negative about their present employment situations, their health risks are offset by their acceptance of their career path and by involvement in other activities outside of their employment.

Saloniemi and Zeytinoglu (2007) report that some workers who are employed in permanent jobs are increasingly vulnerable because of continuing growth of contractual work displacing what was once full-time permanent work. Chaykovsky (2005) finds that part-time and self-employed workers are among the most vulnerable, but also that worker characteristics and circumstances can mitigate employment vulnerability. For instance, workers who deliberately choose self- and part-time employment may feel less vulnerable than those who are involuntarily working in atypical or nonstandard employment. Mallon (1998) has shown that workers in other fields either involuntarily take on portfolio employment due to vague prospects for lasting, full time employment in their field, or voluntarily undertake it because of some merits of portfolio work, including flexible balance of home and work life and possibilities of maintaining personal and creative freedoms. Other research, however, shows greater anxiety and uncertainty, as home and work boundaries become indistinguishable, as new occupational identities depart from the original intent of self-management, and as the



individual is left to his/her own devices to create and maintain an employable, marketable profile (Mirchandani, 2000; Sullivan, 1999; Gold & Fraser, 2002).

Musicians' ability to adapt to employment vulnerability could serve as a useful example for other occupations. Artists have long been recognized outside of their fields as innovators and adaptable to uncertain work circumstances over the long term (Smith & McKinlay, 2009). Ross (2003) regards artists as a new social class with particular sets of skills and experiences including life-long dedication and commitment, patience, sacrifice and critical thinking that may have applications across a huge spectrum of sectors of the increasingly precarious global labour market. Work and activities that characterize music careers are gaining attention for the ways musicians are able to strategize their place locally, as well as on a more freely-accessible global music marketplace (Bennett 2008b). Umney and Kretsos (2015) note that artists possess interpersonal skills and self-management, and adapt to precarious and portfolio employment. Artists' experiences can inform other industries in which employment uncertainty and employment diversity is becoming the norm (Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010).

#### **2.c.iv Portfolio Work and Musician Identity**

Musicians in portfolio employment could become less dependent on music for income while continuing to develop their artistic skills and retaining their identity as professional musicians (Smith Conway & Kimmel, 2012). But their musician identity may be jeopardized by a reduction of time they are able to dedicate to music because of their employment in other fields (Forkert, 2013; Bain, 2005). Nóvoa (2012) suggests that musician identity is closely tied

to mobility (traveling), and that a static career (for example, musicians who do not tour) reduces the likelihood of realizing additional employment opportunities in music, compromising their self-identity as musicians. Nóvoa finds that musicians who have time and money to tour are better able to concentrate on their music while developing and strengthening relationships with fellow musicians, new audiences and others in the music industry. There are, however, ways for artists to retain and build on their artistic identity within portfolio employment. Mills (2010) finds that many musicians combine private music teaching with performance, enabling them to maintain and strengthen a performer-teacher identity. Raffiee and Feng (2014), while not explicitly referencing the arts, find that “hybridization” of a day job and self-employment is more likely to enable self-employment success for those who transition gradually into full time self-employment than for those who shift suddenly from paid employment to self-employment.

With respect to gender, while it commonly known that there are more men than women who work in music (Service Canada, 2011), and that there are reverse representations of men and women according to genre (more men than women in non-classical music, more women than men in classical music) (Creech et al., 2008a; Bennett, 2008a; Ramirez, 2012; Martin, 1995), research has shown that gender and genre are independent factors in determining self-efficacy, skills attainment and views regarding higher education in music (Welch et al, 2008). It has been argued that status and opportunities for women rock musicians, for example, are not predictable because of gender imbalance in that genre. Other skills, including communication, promotion, performance experience and creativity are also principal factors (Clawson, 1999). Griswold and Chroback (1981) found no evidence that

gender and music occupation are predictable by whether an instrument or style is related to masculinity or femininity. However, other research has revealed negative reactions from male musicians when women become successful in genres and instruments traditionally viewed as in the masculine domain (Abeles, Hafeli & Sears, 2014).

## **2.d Public Policy, The Status of the Artist Act, and The Creative Industries**

Unemployment has long been a main economic and political metric in assessing government policy and the state of the economy. Many musicians are not unemployed; many are not working fulltime in any field but possibly working hours equivalent to or exceeding full-time by way of several part-time jobs; many are self-employed; most of their work is periodic, based on short-term contracts, often compensated in cash, and therefore difficult to reliably measure (Bennett, 2004). Fenwick (2006) has found that portfolio workers perform certain “hidden” uncompensated labour tasks that are embedded in preparation for visible work but are not visible to the contractor. An example in the context of music would be a pianist hired to perform for a wedding but not paid for time spent privately rehearsing, and scheduling other commitments around the contracted work.

Much research on artists’ work has tended to concentrate on national surveys in Europe, Australia and the U.S. and less so on local communities. Menger (2001b) urges caution in regarding national or big-city statistics on musician employment as representative of all musicians. Lack of attention to music communities and interrelationships among musicians, venues and commerce has been presented by Turley (2001) as a critique of Max Weber’s Eurocentric and genre-specific analysis of the rationalization of music. Turley argues

that greater attention to communities would illuminate how interaction among musicians and between musicians and communities affect local culture. Nevertheless, nationalized data and analyses at least provide measures of comparison and lay some groundwork for more detailed analyses of musicians' career paths and choices.

In Canada, the Status of the Artist Act (SAA) was enacted in 1992 to permit formal organization of independent working artists so that they could gain legally recognized collective bargaining power with hirers. Its aim was purportedly to enable artists to secure improved working conditions, gain equitable compensation and establish professional relationships, leading to greater security and opportunities in the international music labour market. In conjunction with the SAA, the Canadian Artists and Producers Professional Relations Tribunal (CAPPRT) came into effect a few years later to ensure proper application of the SAA. In 2013, the CAPPRT was dissolved, with oversight of the SAA transferred to the Canadian Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) that oversees Occupational Health and Safety and industrial relations for all occupations<sup>6</sup> (Shilton & Banks, 2014). The amalgamation of the SAA into the CIRB may suggest a less concentrated focus on the specificity of artists in the workforce. But it could also imply that artists' working conditions, independence and self-employment are increasingly becoming informative for other labour sectors that are facing new realities of precarious, non-standard, contractual work (Archibald, 2009; MacPherson 1999).

---

<sup>6</sup> The Status of the Artist Act is available online at Government of Canada website <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/S-19.6/>. Canadian Industrial Relations Board, is at [www.cirb-ccri.gc.ca](http://www.cirb-ccri.gc.ca). The CIRB website details the Rights and Responsibilities of Self-employed Artists at <http://www.cirb-ccri.gc.ca/eic/site/047.nsf/eng/00015.html>.

In 2010, the Canadian Conference of the Arts reviewed the SAA and repeatedly referred to artists' work as "atypical" (*Status of the Artist in Canada*, pp. 1, 2, 28, 30). It noted characteristics of artists' work that individually can be compared to other occupations but that collectively make it distinctive. The first trait they list is artists' "love" (p. 2) for their specialized work, usually realized many years before declaring art as occupation. Other distinguishing traits include: substantial time spent over many years preparing to earn income; success incommensurate with experience and skills; and many professionals supplementing their artist income with part-time work from outside their chosen field (pp. 2-3). The review noted that artists' earnings increased at a lower rate than the rest of the labour force and that artists remained in the lowest quarter of average earnings of more than five hundred occupations measured by Statistics Canada. The report noted that forty per cent of artists complete university degrees or diplomas, compared to twenty-two per cent of the overall labour force, yet artists earn on average \$23,500 annually, which is twenty-six per cent lower than the average labour force. It revealed that Canadian musicians' average annual income is \$16,000, well below artists' overall average annual income.

The report also notes that many professional artists leave their career in their 30s and have a much more difficult time transitioning to other careers because of a combination of their appearance/image, physical or emotional issues, and their lifelong education in their artistic field. The report concluded by expressing disappointment in the overall ineffectiveness of the SAA and issued a renewed call for "individual associations, guilds and unions" to continue to work for their respective members (p. 30). It also reflects little change in the impact of the SAA since a 2001 Canadian Heritage review. Canadian Heritage noted the

restriction of the effectiveness of the SAA to relatively few artists who fall under federal jurisdiction. Most independent artists are under provincial jurisdiction, yet most provinces had not enacted their own legislation to improve the socio-economic status of self-employed artists (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2002).

The Music Industry Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (MusicNL), which grants performance and funding opportunities for member musicians, was created in 1992, the same year as the SAA was enacted. MusicNL and the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council (ArtsNL – another provincial funding agency, for all artists including musicians) benefited, starting in 2006, from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador cultural policy document, *Creative Newfoundland and Labrador: The Blueprint for Development and Investment in Culture* (Province of Newfoundland, 2006). Among its mandates were to guard against the disappearance of traditional culture, and address problems arising from the financial instability of cultural organizations (*Creative Newfoundland and Labrador*, p. 9) by providing direct support for “professional” artists, defined as “those who aspire to earn a living through their artistic work and who are recognized by their peers as artists” (*Creative Newfoundland and Labrador*, pp. 19 and 51-52).

The policy document further recognized “levels” and “stages” of artists’ careers and repeatedly referred to artists as “workers”, advocating that education should be increasingly geared towards the potential of applying artistic creators’ skills to other creative industries in the province through continuing professional development, incentives, mentoring and training programs that foster “creative entrepreneurship” (p. 28). The policy espouses partnership in cultural development between the respective government Departments of Human Resources,

Education, Culture, and International Trade and Development. With the release of the report, MusicNL was among the beneficiaries, in receipt of more than \$300,000 annually disbursed across several music project categories and awarded to successful applicants among its member musicians. The Canadian Conference of the Arts review notably singles out *Creative Newfoundland and Labrador* as a positive example for other Canadian and international policy developers to follow, especially for its attention specifically to the work of artists as potentially contributing to other sectors of the economy as well as to development of the “creative” economy of the province and beyond.

Concurrently emerging with portfolio work across many occupations are creative industries that invite a wide range of knowledge and information including innovation, intellect, creativity and resourcefulness (Caves, 2000). Creative industries are characterized by networks of small to medium-sized enterprises often employing freelance workers on short-term contracts (Bridgstock, 2011). Smith and McKinlay (2009) give the film and television industries as examples of creative industries - made up of a mix of artists and technicians characterized by organizational hierarchy and formal employment but within which innovative thinking is necessary (p. 34). But while there are opportunities in the creative sector for artists to apply skills beyond their primary activities, creative industries have not yet been able to foster widespread job satisfaction or security due to employment casualization and lower sense of flexibility, greater dissociation from their employers, and higher levels of anxiety (Comunian, Faggian & Jewell, 2011).

## 2.e “Are they any good?” – Success and Worth

Many musicians’ measure their success in music according to personal and professional goals and how they feel about their own work, the people they work with, and personal achievements (Fisher, Pearson, Goolsby & Onken, 2010; Juuti & Littleton, 2012). Many musicians also measure success based on income, and volume of work. Intrinsic and extrinsic measures of success depend largely on public support. As evidenced in online public responses to occasional news items on Newfoundland musicians, public opinion is strong and at times merciless on who is “good” or not<sup>7</sup>. There is little about music that is not subjective, including whether a musician is “gifted” or “good.” This has been confirmed by Zwaan, ter Bogt and Raaijmakers (2010) and Zwaan and ter Bogt (2009) who support Becker (1982) and Bourdieu (1996) in finding that the most assured path to success for popular musicians involves having access to managers who help lend legitimacy to musicians’ work.

Musicians’ income from performance can fluctuate depending on perceived legitimacy. Unpredictable performance revenue usually means that musicians rely on other segments of the economy to shore up their music work. St. John’s classical music ensembles often register for official charitable status, structured with boards of directors and staff, and are not for profit. Abbing (2002) writes of the interrelationship between the market and gift spheres. For example, an ensemble that has official charitable status is able to derive revenue not only from audience attendance and merchandise sales, but also from private donors and sponsors whose “gifts” are officially recognized as charitable for tax purposes. However,

---

<sup>7</sup> CBC News. (2015, August 22) Rex Goudie only N.L. performer at Eastbound Hoedown. First time performing with full band in a couple of years, says singer-turned-engineer. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/rex-goudie-only-n-l-performer-at-eastbound-hoedown-1.3200343>.



sometimes the monetary details of these transactions are kept quiet because neither party wants to be known for quantifying in dollars the value of the art (Abbing, 2002). Nevertheless, economic viability of musicians is essential to their success, and subsidization serves the dual purpose of financially enabling the continuation of the artists' work and heightening the public profile of the recipient and the donor/sponsor.

Without funding support, musicians are restricted in terms of the quality of production, whether or for how long they can tour, and what size or price of venue can be afforded for their performances<sup>8</sup>. Becker (1982) discusses how the status of artists can change depending on the level of support they achieve. Artists' work is perceived as intrinsic and creative, yet is characterized by divisions of labour, reliance on institutions and the state, conventions of how music should sound and where it should be played, and a complex network of actors who ultimately determine artistic success. Becker (1982) states that "art worlds do not have boundaries around them" (p. 49) but that there is a network of cooperation that produces works of art. In her study tracing the careers of poets, Craig (2007a) notes the importance of cultivating professional networks to advance artists' careers, in spite of the risk of violating the principle of working as artists for art's sake.

Economic changes can lead some potential funders, including corporate and government sources, to relegate some community arts organizations to non-essential status with respect to sponsorship. Blake and Jeffrey (2000) note that local community musicians in large cities such as London, England have difficulty being recognized as meaningful

---

<sup>8</sup> CBC News. (2012, July 23) Lack of funding puts only traditional music camp in jeopardy. "She said the camp will go on this year, even if it means instructors taking a pay cut." Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/lack-of-funding-puts-only-traditional-music-camp-in-jeopardy-1.1237275>)

contributors to city and national culture and thus have more trouble accessing financial resources than more renowned artists and those located in the centre of a city's music scene. Blake and Jeffrey recommend projects and partnerships designed to foster equal access to funding, markets, and communications for all artists regardless of renown and location. DiMaggio (1983) notes that markets alone do not assure long term survival of innovative art forms that rely on smaller markets. He recommends a collective role for profit, not-for-profit and public enterprises to uphold the arts, and for government to assume greater responsibility to artists in the absence of market or private support.

Abbing (2002) notes that commercial and artistic motivations for doing artistic work may be co-dependent. Abbing finds that because artistic output is varied and often combined with other employment, it is difficult to assess the real economic contribution of artists. On what basis does government subsidize artistic work? What if an artist does not want fame or a full time career in the arts? Should the short life span of artistic careers be taken into account by funders? Artists are often reluctant to negotiate for higher pay and many are willing to work for free. As Abbing puts it, "poverty in the sense of low hourly incomes is built into the arts" (p. 149). Subsidies and incentives, he believes, may even exacerbate the problem they intend to avoid, as artists who are successful in achieving subsidies ultimately strive for state or institutional funding, rather than striving to seek out their own market. But on the other hand, he argues that it is government's duty to protect the vulnerable and the valuable – and artists are both.

Zwaan, ter Bogt and Raaijmakers (2009, 2010) and Brown (2012) find that being likeable and maintaining positive working relationships are integral to musicians' success.

Many of those relationships are with fellow musicians, not all of whom are active in music as part of their livelihood but who are engaged in some of the same work as career musicians.

The boundary-less reputation of self-employment in music, despite notoriously low pay, attracts aspiring professional musicians, potentially oversupplying the labour force of musicians, increasing competition, and holding down musicians' wages/fees. Zendel (2014) argues that the effect of unrestricted labour market entry is not only to reduce income but potentially to undermine solidarity and sense of a music community.

## **2.f Musician Health**

Musicians' careers can be slowed or halted by emotional and physical challenges for which they are frequently at risk. Musicians commonly experience performance anxiety, career anxiety due to financial uncertainty, and are at risk for physical injuries unique to their work. While not addressing the work of artists specifically, Shuey and Jovic (2013) find that workers in precarious and portfolio employment, because of temporary and non-union status, are at far greater risk of not having essential workplace health and safety needs met than full time workers.

Physical ailments, experienced by musicians, receiving considerable attention in the literature include soft tissue damage, arthritis, and hearing loss (Thom, McIntyre & Winters, 2005). When musicians who are working multiple jobs experience injury or illness, whether related to music or not, the other jobs they hold to help make ends meet may exacerbate the injury (Dawson, 2007). Numerous studies (McCready & Reid, 2007; Guptill, Zaza & Stanley, 2000; Park, Guptill & Sumsion, 2007) have recommended that health care professionals

become more aware of unique musician health problems, starting with the effect these injuries and ailments can have on one's career and life. For playing-related injuries, for example, Dawson (1996) suggests that there are ways to predict, avoid and cope with injury to ameliorate occupational disruption. Injury treatment and prevention can enable continuing to play music professionally, for enjoyment and for a continuing sense of accomplishment (Park, Guptill & Sumsion, 2007; Chen & Howard, 2004).

Vuust et al. (2010) find that performance anxiety is more prevalent in classical musicians than in non-classical musicians, owing to differences in practice regimen and performance situations. Kenny (2006) shows that performance anxiety can start as early as childhood and is often exacerbated by low moral support and frequent, subjective performance evaluations. Boucher and Ryan (2011) suggest that performance anxiety can be managed in early childhood by acclimating children to performance environments through performance frequency and repeatedly playing at the same venues. Cooper and Wills (1989) found that musicians' anxiety is an outcome of working long hours, time away from family, and negative interactions with fellow musicians.

It has been recommended that educators take a lead role in helping student musicians overcome performance anxiety (Leblanc, Jin, Obert & Siivola, 1997). Spahn, Strukely and Lehmann (2004) show the importance of higher learning programs giving more attention to treatment of anxiety and other emotional risks, which they found to be more prevalent among university student musicians than in other university disciplines. Britsch (2005) finds that young musicians are often less aware than older musicians of physical and emotional risks. He recommends that management of performance-related injury and anxiety become part of

music training. Wiggins (2011) distinguishes between performance anxiety and emotional vulnerability. Emotional vulnerability is a necessary component of artistic creativity and expression. Wiggins finds that managing emotional vulnerability in terms of directing its energy into the art can enable a greater sense of accomplishment, skill, and self-esteem.

Physical and emotional issues can overlap, as musicians experience anxiety over work conditions, including risk of physical injury due to prolonged practice and improper rest. Orchestra musicians have also been shown to experience stress from boredom (underutilization of their skills) or work overload (Parasuraman & Purohit, 2000). The unique causes of musician injuries and anxiety has led to conclusions that traditional medical diagnoses related to other occupations do not necessarily apply to musicians' work, and that greater attention in health care should be given to musician health (Chong, Lynden, Harvey & Peebles, 1989; Potter & Jones, 1995; Barton & Feinberg, 2008).

## **2.g Emotion Labour**

Musicians draw on their own emotions in creation and performance, hoping that their output evokes the desired emotional response from audiences (Anderson & Smith, 2001). Professional relationships in music are not served by normal rules governing professional behaviour in other occupations. For example, it is accepted in music (depending on the venue) that there will be alcohol consumption on the work site and that performances often happen very late at night. The spaces in which people interact in the music field are often designed to elicit emotional reactions to music. Lighting, stage set-up, and audience placement are all part of the musician's normal work space (Watson & Ward, 2013).

Hochschild's concept of "emotion work" describes how actors work to elicit in themselves emotions demanded by specific work environments (1979). She writes of the importance of actors needing to be aware of "what is owed and owing" (p. 572) in particular circumstances and to behave accordingly. Hochschild adds that suppressing feelings in difficult work situations is more challenging for workers whose job routinely involves contact with other people in emotional interactions (airline attendants and bill collectors are two of her examples) than in occupations where interpersonal relations are fewer and emotion management not as central to the work at hand (steelworkers, plumbers, chambermaids) (2012, p. 154). In these cases of "managed" emotions, Hochschild writes that workers frequently struggle in their jobs when their feelings are out of alignment with conventional behaviour dictated by their environment and people for whom they work (employers and customers). In the context of musicians' work, patrons expect musicians to perform as though they are having the time of their lives, no matter how they may be experiencing in their careers and relationships. Musicians are therefore playing by a set of rules not entirely of their choosing.

Scarborough (2012) studied musicians in order to understand their "presentation" selves – the faces they put on to underscore their music, to compensate for an unsatisfactory performance, or to favourably acknowledge an audience and a successful performance – faces that are as much a part of the performance as the music itself. Pettinger (2015) conducted ethnographic research on musicians in the U.K. and found that emotional labour and physical labour are intertwined and evident in differences in physical movement depending on where they are and their relationship to the people with whom they are working.

## **2.h Career Crossroad**

Research is increasing into the area of longevity in arts careers. Some artists are able to manage a lifetime of portfolio employment and are satisfied with work flexibility and self-management (Smeaton, 2003). But others endure only until their economic needs overwhelm their desire to remain in music as a career. Reasons for career departure have been attributed to career stress related to family, income, prolonged periods of sporadic work, the strain of holding down multiple jobs, and working non-standard hours (Bennett 2008b). Nagel (1988) finds that music career choices and outcomes are closely linked to family influences, but that early identification with music and its prolonged, intensive study could eliminate non-music career alternatives. Younger musicians prioritize intrinsic satisfaction over income. Menger (1999) notes that this balance shifts as musicians age, and that career mobility and work options diminish with age, which may explain early-age departures from music as a livelihood. Menger (2001a) also notes that artists are highly skilled and educated but seek livelihood in an oversupplied, volatile labour market that in turn will most likely keep prices down as costs remain high.

Cunningham and Higgs (2010) find that artists' income is considerably lower than the median income of all occupations, but they fare better once they undertake additional employment in arts-related fields. Alper and Wassall's study (2006) shows that there are increasing numbers of artists entering the field but that few are able to economically realize a long term career in the arts. Their study also reveals that artists experience greater income variability than other professions, and that higher education does not result in higher earnings in the arts but may increase artists' earnings potential in non-arts fields. Their study broadly

examines the working lives of artists generally, without concentrating on specific disciplines. They do not address reasons for leaving arts occupations, nor how commitment to other employment affects arts income and commitment to arts work. Nevertheless, their work shows that persistence in arts careers decreases with age, with relatively few artists working occupationally over the age of 50. However, once out of the profession, they continue to develop their skills as a form of informal learning (Green, 2001).

“Boundaryless” and “protean” careers are emergent employment concepts in work literature that are increasingly becoming associated with the work of musicians. Boundaryless work is characterized by physical as well as psychological capacity to move between jobs and occupations, while protean careers are attitude-driven, characterized by both high levels of internal values (prioritizing new opportunities over money or promotion) and self-directedness to adapt to changing demands (Segers, Inceoglu, Vloeberghs, Bartram & Hendrickx, 2008). Although boundaryless work does not necessarily imply greater employment certainty, it is characterized by skills transferrable across employers, is dependent on support from social and professional networks (Creech, 2015), and can enable self-management and increase potential for job mobility (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Cheramie, Sturman & Walsh, 2007; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006).

## **2.i Professionals, Amateurs and the Music Industry**

Andrew Abbott (1988) refers to teaching as a “pool” profession “where specialized professionals work while awaiting new demand in their own” (131). He includes musicians among these professionals who, on local scenes in the United States, saw their regular



performance employment displaced by the rise of mass media, causing many local musicians to seek employment in ancillary work including music education and community music participation. In St. John's, there are three kinds and locations of music teaching: university professor, school music teacher, and private music teacher. Private music teachers can create their own employment, whereas school and university music teachers are required to earn degrees in music and education and then compete for employment in education.

Do university degrees make a school music teacher more "professional", even though they might be less successful in landing a job in a school, than a private music teacher who has the ability, without a degree, to operate out of her/his home? Private music teaching in particular seems to closely represent what Hughes (1970) calls "amateur experimenting" which refers to practicing in a professional field without a license. He adds that rapidly-shifting career boundaries and contingencies take place in all occupations, in part due to changing technologies and new, more flexible settings of work (i.e., home as work space) (Hughes, 1994). Stebbins (1992) includes music as a field that has experienced what he calls "modern amateurism" (8) whereby music has transitioned in a process of professionalization from an act of serious leisure to one that can produce employment and income.

All musicians, particularly on the local scene, participate in a field where they are unrestricted by age, experience, or education to perform or teach privately (Frederickson & Rooney 1990) and their work is often undertaken as an additional source of part-time income. In her ethnography of the culture of amateur (non-career) musicians in an English city (with about the same population as St. John's), Ruth Finnegan (2007) notes a long continuum with frequent overlap between fully-amateur and fully-professional musicians, and focused her

study on musicians who fall close to amateur on the continuum. In so doing, she acknowledges the potential for considerable ambiguity owing to differences of distinction in the literature and among musicians themselves. Amateur/recreational musicians can have equivalent training and calibre as professionals but play for their own enjoyment and without expectation or need for pay. Professional musicians meanwhile are willing to work for free to keep up their public profile and to maintain their artistic skills. She says it was impossible for her to exclude rock bands that worked for pay. Drummond (1990) finds that music work generally is characterized by informal codes of conduct, with work often taking place in social environments among highly educated musicians with many years of expert training and varying degrees of career goals. Claiming to be a musician, therefore, might not carry the same professional weight and seriousness as claiming to be a professional in any other occupational field outside of the arts (Frederickson & Rooney, 1988).

Self-employed, freelance musicians unavoidably are intertwined in an industry of managers, agents and government who ultimately grant or deny access to resources and the marketplace (Thompson, Jones & Warhurst, 2007). In Newfoundland, musicians partly rely on industry agencies to help offset their costs of recording and travel, and agencies in turn rely on government support to provide that funding. Towse (1993) finds that musicians who are successful in their funding applications will be better able to manage their costs, but cautions that increasing funding opportunities could risk encouraging more musicians to enter the career, forcing additional downward pressure on their income. DiMaggio (2006) says there are more genres than ever competing for attention and recommends that additional work be undertaken to examine whether the effect of arts agencies is to strengthen and motivate artists,

or to fracture the arts community by fostering competition and enforcing bureaucratization of artists' work.

Not-for-profit arts organizations are sometimes accused of following the path of for-profit entities rather than supporting and promoting artists' modest objectives. Kubacki and Croft's (2005) interviews with classical and jazz musicians reveal concerns over standardization of music to please consumers. They are torn between settling for a career based on simplification of music and compromise of their artistic integrity, or settling for smaller audiences that allow artists to display more creative breadth even if for less income. Their interviewees generally feel that not-for-profit organizations operate less in the interests of creative musicians and more for those with profit motives, showing preference for the most marketable, potentially lucrative musicians.

Attempts have been made to monetarily quantify culture's contribution to the economy including, for example, how culture boosts gross domestic product due to its positive effects on tourism revenue and retail sales (Music Canada, 2012; Canadian Independent Music Association, 2013). The results are sometimes used to appeal for sponsorship and subsidization of the arts. Throsby (2001) adds that culture has many intangible qualities (for example, practices and traditions fostering social cohesion and sense of community) that should also be taken into account in order to deliver a complete picture of artists' contribution to the economy.

*Creative Newfoundland and Labrador* attempted to combine intangible and tangible contributions of artists to the province's economy. The document provides a definition of "professional" artists, derived from the agencies purported to represent Newfoundland and

Labrador artists, that casts light on dimensions of portfolio and precarious employment: that artists are self-employed, work on serial short-term contracts, have many employers, are highly skilled, highly educated, employable and flexible (*Creative Newfoundland and Labrador*, p. 19). ArtsNL has its own, more specific, definition of “professional artist” that takes into account artists’ commercial activity. Its definition includes “professional or business income” derived from art work, public presentation or performance of art work, devoting a “reasonable proportion” of time to the promotion of art work, and membership in a professional association relevant to their art work (ArtsNL, [www.nlac.ca/grants/patf.htm](http://www.nlac.ca/grants/patf.htm)). Taken together, these definitions show many ways in which artists can be classified as professional by including both intangible and tangible qualities of artists’ work. But while in some ways the definition of “professional” artist is clarified, many of the outlined features and stipulations can also apply to the work of amateur artists, given that full-time work in music is not one of the distinguishing traits of what it means to be a “professional” in the art world.

## **2.j Networks and Exchange**

Young and veteran musicians alike operate within a huge web of relationships and informal arrangements. Musicians’ narrative of their work and lives are created and sustained by a social world, with changing degrees of influence by various actors in their networks over the time of the career. As their networks change over time, so does the articulation of their values (Crossley, 2011).

Jones, Hesterly and Borgatti (1997) refer to open-ended and social (not legally-binding) contracts within networks as “network governance” and a key component of work

that is becoming more common in non-arts fields. Musicians, however, continue to view their work as distinct from the general labour force. Most artists consider their work to be more intrinsic than as a commercial commodity. But as professionals earning a living, they need their work to be both: recognized as a creative skill and worthy of remuneration - which is likely what makes public labour policy so difficult to implement and consistently enforce in the arts sectors (Oakley, 2009).

In social theory, there are different perspectives on the meaning of exchange and social interaction. Zafirovski (2001) and Crossley (2011) note Simmel's emphasis on the relationship between monetary and non-monetary factors in transactions, in particular the interrelationship between human interaction, social relations and money. Exchange thus involves a "total social phenomena" (Zafirovski, p. 28) and serves to rationalize transactions that might otherwise be obscured by close relationships. Assigning quantifiable value to something diminishes arbitrariness and qualitative differences (Zafirovski, 2001). Zelizer (2011) also notes Simmel's belief that money is "qualityless" (p. 96). His theory, says Zelizer, undermines the reality that there are multiple monies based on meaning relevant to the parties to the exchange. Money is therefore not autonomous of social ties, but is instead interdependent with "variable systems of meanings and structures of social relations" (p. 118), an assertion evidently relevant to the work of musicians.

Money, in Zelizer's (1989) terms, is defined at least in part by relationships that are beyond traditional economic formulations. On the music scene of St. John's and presumably elsewhere, musicians often borrow and lend equipment or instruments in a kind of modern day barter system. These kinds of transactions come to represent a high level of trust and solidarity

in a field where musicians' financial means may be limited. Exchanging in this way represents intimacy and mutual respect, can strengthen the reputations of both parties, and can be parlayed into future employment opportunities. Musicians' work is therefore often representative of Zelizer's (1994) assertion that there are different kinds of monies, and different kinds of exchanges not involving money.

## **2. k Theoretical Framework of the Research**

The starting theoretical point for my research is the place of musicians' work in the context of Bourdieu's (1986) concept of the convergence of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital. Bourdieu's theory posits that what is commonly called "society" is more explicitly made up of autonomous fields that integrate past experiences with the present, within which exist ongoing competition and strategizing for rewards and prominence. Each player's maneuver on the field affects the movements of other players, and the rules and boundaries of the system shift accordingly over time (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Relating this theory to the careers of musicians: musicians are self-employed and, even though most of them work in groups, they each are strategizing relationships to their own career advantage while attempting to remain members in good standing of a music "community" or music "scene" (which in this study will be used interchangeably to refer to the environment in which local musicians co-exist).

Economic capital can grant immediate access to some goods and services without any other costs, but can also require social capital in exchange. Musicians who compete for funding, or want to create an image to match their style and grow their audience, or want to

work only with the best musicians, or want to work with only their closest friends, are cultivating social capital to employ it to their greatest economic potential. Conversely, economic capital can be converted into social capital. Securing funding for a project may afford new relationships with other musicians, sound engineers, and venues that would not otherwise be accessible. Bourdieu's social capital refers to a "durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). The implication is that the best way to get ahead is by knowing the "right" people with access to resources to make that happen.

According to Bourdieu, high educational success rates for children are positively correlated with parents' educational attainment and children's exposure to fine arts, and communities were formed by shared cultural tastes informed by class (de Boise, 2016; Prieur & Savage, 2013). Bourdieu expanded his theory beyond education to encompass a wide range of knowledge and tastes, though still linked to social stratification (Lin, 1999). Bourdieu (1986) writes that cultural capital can exist in three forms. Embodied cultural capital is incorporated within the individual and represents what they know and can do, and is accessed through well-educated parents' investment in higher education. Objectified cultural capital is represented by material cultural items including books, works of art, or musical instruments. Institutionalized cultural capital refers to academic qualifications that provides a "certificate of cultural competence" and a "guaranteed value with respect to culture" (p. 50). For example, a degree from a university classical school of music may position musicians for greater likelihood of economic return on their academic investments. Bourdieu also argues that "the scholastic yield from educational action depends on the cultural capital previously invested by

the family" (p. 48) and that children with the greatest future advantages come from families that are "endowed with strong cultural capital" (p. 49).

A fourth kind of capital, symbolic capital, is implicit in Bourdieu's capital theory, represented as mutual trust that emerges from social capital, which in turn can be utilized in power and exchange relationships (Siisiäinen, 2000). Whereas cultural capital consists of acquired knowledge and skills, symbolic capital represents accumulated prestige that emerges from possessing other forms of capital (Hesmondhalgh, 2006). The distinction can seem subtle, but is important in terms of how capital is employed. Having friends for its own sake is social capital, while gaining reputation and opportunities to advance one's work from those friendships represents symbolic capital. Bourdieu (1996) distinguishes between small- and large-scale production and how the balance of capital shifts accordingly. While high levels of economic capital dominate in mass cultural production, small-scale cultural production (for example, a local music scene) involves a greater emphasis on symbolic rather than economic capital (Hesmondhalgh, 2006).

Economic capital, according to Bourdieu, is therefore at the root of social, symbolic and cultural capital, and the different capitals are convertible into one another. Criticism of his theory is based on his relationship of capital acquisition to social stratification and the belief that his theory does not adequately account for the experiences of individuals with vast economic capital who are low on cultural capital, or people whose cultural enrichment is not rooted in economic capital (Peterson & Kern, 1996).

Crossley (2011) is critical of Bourdieu's assertion that cultural and economic capital determine social relations, arguing that the minutia of capital convergence is overlooked.



Rejecting Bourdieu, Crossley believes that cultural and economic capital are derived *from* social relations and that particular circumstances in social networks result in relative degrees of capital acquisition, noting specifically that “social worlds are networks of interaction demarcated by their participants’ mutual involvement in specified activities” (p. 138). In applying his “relational sociology” to how musicians interact and cultivate their networks with relative importance, we may focus on layers of relations and develop a clearer idea of how social networks and economic capital inform one another, and of the power dynamic within a relationship.

Similarly, Throsby (2001) argues that social capital is represented by social networks that exist within communities. Not unlike Bourdieu, but writing specifically in the context of artists’ work, Throsby says that cultural capital can exist tangibly as viewable artworks, artifacts, and venues, and can exist intangibly as shared ideas, practices, beliefs and values. But he observes that different artists have their own attitudes towards earning a living from their work, ranging from those with profit motives to those who work primarily or entirely for aesthetic reasons. He adds that many artists are economically deprived and without patronage, and therefore operate based on their own initiatives to satisfy their own creative objectives without acquiring or wanting economic impediment to their art.

It has been argued that a rejection of Bourdieu’s capital theory is to deny its existence. Defenders of Bourdieu claim that his field theory opens up the possibility of incorporating relational analysis and strategic social networking (Prieur and Savage, 2013, 2011; Lin, 1999). The best compromise may therefore be to update Bourdieu while staying open to the

possibility that his assertions with respect to class may still be relevant in some ways (Lin, 1999).

## **2.1 Relevance of the Literature to this Research**

What my research sets out to accomplish that few other studies before have done is to connect these separate concentrations of preceding literature and apply them to the entire career arc from childhood to the present, so that we have a portrait of a career that is inclusive of as many issues as possible that are experienced by musicians over the course of their work and lives. Where numerous studies have reported on the importance of family and peers, my research traces the evolution of family and peer relationships through all career stages and life transitions. Literature on private, classroom and higher education for musicians has concentrated on how specialty training could do more to prepare emerging musicians for career realities. My research extends these studies by determining the reasons for and impact of acquiring higher education over the long term.

Portfolio employment and precarious work have become ubiquitous concepts across many kinds of work. Musicians, however, have long been familiar with and accept these as normal conditions of their chosen career path. My research applies much of what is known about portfolio and precarious employment to the specific context of musician employment on a local scene and the ways in which musicians adapt their creative work and make career decisions accordingly over time. These separately-researched concepts – family, peers, education, and employment – are linked together in the context of my study, one impacting another over the course of life and career.

Arts policy in government and arts agencies are designed around what is believed to be known about artists' work. Much of this data, however, stand alone as statistical summaries, are infrequently updated to account for economic changes, and are generally not comprehensively informed by local experiences. My research into the careers of several dozen St. John's musicians can meaningfully fill some of these gaps and serve as a basis for updating statistics on musician income and employment so that they can have greater relevance to future public policy and funding.

There is considerable literature on matters of musician health, some of the more common being performance anxiety and physical strain or injury. My research aims to alert readers to the drastic effect that health risks pose to musicians' careers. An injury that might seem relatively benign in some occupations – arthritis, tendonitis, vocal issues, to name a few - cause severe disruption to employment, and therefore to income, for self-employed musicians who have little or no recourse to health benefits or unemployment insurance. The implications are enormous for musicians who are familiar only with this lifelong lifestyle as an occupation and who may need to adapt quickly to a new, entirely unfamiliar occupational path.

All of these issues and more are presented against the backdrop of theoretical literature that has not commonly addressed the work of musicians specifically. Digging deeply into individual musicians' experiences and choices, and spanning the breadth of their careers and lives, will enable readers to view with clarity the many intersections between personal relationships, professional relationships, education, employment, income, and health management. It is with rich detail emerging from this study that concentrates on the work of

musicians in a specific city that we can witness emotional labour in action, and see the interaction of economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital come to life in the real world. The outcomes of this research will therefore complement and update existing literature and theory by drawing much of it together in lived experiences, and opening new avenues for additional future research into the beloved and complex world of music making.

### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

This dissertation is based on the findings of a qualitative study of 54 musicians whose income is derived in part or in whole from music performance and whose careers are based in St. John's, Newfoundland. I consider the "career" as a formal process beginning at the point when each participant either began earning income from performance and actively self-promoted as a performer or when they decided firmly to pursue a career in music by undertaking formal university study, even if they delayed earning income. Some university music students, for example, perform in extra-curricular ensembles during their years of study and are sometimes paid for their work, while others do not engage in music performance outside of their school requirements.

Other sources of income may come from other work in music or from non-music occupations, but the primary criterion for participation in this study is that the informant is routinely engaged in income-generating performance. Participants come from a cross section of genres and number of years of experience as professionals (Appendix 2). The participants are musicians whose primary genre specialty is in rock, traditional or classical music, or any subgenres related to those broad categories, or who cross over from one genre to another in the course of their work. Experience is categorized according to whether they are relatively new to the music profession (fewer than 10 years of income-earning performance) or are well established on the St. John's music scene (at least 10 years of income-earning performance).

Participant ages range from 19 to 72. The average age of participants is 36, in line with the general median age of the population of St. John's of 39.4 years <sup>9</sup>

This sample will reveal a large breadth of life and career experiences on their way to becoming career musicians, including some who have left the career. Differences and similarities are explored between, for example, young or new professional musicians (not all new musicians are young) and their more experienced counterparts, as well as across genres, gender, marital status and other features of work and lives. Conditions including family life, income, volume of work, physical or emotional stress, and many more are explored to determine their role in career affirmation, doubt, or departure.

This work examines the entire span of each musician's career from their earliest memories of music-making up to the time of their interviews for this study. The interviews were semi-structured, with all participants asked the same scripted questions, with additional unscripted questions asked as deemed appropriate based on their responses. Interviews took place individually, except in two instances where members of ensembles were interviewed together (two and three members, respectively). Each interview was supplemented with details as to the location, time of day, and other characteristics of the interview setting and participants.

#### Interview Schedule

<i>Genre/Career Phase</i>	<i>Rock/Traditional</i>	<i>Classical</i>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<10 Years Performing	11 Interviewees	9 Interviewees	<b>20 Interviewees</b>
≥10 Years Performing	16 Interviewees	9 Interviewees	<b>25 Interviewees</b>
Opted Out of Music	6 Interviewees	3 Interviewees	<b>9 Interviewees</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>33 Interviewees</b>	<b>21 Interviewees</b>	<b>54 Interviewees</b>

<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada. Retrieved from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-cma-eng.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=CMA&GC=001>

Fewer participants who opted out of the music profession were interviewed than hoped for, though many were asked to participate. Reluctance or refusal of former professional musicians to participate may limit conclusive statements that could otherwise be made about the decision to exit the music profession. Nevertheless, the nine participants in this category provided rich perspectives that offer unique experiences as well as some common characteristics. Eight of these nine participants are graduates of classical university music programs, though not all identified as classical musicians as their primary occupational genre. Only one spoke negatively of his university music education, and the others barely spoke of it at all. The educations of those contacted but who declined to participate in this study are unknown, as are their reasons for choosing not to participate. It may be that former occupational musicians who agreed to take part in this research felt disillusioned about the investment of time and money in their education with little or no opportunity for career advancement to show for it.

I refer to the music “profession” to specify participants who are committed to employment in music with at least some of that employment involving self-promoted, income-generating performance. Most participants of this research use the term “profession” in describing their work experiences in music, but its usage should also be contextualized to each participant’s experiences. One participant noted pointedly that a musician is professional only when s/he is formally contracted to perform music for payment in exchange. This is supported by literature that has investigated various aspects of performing arts (Coulangeon, Ravet & Roharik, 2005), though other literature refers to music professionals as those more simply working as freelance practitioners for at least part of their employment, without reference to

contractual labour (Dobson, 2010). Hughes (1963) described professionals of a particular field as being in “close solidarity” and “constituting an ethos of its own” (p. 657). This certainly seems to fit how musicians of my research tend to express themselves publicly. But examining his definition more closely, the distinction between professional and non-professional, and whether musicians are one or the other or neither, is clouded by his assertion that they “profess to know better than others” (p. 656). There are many highly-skilled, well-educated musicians who choose to perform only in casual settings with no interest in a music career but who may know at least as much about music and its audiences as their income-earning counterparts. So, who is professional and who is not?

For the purpose of this research, the word “professional” is used because it is commonly expressed by participants in describing much of their work, whether full time or part time, and whether work is formally contracted or verbally agreed. In this way, “professional” musicians may broaden or challenge what it means to be a professional according to other sociological literature on work and occupations. In musicians’ work, I believe some flexibility in the use of the term “profession” is therefore necessary, especially on a local scene where many musicians and other industry professionals know each other well and verbal contracts are often sufficient and normal. Furthermore, not every performance is paid in money. Musicians are well known for exchanging favours for one another, helping out friends in need, or donating their talents to particular non-paying causes. My use of the term “music profession” therefore is intended to account for all possible kinds of work and different forms of exchange.



There are several agencies based in St. John's that support the work of musicians throughout Newfoundland and Labrador that play some role in efforts to "professionalize" music by way of, for example, encouraging musicians to dedicate more attention to managing their finances, funding applications, marketing and promotion. These organizations are described in the thesis and are summarized here by way of introduction:

*MusicNL – The Music Industry Association of Newfoundland and Labrador.* This organization provides funding on a competitive application basis to musicians with paid membership. Funded projects include sound recording, touring, market access, and promotion and development. The main source of MusicNL's project funding is the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Department of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development. MusicNL has membership of more than 200 musicians and other music industry workers (including managers, venue owners and recording studios) located throughout the province.

*ArtsNL – The Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council.* This organization offers funding to artists of all disciplines throughout the province. Like MusicNL, funding is granted through a competitive application process. Unlike MusicNL, ArtsNL does not require membership. Their funding is generally available to professional artists, professional groups, and not-for-profit arts organizations. Funded projects include, among others, professional project grants, sustaining programs for professional arts organizations, community arts programs, travel, and educational programs. ArtsNL defines "professional artist" fairly flexibly as meeting some of a number of criteria including receiving professional income relevant to artistic work, public

recognition by fellow artists and industry agents by reputation, membership in arts associations, and public accessibility to their output<sup>10</sup>.

*CFM – The Canadian Federation of Musicians, Local 820* (Alternately known as *The Newfoundland and Labrador Musicians' Association*). This organization offers contractual, insurance, pension and royalty advice and services to musicians with paid membership, as well as general information and advice to non-member musicians. This is not a funding organization. Its mandate is to assist member musicians with, for example, legally-binding employment contracts, international travel visas, liability insurance, health insurance, and retirement pensions.

Most participants in this research are not members of MusicNL (which makes its membership publicly available at <http://www.musicnl.ca/members.aspx>). It is not known how many research participants are members of the CFM.

This chapter will detail the study design, participant recruitment methods, data collection and analysis. The findings are detailed in the following chapters that trace the career experiences of the participants.

---

<sup>10</sup> ArtsNL's criteria for meeting the definition of "professional artist" is available at <http://www.nlac.ca/grants/index.htm>.

### **3.a Study Rationale and Design**

The research concept emerged from absence of the arts, especially music, from literature on work and occupations, as well my observation of lack of knowledge by young musicians about to enter the field of many of the realistic career challenges faced by St. John's musicians. It is commonly known that there are some basic work requirements from the outset, including an instrument, a music teacher, and means to access to those resources. Access is typically enabled by parents and involves a substantial commitment of parental time and money over a long period. Once access is achieved, the rest of the path is paved by a complex network of relationships that changes as the student ages, gains expertise and experience, and transitions into a career of music-making. But the career needs more than just musical and educational tools and interpersonal skills. It demands the continuing support of whoever is central to the musician's life at any given moment through successive career phases.

Careers in music might eventually diverge down other music-related paths including composing, sound engineering, management, or education. But the essential core experience of every musician's career development is performance. Expertise on an instrument (I include the voice as an instrument) is central to what is involved in a music career. Evolving artistic proficiency and successive public performances garner attention of key figures in the music industry. As young people, affirming events can include praise from music teachers or a prize in local community music competitions. As musicians age, key figures change and can include musician friends who want to collaborate professionally, managers who believe they can advance the musician's career for their own and the musician's professional gain, media who

attract attention to the musician's work, and audiences who ultimately provide the most fundamental resource required - revenue.

I believe that comprehensive inclusion of every aspect of musicians' work is necessary to illuminate their career experiences, goals and decisions. It is not enough to understand only how much money they make in music, what kinds of work their days consist of, what projects they are working on, or what their goals are. That information must be completed in relation to a very long trail that begins for nearly all participants in childhood. This is why a method is employed in this research that links life, career and key decisions. Becker (1982) emphasizes collective action of all actors in the process of art creation. My research broadens his claim by examining all factors that are component in the careers of musicians, not just in the creation of music. How musicians sustain their primary skills in music alongside ancillary jobs is of interest in my research, which not just describes their experience but also asks whether portfolio work necessarily means greater precariousness than single-job work. The role of education will be also be explored in terms of the ways local musicians prepare for the best opportunities for employment in music or for alternative careers, and whether music education adequately addresses issues of portfolio employment, low pay and music career attrition.

Seeking knowledge of the work of musicians first involved an extensive review of the literature to determine if similar studies had previously been undertaken. There are countless media interviews with musicians that concentrate on specific projects, and important works tracing the history of genre development and commercial authenticity (Peterson, 1978, 1997; Bryson, 1996). But I was unable to locate extensive qualitative research that traces the entire life and career experiences of musicians in any community in North America.

My research will coalesce around some of the methodologies of existing community-centred research to derive a representation of the work of local professional musicians. While Shank's (1994) ethnography painted a picture of the historical development of a local music scene, my narrative examination will present a current view of the St. John's music profession directly from the perspective of income-earning musicians. Where Finnegan's (2007) ethnography included active amateur musicians, my research focuses on the work of self-identified professional musicians. Where Vaag, Giæver and Bjerkeset (2014) focused on a small number of award-winning musicians, I concentrate on a collection of musicians at various points in their career regardless of renown, from emergence onto the scene to exit from the scene, and I draw on significantly more participants. Where Umney and Kretsos (2015) concentrated on jazz musicians attempting to emerge onto the scene, I examine more musicians across several genres and span the breadth of a music career. Drawing on the value of those studies, I attempt to trace the complete trajectory of a music career in St. John's. Furthermore, my research outcomes may connect with other literature whose concentration has been on what musicians do, the physical or emotional issues they endure, and how hard they work. I want this study to lead to a clear understanding of how they *became* musicians, and the circumstances that led to key decisions along their career trajectories.

### **3.b Inclusion Criteria and Recruitment**

It does not seem possible to find two perfectly identical careers in music, as most – especially on the local scene – are comprised of a variety of work, rooted in self-employment and emerging from unique personal and professional experiences. But the one activity all

musicians engage in at some point is performance. Since this is the lone sure common thread linking all musicians' work, I decided that this would be a requirement for participation in this study. Musicians who teach for a living and never or rarely perform started on their journey as music educators having learned to sing or play an instrument. Musicians who work primarily in a field other than music will have had at least some experience as performers, even if only as children performing for lessons with their teachers. And there are musicians who have never taken a lesson or who have never aspired to a career in music but who have on their own become proficient in singing or playing an instrument, for their families or small private gatherings. I therefore define a musician as someone who can sing or play an instrument and has performed in any capacity, no matter what their eventual focus in a music career (for example, composition, sound engineering, or education), or if they have pursued a career in music at all.

Specifically for the purpose of this research intended to detail musicians' employment, participants will have had to be actively seeking paid work in performance and promoting themselves as performers, even if they hold multiple other music-related and non-music forms of employment. This is consistent with Craig's (2007a) criteria for including participants in her research on the careers of poets. Active seeking and promotion includes appealing for publicity through professional websites, social media and traditional mass media, as well as on posters placed throughout the city. Musicians who do not actively promote themselves as wage-earning performers are excluded from this study. For example: classroom music teachers who do not perform, or who do not promote their performances as paid activity, and do not rely on a paying audience for part of their economic livelihood are not included. At least

partial dependence on performance income that is actively promoted is required for inclusion in this research. Performance includes singing, playing instruments, conducting ensembles, and recording commercially-available albums. In choosing this common feature, I could then discover how performance – here defined as the central act in becoming a musician – would compare to other sources of employment in terms of time and income.

The second criterion is that participants' careers must be based in St. John's. That is to say that they live in St. John's even if they tour frequently to perform outside of the city or province. This would lend weight to the experience of living in this city as wage-earning musicians and lead to questions of why they continue to live here and not someplace else with potentially bigger audiences, access to more lucrative markets, and easier geographical access to other markets.

Given that this study potentially is setting a precedent at least in North America by way of the number of participants sought with an objective of illuminating the career experiences of musicians, I decided from the start to concentrate the study on musicians who participate most frequently in the genres of rock, traditional and classical music. Those genres were chosen for two reasons. First, they collectively represent the largest population of wage-earning musicians in St. John's and are genres among which there is frequent crossover. Second, there are many sub-genres within each of those broad categories which I hoped would capture musicians who, for instance, identify more specifically with folk-rock, Celtic rock, punk rock and so on. That objective was made clear to prospective participants in my call for interviewees. No participants took issue with these classifications. A few in the pre-interview screening by e-mail mentioned that they have participated in several genres, sometimes

concurrently, but otherwise unequivocally identified as one of the three broad classifications I presented.

A few participants questioned why the study did not include musicians of Newfoundland and Labrador whose careers are based outside of St. John's. The reason for concentration on St. John's musicians is twofold. First, I wanted to concentrate the study on St. John's as a modest-sized city, geographically distant from other main cities of North America, and a chief hub of music performance and music production in the province. This is not to deny the existence of exceptional performance and recording scenes in other communities in the province. It is simply that St. John's by itself offers considerable diversity of genres, experiences and competitors in the same community and is the locale of the offices of the province's main funding agencies. The hope is that either I or another researcher will use this study as a starting point to use for comparative purposes in understanding the experiences of musicians elsewhere in similar-sized cities throughout North America, or will expand upon it to include genres and communities outside of this study's scope. The second reason for my choice simply has to do with cost and time. Newfoundland is one of the largest islands in the world and has hundreds of communities. It was important for me to meet in person with musicians in settings of their choosing. Scheduling interviews throughout the province would not have been practical within the time constraints of this study, and would also have led to outcomes less concentrated and definitive than I hoped for.

The first call for participants was sent to the office of the Music Industry Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (MusicNL), which then sent my request by email to its membership of more than two hundred musicians. The same call was posted on my personal



website, my Facebook page, and my Twitter page on the same day. After receiving more than 30 favourable responses within the first week, I was able to discern which cells of the interview matrix required additional outreach and which had received abundant replies. Given that the lowest numbers of initial respondents were in the genres of traditional/folk and classical music, I next submitted my call for participants to the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra (NSO), Memorial University of Newfoundland's (MUN) School of Music, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Folk Arts Council. The latter generated no responses, but responses from the NSO and the School of Music were favourable and nearly completed my required populations. In an attempt to fill the remaining populations of active musicians, I next resorted to my professional e-mail list of fellow musicians, slightly revising the call for participants to include genres not quite yet fully covered.

The most difficult population to reach was of musicians who had abandoned careers in music. In order to trace the entire career arc and to more completely discuss the theme of career reevaluation and retirement, I felt it was important to gather more respondents of this population. This would also determine how or whether themes emerging from earlier stages of the career had changed at the latest stage. There is no association of former wage-earning musicians. They generally left the scene very quietly with little or no fanfare or even an announcement. Tracking them down became a per-individual effort of personal e-mail contact as I asked friends and colleagues and poured through my own recollections of musicians who are no longer active on the scene. Requests to MusicNL in this regard went unanswered. I did, however, reach out to 30 musicians who were familiar to me by reputation and who I knew, or had learned from others, had left music in favour of alternative careers. Thirteen of those

musicians did not respond to my requests for interviews. Of the seventeen who responded, all agreed to participate, but eight gradually dropped out of contact in the process of trying to schedule our meetings. One had scheduled a meeting with me months in advance, cancelled just two hours before, and did not respond to my request to reschedule. I can only assume, as someone who once changed careers myself, that it is difficult if not unpleasant to discuss a career that for any number of reasons did not work out according to plan. Nevertheless, nine former career musicians did participate and offered extraordinary information as presented in chapter nine.

The call for participants stated that interviews were estimated to last between 45 and 60 minutes. Most were kept within that range, but several ran longer, ranging from one hour to three hours. The shortest interview was 35 minutes. Shorter interviews were due either to the participant's busy work schedule restricting the length of our discussion time or simply to their brief responses. The lengthiest interviews were extraordinary to me because of the comfort those participants had with the interview process, the research purpose, and the complete freedom and abundant detail they seemed eager to share.

A total of 54 participants (32 men, 22 women) were recruited – 23 rock musicians (18 men, 5 women), 10 traditional musicians (7 men, 3 women), and 21 classical musicians (7 men, 14 women). Of note, gender varies by music genre, with more males in rock music and more females in classical music, although the overall distribution of men and women regardless of genre is in line with available estimations of employment in music by

gender<sup>11</sup>. Not surprisingly, all classical performers were trained in classical music, whereas 20% of traditional performers were trained classically, and approximately 40% of rock performers were trained classically.

	All Subjects	Rock	Traditional	Classical
	N = 54	N = 23	N = 10	N = 21
Age Mean	36.4	34.4	38.3	37.4
Age Range	19 to 72	19 to 72	25 to 66	22 to 66

The average age of participants is 36.4 years. Forty-one (75.9%) range in age from 19 to 44 years. Only nine (16.7%) are age 45 years and older, and only four (7.4%) are in their 60s and 70s. There were no participants in the age range of 55 to 64 years.

All participants were given a choice of meeting location - my home, their home (which is also often their place of business), their office (if not in their home) or another venue of their choosing. Twenty-seven participants opted for public venues, almost all of which were pubs or coffee shops, with two taking place in restaurants. Six were interviewed in my home. Nineteen participants were interviewed in their homes and two in their offices located outside of their homes. I found that those 21 participants who were interviewed in their normal environments of home or office were most at ease. Perhaps they were appreciative of my going through the extra effort to meet with them on their turf, or perhaps they felt more comfortable speaking with me at home where their career and life intersect routinely. In any case, my sense that those interviews were more engaging, emotional, provocative and detailed, appeared to affirm Becker's (1998) assertion that the closer a researcher gets to the immediate

---

<sup>11</sup> Service Canada reports that 61.9% of musicians in Canada are men ([http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/qc/job\\_futures/statistics/5133.shtml](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/qc/job_futures/statistics/5133.shtml)), while my survey is comprised of 59.3% men. There is no breakdown by genre of music.

surroundings of the participants, the more precise, revealing and meaningful will be the descriptions of the conditions that shape their careers. Fourteen interviews took place during the evening, and forty took place on mornings or afternoons, all scheduled according to the informants' availability. Semi-structured interviews and some open-ended questioning in a setting most comfortable and convenient for the participants also seemed to evoke a greater sense of trust and open rapport than obtained with participants interviewed elsewhere (Fontana & Prokos, 2007; Weiss, 1994).

All interviews were recorded using a battery-operated Sony ICD-PX333 audio recorder. No notes were taken during the interviews. Immediately following each interview, however, I wrote notes detailing the time of day, setting, and general outcome of our interaction. I transcribed the interviews soon after they took place. All elements of data collection - scheduling, recording, transcribing and analysis - were carried out only by me. The recordings were uploaded to my personal computer to VLC Media Player and played back at reduced speed through headphones to facilitate transcribing. The computer is located, and all transcribing took place, in my office at my home and no one else was present. Only one interview at a time was uploaded, then transcribed, and then removed from the computer. Transcriptions were prepared using Microsoft Word and each participant coded with a label indicating genre, length of music career and numerical order of each successive participant:

- T = Traditional; R = Rock; C = Classical
- Fewer than 10 years in income-earning performance = 1
- 10 or more years in income-earning performance = 2

For example, T2.4 means that the participant's primary genre is in traditional (T) music, the participant has been a professional musician for more than ten years (2) and is the fourth

participant in this category (4). Interviewee codes, and the date, time and location of each interview were summarized on an Excel spreadsheet. Signed consent forms are stored in a locked file cabinet drawer in my office.

Every interview began with some dialogue, the formality of which varied slightly depending on whether the participant and I were familiar with one another as fellow musicians. In cases where there was familiarity, I informed them of the purpose of the study and my role in it in the same way as I did with all other participants. I assured them of privacy and that no one other than I would ever hear the interviews or read the transcripts. I further assured them that in the event a quote of theirs was used in my completed manuscript, their names would be changed to a first-name-only pseudonym not resembling their real names, and that no other descriptions would risk revealing their identity. Most participants indicated that they did not care whether I used their real names or not, revealing both their openness to the process and their strong desire for their voice to be heard in this research. Nevertheless, only single-name pseudonyms are used in this thesis. Pseudonyms were removed and replaced with “Participant” in cases where I felt the data was especially sensitive and risked identifying the informant. A few participants told me they were grateful for the assurances of privacy, especially those not previously known to me who may have been slightly less trustful of the process and of my objectives. All interviews ran smoothly and, I believe, their freedom of expression was facilitated by the opening question asking them to reflect on their earliest experiences in music.

I believe the candor of our pre-interview dialogue, in addition to allowing participants the choice of time and location for the interview, helped foster a sense of openness in their

responses. Furthermore, all musicians are well-practiced in securing media attention in any format. There is a great deal of competition for attention on radio airwaves, local television and online media. Musicians have a lot to say, and their work demands self-promotion and freedom of expression. I thus believe this core nature of musicians' work was particularly helpful in creating a body of informants skilled in communicating their experience.

### **3.c Data Collection**

The interviews were semi-structured. Leaving the door open to additional questioning outside of the script served several functions. First, it invited participants to elaborate on their unique experiences as much as they wanted. Second, their responses, particularly to unscripted questioning, reminded me constantly that my prior knowledge of the music profession was limited. Participant responses enlightened me as a musician, researcher and educator as much as I hope they will inform the reader. Furthermore, open-ended and unscripted follow-up questions served to restore the interview to a more conversational interaction and yielded a more informative outcome than, say, open-ended fixed questioning without follow-through questions (Weiss, 1994). In cases where the participant and I were unknown to each other, open-ended and unscripted questioning eased feelings of unfamiliarity and distrust that may have existed prior to the start. All of the participants were set at ease, especially by the first question that invited them to reflect on their childhood experiences with music. The interviews were structured in a way that invited every participant to speak autobiographically and frankly in relaxed interactional, informal exchanges, getting to the core task of qualitative interviewing which is to establish a comfortable relationship with the participants (Shaffir &

Stebbins, 1991), and to give participants a sense that they are constructing meanings of their experience on their own terms (Mason, 2002).

My perspective as a musician was at the start a minor cause for concern, calling into question my objectivity in interpreting the data. My position in the music community is in many ways not unlike that of many of the participants no matter what their age, gender or genre. I struggled to carve out a reputation as a musician and have tried ceaselessly to garner and keep the attention of local mass and online media on my work with a huge range of successes and non-successes. I feel that my previous and ongoing experiences have enhanced my ability to understand and validate the experiences of the participants (Wolcott, 2001). My follow-up questions to the scripted ones allowed me to set aside my own preconceived notions of musicians' lives and enabled my participants to present realities that greatly extended my prior knowledge and appreciation of musician work. They trusted me as a musician/researcher because I made sure they knew that I trusted and valued their insight and information (Van Maanen, 1988).

My musician/researcher perspective necessitated reflexivity, an important process that would help me understand my place in the research as a participant in the world of musicians, as well as someone with a responsibility to be an unbiased researcher of a field in which I have worked for more than fifteen years. There were moments, particularly when interviewing peers and colleagues well-known to me, when I felt I had to take extra measures of self-awareness in order to ensure that the interviews were not hindered in any way. For example, I was very much aware when I was interviewing a colleague, friend or stranger. I had to take care that the interviews were neither overly informal nor overly dispassionate and formal. In

my study, the participant is the observer/informant, while I too am an observer and in some ways an additional informant to the research. Preparing myself in advance of the meetings, and informing each participant of my background was not only a process of full disclosure but also a means of adding context to the interviews. My place as an insider-researcher and the reflexive process is, as May (2015) puts it, a way of ensuring a “more rigorous social science” accounting for “presuppositions” that might be built into the research (p. 402), and serving to elaborate and more fully explain the theory and work at hand (Willis, 1997), thereby increasing the validity of the study (Trainor & Graue, 2014). Revealing my place as a fellow musician, and opening with a personal question requiring recollections of childhood as a starting point for tracing a career path brokered a sense of mutual comfort and relationship, heightened my interest in my informants’ perspectives, and resulted in engaging, dynamic conversation.

Each participant was asked the same series of 22 scripted questions (Appendix 1.d). Their answers to the first 21 were open-ended and usually enabled additional questions if, for example, a response was not clear to me, if I wanted them to elaborate, or if they raised a topic not brought up by other participants which I felt would be informative to the research. The 22<sup>nd</sup> question in closing consisted of a series of categorical, closed-ended questions seeking information on gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, other work besides music, highest level of education and income from all sources of employment. A scripted question was asked of all participants as to whether they perceive theirs or fellow musicians’ music careers to be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way by gender. Most participants were not responsive to the question at all. The topic does, however, span a section of eleven pages in what I feel is a



very thorough and interesting section, and I have connected it to as many areas elsewhere in the dissertation as possible where I, or my respondents felt it to be relevant.

All 54 participants were presented with the consent form (Appendix 1.c) in advance of their participation and again at the site of the interview upon their verbal agreement to participate. At the interview site, they were required to sign the consent form in advance of questioning and were advised that they could choose not to answer any one or more questions and/or stop the interview at any time. No participant withdrew from the interview. The only question with which participants were reticent was with respect to estimated earnings. Six participants chose not to respond to this question, claiming either to not know their income or preferring not to disclose it. It is common from my experience as a self-employed musician to withhold information regarding fees charged to clients. It may have to do with competition, or not wanting to know how one's fees and income compare to others performing similar work. This may also be typical of other fee-for-service occupations.

### **3.c.i. Qualitative Analysis**

Following transcription of all interviews, responses were copied and coded into question-specific Word documents. The responses for each were organized by pseudonym, age, gender, music genre and years of experience. This facilitated comparisons and contrasts across the spectrum of participant demographics and made it easier to locate files when preparing the literature review and research findings. Common themes were colour-matched, while especially salient and richly-articulated responses were highlighted in bold font. Quotes

chosen for the thesis were italicized. Responses were further assimilated into tables (discussed in the following section) for summarization and quick references.

The research is based on an emergent process that permits themes and theoretical relevance to grow from the musician narratives. I began the interview process with a broad range of musician experiences in order to discover if common traits, expected outcomes, or new ideas emerged from our discussions. In addition to coding, I noted the setting of each interview in order to determine if location had any perceptible impact on the length of discussion and comfort level of the participant. It did seem, for example, that the most detailed, thoughtful and frank responses happened when interviews took place in participants' homes. This is likely because they were more comfortable and expressive in their home setting and did not appear to have an appointment elsewhere at the time, whereas several participants who opted to meet in public or in their office tended to be on their way to or from other meetings, a little more distracted by the time and surrounding people, and their responses slightly more brief and direct.

Throughout the months-long interview schedule I kept field notes of conversations with and observations of other musicians and the music profession in general in order to compare and contrast those revelations with the scheduled interviews. It usually happened that my field notes supported the interview outcomes. There were no instances where field notes entirely contradicted interview findings. Depending on where and when observations happened, field notes were written shorthand on a pad and later transcribed, or voice recorded immediately following the observation.

To supplement the interviews, I attended numerous concerts of local musicians as well as public meetings held by MusicNL. MusicNL holds periodic “town hall” information sessions for musicians at a local pub and holds an annual conference that includes performances and career-related information sessions. I wrote field notes of my observations and audio-recorded many of the public meetings. These were transcribed from hand-written notes into Word according to genre and general themes for quick reference when similar themes arose from the interviews. That information is referenced in some of my analysis and commentary throughout this thesis.

It is difficult to precisely compare income, genre and gender characteristics of my participants because accurate and current statistics on professional musicians are often hidden among such details of the work of artists in general, or are qualified for reasons having to do with challenges in tracking their employment in music when so many other employment factors are involved. Nevertheless, for comparative purposes between the outcomes of my research and national measures, I reference data from the 2011 National Household Survey and Labour Force Survey and compiled in the summary document *A Statistical Profile of Artists and Cultural Workers in Canada* and from the most recent available statistics from Service Canada, both of which offer some useful insight into the work of musicians nationally, though not by province.

### **3.c.ii. Quantitative Analysis**

Though qualitative interviews are the primary source of data collection and analysis, some quantitative data analysis was additionally performed, using SPSS (version 22.0), in

order to present a visual summary of musicians' detailed descriptions of their experiences. The demographic characteristics and some other responses of the entire sample were described and comparisons made among the three music genres. Descriptive characteristics for continuous data included mean (standard deviation) and range. Demographics were described as N (%). Comparisons among the three music genres for continuous data were performed using student *t*-test, and for categorical data (for example, age, gender or educational level) using chi squared test.

### **3.d Conclusion**

Every reasonable precaution was taken in seeking participation for this study to avoid risk of bias. This included full disclosure to ICEHR as well as to my participants of my dual roles as a St. John's musician and researcher seeking to glean far more knowledge about the career span of musicians than I held. The rich outcomes of the study, detailed in the following chapters, were facilitated by several factors including musicians' comfort in interview settings, my establishing a rapport with them from the start, conversational-style semi-structured questioning, and setting the interviews in a location and at a time of my respondents' choosing. Even though there was a high likelihood that many participants would be known to me personally and/or professionally, the risk of bias was reduced by appealing for participation through the general memberships of several musician-based institutions.

I believe my researcher-insider position and semi-structured interviews achieved a significant objective of qualitative work - which is, according to Gubrium and Holstein (2012), to attain the highest degree of authenticity by providing "an atmosphere conducive to

open communication” and helping participants feel that they “are as much constructive practitioners of experiential information as they are repositories or excavators of experiential knowledge” (p. 32). It was clear in these interviews that the more comfortable the interviewees, and the more they felt they were contributing to an important process, the more detailed the information they provided. This was the desired outcome - the researcher and interviewee both serving as active participants in a process of a deepening, unfolding narrative (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2003).

What follows, therefore, is a rigorous and reflexive approach with detailed interview results that inform the understanding of the complete course of career experiences of musicians whose work is based in St. John’s, Newfoundland. It is hoped that this comprehensive thesis examining the intersection of their careers and lives will enhance existing scholarly literature, inform prospective and current professional musicians, the music industry and the public, and paint a clear, realistic picture of how and why musicians become and remain committed to work that is in some respects notoriously precarious and not remunerative.

## **Chapter Four: Becoming a Musician**

Music as an occupation is distinctive because of the ways it is identified, nurtured, structured and developed, already bearing some of the hallmarks of a career even in early childhood. Most participants of my research told of starting music lessons at an early age. They were immediately introduced to tasks and processes that would become necessary to uphold throughout their forthcoming careers in music: scheduling lessons and practice time, preparing for performances, and following performance protocols including adopting clothing, facial expressions and posture appropriate to the instrument and occasion. Many participants who were self-taught or learned music by growing up in a home of musicians modeled their performance and creative styles after favourite artists or family members they admired from an early age. Though structured differently than weekly scheduled music lessons outside of the home, self-taught participants also demonstrate methodical, concentrated study and practise of music from an early age.

Career success in music will eventually come to depend on subjective opinions of others, but many participants of this study were committed to music very early by parents who had little or no training in, or knowledge about, music. Young people become objectively committed to music, sometimes independently of their own initial volition, by parents who invest thousands of dollars in instruments and lessons, adjust their own schedules around their children's music regimen, and thereby develop their own stake in their child's music learning (Dai & Schader, 2002). Parents also shop carefully for the teacher they trust to be the best artistic and personality fit for their child. Few if any other occupations involve so much advance thought, care, attention and risk-taking by families on behalf of a young child whose

continuing interest in, and commitment to, music remain to be seen. This is why childhood choices and parents' actions in the early life of their child are being considered here as components of the forthcoming music career.

Practice and lesson times are often directed towards goals not unlike later career goals in music: impress the teacher, please the parents, show off to friends, win a competition. In order to achieve those goals, young musicians need to learn to balance their music work with their schoolwork. Achieving balance between music and non-music work is another characteristic that will feature prominently through subsequent music career phases. Those opportunities and goals are likely to be provided and enabled by parents' moral and material support. This is not to suggest that parents need to be wealthy in order for their child to become engaged in music. The narratives of my respondents show that many families of musicians are not wealthy but manage to invest as much as possible in the best instruments, teaching and opportunities. Three key elements – family, competition and income – are thus present at the earliest career moments in music and continually feature in some of the most important decisions musicians will make throughout their music careers.

This chapter will examine the earliest moments of becoming a musician, revealing the people, settings and events central to the lives of young musicians, and will trace participants' earliest recollections of music through to their decision to pursue music as an economic livelihood. Most participants refer to a combination of parents, teachers, and peers as among their greatest influences. But it will also be seen that young musicians make key decisions somewhat independently.

Several general stages along the career continuum are identifiable. Stages are not definitively outlined because some participants' recollections are vague as to when they happen, each experience is unique, and transitions between career and life phases often overlap (MacNamara, Holmes & Collins, 2008; Juuti & Littleton, 2012). Some participants say that their commitment to music as an occupation coincided with their earliest recollections of music, while others would wait much longer before deciding to work in music even though they had studied music for years. Therefore, the outline below is for general categorization and allows for considerable overlap:

### **Earliest Recollections of Music**

First experiences with music generally take place within two general life phases that for the purposes of this study are defined as:

- Childhood (up to and including 12 years of age);
- Adolescence (high school age – 13 to 18 years of age)

### **Confirmation of Music Skills**

This second moment can be loosely categorized into the same general childhood and adolescent stages as for earliest recollections. Confirmation of skills and potential will be seen to more involve teachers and peers as young musicians age and their social world widens.

### **Considering a Career in Music**

This final key moment in becoming a musician is arguably the most significant for all participants. For young musicians, a decision is made at some point to transition childhood and adolescent learning of music into their wage-earning occupation. This step involves



someone of influence and authority confirming that their musical skills are strong enough to viably pursue a music career. Parents are often central to this process as the first enablers of entry into music, whose continuing moral and financial support is required. As children mature in life and in music, they often develop close relationships with either their private or classroom music teacher.

#### **4.a Earliest Recollection of Music**

Approximately two out of every three participants (68.5%) said that their earliest memory of music happened before the age of nine years, with more classical musicians (85.7%) reporting memories of music from such an early age. This might have to do with scheduled weekly lessons outside of the home tending to start sooner than for those who practise in other genres. Nevertheless, more than half in all genres (52.2 % of rock musicians and 70% of traditional musicians) told of their earliest music memories happening before the age of nine years, speaking to the significance to career development of music exposure and training happening at a young age.

Approximately three out of every seven participants (44.4%) say that they always knew they wanted to have a career in music, even in early childhood. Another one-third of participants said that they decided to pursue music as a career during their high school years. These findings are similar across genre, except for traditional musicians. Four of the ten traditional musicians interviewed said that they did not decide on a career in music until after high school. The sample size of this genre is smaller than for rock and classical, making it difficult to draw any firm conclusions as to why this might be the case, especially in

Newfoundland and Labrador where there is a long tradition of music rooted in traditional styles. What is also known about traditional music in Newfoundland, though, is that it is often regarded as a genre to be shared with and among the general population (Breslin, 2011). Because of the popularity and casual settings of traditional music sessions, it might be more difficult to distinguish between professional and non-professional musicians and therefore more difficult to establish a career apart from performing non-professionals.

Half of participants, consistent across genres, say that their greatest career influences were their parents, and another 20% named parents and teachers together as their greatest music career influences. These outcomes are unsurprising given the earliest sources of encouragement and musical resources in young musicians' lives.

#### **4.a.i Childhood (up to and including 12 years of age)**

##### *Home*

All participants were asked to recall their earliest memories of music in their lives. Forty-three (79.6%) specifically recalled that their earliest musical experiences happened in childhood (up to and including the age of twelve years). Thirty-nine of those 43 (90.7%) said that their parents were a significant part of their earliest musical memories. For participants whose first music experiences happened in childhood, there appear to be two general circumstances:

1. Non-musician parents “put” their children in music lessons for their child’s first extra-curricular activity;
2. There was a pre-existing musical tradition in the household.

Though the outcomes can be broadly categorized in this way, it is not a given based on the interviews that a child who grew up in a household of one or more musicians would later decide to pursue music as a career. Nor is it a given that children who grew up in non-musical homes would become less successful or less certain in their career choice. Significant across all narratives are the ways in which music learning was fostered in young people in a home – their parents’ home and/or their teachers’ homes - regardless of the parents’ own musical knowledge, reasons for purchasing an instrument, or enrolling their children in music lessons to begin with.

*“Joan”*

**Well, as any good parent, my Mom put me in piano when I was, like, five. And that was just sort of a thing. She was raised in a rural area, and like any good kid she did a couple of years of piano, sort of learned how to read music. And when her oldest turned five, it was like “Are you ready for piano?” Me being me, I went, “Okay, sure.” And I continued with piano and I was made to practise a half hour a day, five days a week from day one. Made by my parents! My mom sat beside me every day. I’m not gonna lie, there were tears that first year (*laugh*). But we stuck with it and I really enjoyed it. And then I was about eleven and I decided I loved piano.**

*“Grace”*

**We were always made to sing in front of the Christmas tree.**

*“Bruce”*

**Well, I don’t think I ever considered it as a career until I started playing when I was, like, six. I was kind of forced into piano lessons. My sister was also doing piano lessons at the time. And I just kept going with that.**

These recollections are comparable to the experiences of many other participants whose earliest meaningful music experience happened in childhood, confirming that music is an occupation to which many young people are often objectively committed by their parents at an early age. Descriptions such as “put,” “made to” or “forced” into music indicate that some children are at best reluctant participants at the start and their parents make the initial

commitments for them without much discussion or alternatives, perhaps indicative of parents' desire for prestige or status in showing off their cultured, talented child to others. However, the children themselves would next decide on their own, even at a very early age, whether to seriously continue with music. Some described their start in music as never having been a conscious decision, saying that music and their desire to pursue it were always present, and part of their everyday taken-for-granted life.

*“Harry”*

**There was never a point where I was like, “Yes, this is what I’m going to do.” It was kind of an emergent thing that happened in my life.**

*“Cindy”*

**I don’t know that I can even... I just, like, grew in. I did ‘Music for Young Children,’ and then piano lessons, and started (*instrument*) in Grade 5, and (*instrument*) in Grade 7. It was just... What else do you do?**

Earliest music experiences for most participants intimately involved adult family members they looked up to, and usually were pleasurable, fun events: kitchen parties, parents singing along to pop classics on the radio while driving on family vacations, playing piano or fiddle for family after Sunday dinner, being asked to stand on the table to sing for their parents' friends at late night parties, hearing their mother singing quietly to herself while working around the house. There are numerous such examples of experiences that established a deep, personal, family association with the music.

*“Darrell”*

**My grandfather played the fiddle. And he would love to tell you the story that he sat me up on his knee and taught me to play my first fiddle tune.**

*“Gene”*

**When we were growing up there was always parties and everybody would have a party piece. And my party piece with all the family, with all the adults... my mother and father I remember used to sing, (*singing*) “Juanita, Juanita,” ... and I used to play “Für Elise.”**

*“Tracey”*

**I was very young. Probably three or four years old and standing on one of those big, old record players. Those long brown record players with the LP on one side, and the other side would have a radio. And standing up and holding on to that. It was definitely a folk song or something. Most likely, knowing my Mom, it was (*singing*) “Oh Mary, This London’s a wonderful sight.” That’s the first song I ever remember, and that was my Mom’s favourite song.**

Most early experiences were like these - highly social and taking place in intimate, comfortable, personal, attractive surroundings that gave young musicians a sense of freedom, independence, control, pride and self-confidence, complete with a little audience exposure (usually family members and adult family friends). Music demands a great deal of a young child’s attention, and other details adults might take for granted can make for overwhelmingly positive associations to music for impressionable young musicians. Ongoing support and interest in the home setting seem to enhance their earliest music experiences and enable a strong attachment to music. This is consistent with the findings of Doxey and Wright (1990) in their study of sixty young children and the impact of parental encouragement and children’s musical aptitude and commitment. The presence of a grandfather, of parents singing, the inviting colours of a room, cooking smells from the kitchen while practising, and other characteristics of the environment seemingly external to music are vividly recalled and seem to play at least a subconscious role in commitment to music.

Early attachment to music seems to be independent of whether participants’ parents were themselves musicians. Twenty-five (46.3%) participants described music pre-existing in their home before they started to learn music. These included older siblings taking lessons first, parents singing along to music on the radio, family social events where music and dancing were prominent, or family members playing music and rehearsing at home. But the

other twenty-nine (53.7%) participants did not describe their earliest memories in those contexts.

Non-musical parents without contacts in music may have little knowledge of what kind of instrument to buy or what teacher to hire. Purchasing a new instrument is therefore an enormous and risky investment, as is selecting a teacher whose style and personality may or may not suit a child's as-yet-untapped interest in music. In these cases, parents' commitment to buying instruments, attending recitals and competitions, driving children to lessons, and so on are shown in this study to be every bit as influential in reinforcing commitment to music at an early age as for participants who grew up in a musical household. What is important, regardless of pre-existing musical tradition is the overt presence of strong, nurturing encouragement and support of the child's early interests (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde & Whalen, 1993; Bloom, 1985; Freeman, 1985 & 1991; Sosniak, 1990).

### *The Teacher*

Twenty-seven (50%) participants stated that their development in music was most influenced by someone other than, or in addition to, parents or family members. Of those, 24 are presently active as professional musicians. This suggests that parents' musical experience, and whether there is a strong musical presence in the home, do not entirely determine career commitment. Some narratives indicate that the setting of their earliest experiences in music featured most prominently in their commitment.

#### *"Karen"*

**I was always told my parents saw me with a real interest in music. At the age of 6, Mom took me to (*teacher*). I started voice with her at her mother's house. I was her first**

**student. I knew right away that I loved her and I loved that house. Their house is just really interesting texture-wise, and really cool. So I was very happy there and loved her right away, and we're still very good friends.**

Evoking feelings and words having to do with love, happiness and friendship, Karen's experience shows that material surroundings and a close bond between student and teacher can result in commitment to music at a young age. Relationships with private music teachers are especially relevant in music commitment. A young child is being left alone in the care of an older musician in his/her home or studio, guided to learn increasingly challenging music, and taught physically and emotionally how to perform that music with artistic prowess. This kind of learning necessarily involves tactile and emotional engagement between the teacher and the student, and makes becoming a musician extraordinarily unique in terms of the amount of trust parents place in a private teacher. Massie (1977) found trust between student and private teacher to be essential for both teacher career success and childhood musical interest, while Swanson (2008) emphasized the importance of trust between the private teacher and the child's family.

Karen's recollection, and those of other participants, show evidence of transference, or at least potential for transference, of love and longing to please a teacher in similar ways as a child will want to please a parent. She describes feeling as comfortable in her teacher's home as in her own. Anytime a child plays an instrument or sings for the teacher, he/she is being given an important undivided moment to demonstrate to an influential adult the results of their work between lessons. This can yield an empowering sense of independence and achievement and is repeatedly demonstrated in the narratives as a determining early influence in career choice.

*“Katherine”*

**It’s always been music, honest to God. And I think it was just that the seed was planted in grade six. I had this wonderful teacher. I just think that the idea was always there. He taught us all to play guitar, and he used to take me and record. He loved playing guitar and he’d make me sing all the folk songs of the day. And, just that an adult loved my voice! I thought, “Oh, this is good!”**

*“Beverley”*

**I had a really great teacher, and she was like... I just wanted to be like her. She was so amazing.**

It is difficult to think of another occupation that enables someone so young to receive such quality and frequency of interaction with adults, or that yields an opportunity to decide for himself/herself the extent to which a career will be further pursued. It can be argued that children show high skills and keen interests in pursuing other disciplines at an early age. But these narratives demonstrate that music and career-like skills are immediately apprehensible by a child and informed by direct interaction with adult teachers in ways that are unlike many other occupations. Music learning involves an extraordinarily high degree of trust and mutual personal respect between a child learner and adult teacher. Many narratives confirm that young musicians gain tremendous self-worth and confidence when a teacher they admire comments on how great their posture is, or how strong their playing or singing is, or how beautiful they look when they perform.

If the student, their parents, and teacher mutually accept that kind of bonding, then the young person’s attachment to music is at least partially embodied in this relationship of confidence-building and empowerment by way of greater self-awareness brought about by their teachers. Sense of self and commitment to music-making may develop from a very young age, become inextricably intertwined, and have a positive impact on continuing the



enjoyment learning of music and other fields. This supports the findings of Rife, Shnek, Lauby and Lapidus (2001) in their survey of 568 children whose continuing interest in and enjoyment of learning music was strongly influenced by their relationship with their private teachers.

It is outside the scope of this study to compare early childhood music training in Newfoundland and Labrador to other places, but there seems to be evidence among the narratives that music was the “thing to do” for many Newfoundland children, either because of an outlet from schoolwork, to follow a longstanding familial tradition, or for prestige. Many participants were unable to clearly recall how exactly they ended up taking music because it seemed to be seamlessly interwoven with everyday life and leisure, yet they realized early on that it was something to be expected and treasured, regardless of their family knowledge of music.

*“Kim”*

**Like every Newfoundland child, we all sang, we all did choirs. You had to. It was considered prestigious. (...) That’s what you did, and we all played piano. To be honest, my parents came from a humble background, so I don’t know where they got the idea that we should all be in piano and music, but we were all in it. A lot of it came from the church.**

*“Sophie”*

**I find it strange calling myself a musician because I never chose to engage in it. It’s something I always did, but I never thought “This is what I’m gonna do.” I feel like, especially being in St. John’s, it just sort of happens.**

Kim and Sophie’s experience speaks to a generally accepted tradition in Newfoundland and Labrador of young children participating in music. Kim in particular gives a personal example of symbolic capital emerging from social and cultural capital – the prestige her parents felt by having a child enrolled in music lessons with good teachers, and given performance opportunities. Those are the experiences of the more senior professional

musicians in this study. Few younger participants describe their early recollections as tied to a provincial or cultural tradition, but confirm the importance of having a close relationship with their music teachers.

#### **4.a.ii Adolescence (High school years – Ages 13 to 18)**

None of the participants whose earliest meaningful music recollections happened in childhood recalled experiences from, say, a school classroom or a friend's house. As young musicians age, however, their social networks grow, and they spend less time at home and more time in the company of their friends and in school. Thus, musicians whose earliest meaningful music recollections emerged from adolescence generally describe a great deal of school music teacher influence, musical engagement with peers, school music performance experiences, and more of an inclination towards self-teaching.

All five (9.3%) participants whose earliest recollections happened in their high school years have parents who are non-musicians. Parents are either not mentioned at all in these narratives or else are mentioned in the context of showing some reservations about their child's interests in music. No strong disagreements over the choice of music as an occupation were described between musicians and their parents at this age, and parents still often undertook considerable sacrifices of time and money, but seemingly not to the same extent as parents who chose music-learning for their children in early childhood. Some parents express reservations about music as a career path.

*“Ernest”*

**Mom and Dad, probably more Mom who is a school teacher, I guess saw the importance in music as an educational tool as much as anything else. Recognized it as an aid in learning in general. I think she was aware of the fact that there was enough evidence to**

**support the reality that people who took music lessons or played a musical instrument basically just did better in school and were more well-rounded. (...) They were supportive, God love ‘em. Mom especially. Dad was a bit more reserved. Not unsupportive, but a bit more guarded and a bit more realistic with it all.**

*“Nicolas”*

**Probably 12 or 13. Nagged my parents for a couple of years. So when I was 15 years old, I finally got a guitar. And the interest in rock n roll was there, and my cousin being in a rock n roll band, and through him exposure to loads of great records. They were into r&b, and blues, and jazz, Ray Charles, Ike and Tina Turner. And when I finally got a guitar I was attracted to playing all of that.**

When children are at an age of considering what to do after high school graduation, their parents sometimes need convincing that the interest in music is sincere, career-oriented, and viable. It can be easily understood why high school music teachers receive more attention in these narratives of adolescence than private teachers, since the school provides frequent opportunities for musical expression and social interaction. Influences of school music teachers and peers are commonly emphasized by musicians whose first identification with music happened after childhood. “Mitchell” describes his earliest involvement with music as including his high school music teacher and high school friends with whom he started a band.

*“Mitchell”*

**I started playing music really late. I was in Grade 11 when I started playing bass guitar. I started playing with a hip-hop artist at the time. We put together this little project. As we started to perform around the school a bit, my high school, we started to get other people that were interested in joining us. Just friends that were like, “I play guitar. I play drums.” Before we knew it, we had a little project happening. I was self-taught. I was just listening to our records trying to learn what this guitar player was playing and just trying to learn exactly the parts so we could keep playing the music. (...) I started talking to my high school music teacher, and it just really went from there.**

Whether earliest interests were influenced more by parents, teachers, or peers, it is clear that the people and events that matter most to young musicians change over time as they edge closer to choosing a career. Eight (14.9%) participants said that their earliest interests in

music were guided either by peers only or developed independently. Six of those recalled their earliest moments in music from adolescence. Of those musicians, only one was classically trained (but just briefly), all claim to be self-taught, and all specialized in genres other than classical music. Genre choices, career longevity, measures of success, and work opportunities will be explored in depth later. It is important to note for now that this is another instance of different skill sets, training, influential people, and career entry points for musicians changing over time and, in these cases, bearing some relationship to preferred musical genre or style. For rock or traditional musicians the involvement of parents and teachers as well as the timing of earliest recollections appear to be quite different from the experiences of classical and classically-trained musicians.

*“Albert”*

**When I was in high school, I guess I was a typical student, into different things or whatever. Met a couple of guys. One guy, he had all the gear and said that he would sell me the bass, and his buddy the drums and we would form a band. So we did. And it kind of became what we did. We took that and moved into St. John’s, and then at 17 started playing the bars downtown.**

The narratives show that becoming a musician does not depend on a single condition. In general it does depend on relationships with parents, other family members, and music educators. Participants spoke of how music was introduced to them by adults who felt it would be in their child’s interests, or in mutual agreement with peers with shared musical interests. Furthermore, consistent across all genres of this study, there were no references to emulation of musical figures other than parents, family members or teachers. Even Nicolas who was influenced by certain styles was first attracted to music by seeing his cousin play in a band.

In spite of the wide variety of possible experiences, it can be concluded that young musicians can identify with music as a primary source of pleasure and possible long-term interest at any age from early childhood through late-adolescence. There is evidence from very early on of the intertwining of economic capital in the form of investment in music learning, cultural capital in the acquisition of musical skills from lessons, social capital as parents, their children and music educators form a social network aimed at music skills development, and symbolic capital in the form of status or prestige for all three parties to the network. The findings also show that the parties involved in negotiating a young musician's involvement in music shift according to age of earliest identification – from parents and private music teachers in early childhood, to parents and their children in adolescence. Parents' unquestioning moral and financial investments in children's musical interests appear to be greater when that interest is identified in early childhood than in adolescence. Finally, it appears that peers and school music teachers emerge as primary sources of influence for musicians whose earliest identification happens in their high school years.

#### **4.b Confirmation of skills in childhood**

Some narratives show that learning music can represent status to the child and/or parents as well as to the teacher. In St. John's, for example, the major community performance opportunity for many young musicians is the mostly-competitive Kiwanis Music Festival. Adjudicators are hired from outside the province to critique and award prizes to young local musicians. Generally, students enter the Kiwanis Music Festival when their teachers believe they are proficient and comfortable enough to compete with other young musicians of the

same age, and (in some cases) when they also sense that their student has a chance of winning, or placing among the top entrants in their class. Such public displays of talent at a young age have the potential to motivate a young person, enhance a teacher's reputation in the community, and validate the choices of the parents to invest in instruments and lessons. This kind of performance opportunity demands a high level of long-term preparation and concentration. An unsatisfactory outcome can devastate future commitment to music, whereas a successful one (which might not even mean placing, but rather being satisfied with the experience) can result in greater commitment to music (Beauchamp, 2000).

Whether their children compete against other kids in a music festival, are singled out in school to perform, or receive high praise from the teacher for their musicality, parents take pride in their child's public accomplishments. And such accomplishment yields public recognition and status.

*"Beverley"*

**I think there was always a status. So I was always into that a little bit, to be honest. Growing up as a young child in the '70s, you were defined in our circle by something. So you were always either a piano player or maybe you played the violin. You were defined. "This is *Beverley*. She plays piano." So it had a definition. So if I left music in grade eight, I would have left the definition, and that was no good.**

Losing "definition" seems to imply as much about the child's failure or loss of status as it does about the parents' lost investment in instruments and lessons. It can manifest in the child losing interest in music altogether and quitting lessons. It is also important to note differences in experiences over time. Children today have a far greater variety of extra-curricular activities in which to engage than they did thirty years ago. If music were the only activity, then quitting music lessons for any reason might be a major disappointment for the

family. Today, when a child quits private music lessons, the parents can explain their departure as a choice in favour of greater interest in other activities. One participant expressed concern about the implications of multiple extra-curricular activities competing with music.

*“Rodney”*

**When a ten- or twelve-year old says to me “I didn’t have time to practise this week,” I know they’re not home lazy. They’re overscheduled. It’s a generation of parents also who can afford it, right? This generation of parents are two generations beyond the baby-boomers now. And the money is there. The activities are now there because the money is there. There’s so many things for children to get involved in. Too scheduled. And I see children wound up tighter than a drum because they just should be in the park looking for a four-leaf clover, and they’re not. They’re not! That’s troublesome. I wonder what will happen to the current generation fifteen years from now. Oh, we’re gone off the rails somewhere there with all that. There’s really no time. And the parents are equally as busy.**

Rodney’s suggests that there is far more formally organized non-music activity competing with music lessons today than in past generations, causing some private teachers to qualify their assessments of whose talents are truly good enough to meet the demands of a prospective career.

Many participants do not describe their earliest memories of music participation as altogether pleasant, even though most went on to lengthy music careers. They offer a glimpse into an alternative experience, where learning music or even just being surrounded by it was a source of pressure, especially in home environments where there are musician family members to whom musical comparisons could be made. When participants describe being “put,” “pushed,” or “forced” into music lessons as young children, was their eventual career path more their choice or more the choice of their parents or teachers? And to what extent was that outcome a matter of status for the family?

*“Sam”*

**In terms of actually choosing to pursue it as a career, I never really sat down and said, “I’m gonna do this for a living.” At no point did I really decide that. I mean, I didn’t really be the one to choose to play music. I mean, I was kinda shuffled into piano at three years old.**

*“Sheila”*

**My Mom signed me up for an audition without telling me, and I was freaking out (...) I didn’t like to sing in front of other people. I went and was more nervous than anything. I hated it. Hated it! Apparently my Mom tells me that I sang a lot as a child, and then as soon as I started school I became really introverted and wouldn’t sing in front of anybody. So then being forced to sing was very terrifying. But then I got in, and that really changed everything. I still didn’t want to sing by myself, but I loved singing in choir.**

Self-identifying or being identified by someone else as a musician demonstrates another contrast to many occupations that have fairly well-defined points of commitment, career entry, and quantifiable levels of attainment. If you do not have a job as a mechanic, do not own the tools, and have not earned a trade license, you cannot practise as a mechanic. A physician cannot work as or claim to be a doctor without a license to practise. But there is no such license to practise music and nothing that can stop a musician from trying to earn money from performing or from identifying as a musician.

Arbitrariness of the “musician” label points to the lifelong ambiguous and precarious nature of this work, and highlights lack of clarity concerning when musical skills are confirmed by someone important enough, or are judged to be of a high enough standard, to suggest a potential career. Are you a musician if you play music only casually and at parties? Is a child taking lessons a musician? Are you a musician if you quit taking lessons? Are you still a musician if you exit the music career? There are no standard responses to these questions because music is not a standardized occupation. The participants of this study show



that commitment to music depends on a wide array of factors at different times, and is influenced by different people who themselves, especially parents, are the gatekeepers of one's introduction to music as well as to their continued pursuit of music potentially as a career. As Pitts (2012) has shown, without parents or primary guardians as the initial providers of instruments and opportunities to learn music, musicians would not likely have ever become involved in music so intensively at a young age if at all.

Some participants describe their teachers as the driving force behind the decision to pursue a career in music. Thirty participants were not settled on their commitment to music until they were well into high school and had developed a relationship with their private and/or school music teachers. The feedback they received ranged from loving, warm, kindly encouragement to tough-yet-constructive advice. How participants responded depended on their own personalities and musical objectives. Some student-teacher relationships were described as disciplined yet nurturing, and involving conversation about feelings, self-confidence, and potential. Some transitioned into personal friendships, as seen in Karen's reflection (page 108). Other teacher-student relationships were less characterized by mentoring and more by compacting as much technique and artistry in a strictly-confined lesson time. Some musicians respond favourably to those kinds of conditions while others do not. Even unpleasant student-teacher relationships can have unexpected results.

*“Elaine”*

**I left his office and I bawled my eyes out all the way down the hall. And I think that was the moment where I realized “Someone just told me they don’t think I can get better at what I thought I wanted to do.” My reaction was this: “This must be what I have to do, if I’m so upset by that.” (...) I didn’t realize I would react that strongly to someone saying, “You’re not that great.”**

There can be a heavy emotional toll from learning music, but even the most distressing episodes with teachers can instill a greater level of determination to succeed or result in seeking out of new teachers more suitable to one's own emotional and artistic needs. But there is little evidence among participants in this study that musicians eventually quit music solely because of their teachers. There is only evidence that their commitment grew because of their training, no matter how well they got along with teachers, and that they learned how to manage challenging professional and personal relationships in their work and how to find compromises that would satisfy their parents.

*“Beverley”*

**We always had to take piano. I was in piano forever and hated it. I cried all the time. I hated it. I only got into voice because I made a deal with mom that I would quit piano and take voice and keep up music.**

What is evident from Beverley's and Karen's experiences is that parents, whether musically knowledgeable or not, make the initial musical choices for their children. But parents do not themselves produce professional musicians. By providing instruments and teachers for their kids, they are facilitators of the music option. It is up to the young musicians to decide just how committed they want to be, and that often depends on how well the child and teacher get along.

#### **4.c Confirmation of Skills in Adolescence**

Some participants whose strongest commitment to music first happened in high school received confirmation of their talents and career potential from school music teachers. Some had been considering other fields of study and work beyond high school until their talent was

identified and encouraged by their teachers. In adolescence, musicians show signs of thinking and acting independently of parents' wishes.

*"Frances"*

**It wasn't until grade 12 when a teacher had heard me. It was actually a student who dragged me along kicking and screaming to one of her voice lessons. But then I was so interested in knowing what a lesson was, that I was going. (*Teacher*) is such a good mentor. Such a good teacher. She knew this dynamic of "I gotta work this." And she did. At the end of the lesson, I was singing full out. By the time I got home that night, she called mom and said, "I'm going to teach your daughter for free, just in case that's the issue." It was sort of just never even talked about in the house. Mom and Dad didn't know if there were music lessons.**

Several narratives show some indifference on the part of parents towards their child's continuing interest in music: facilitative of their instruments and lessons, but not in favour of music as an occupation. At least one participant responded independently in spite of relatively short-lived experiences with various music teachers over a fairly short time. For some reason, inexplicable even to her, "Michelle" was committed to continuing her study of music but at her own pace. Though her experience stands out from the other narratives by way of less-than-usual parent and teacher support, she appeared to be no less committed than those whose talents were discovered and nurtured by close relationships with parents and teachers.

*"Michelle"*

**I had a teacher that just lived up the road from me. I could ride my bike there. When I was going to grade 12, he moved away. So I didn't want to just abandon it, and I didn't really put that much thought into it. My teacher is leaving and I have to find a new teacher. (...) I specifically remember my piano teacher. She wasn't a very nice woman. She said, "Do you expect to get into music school practicing an hour a week? You came to me because you want to audition." And I'm like, "Did I?" I did an audition, and I remember tears after the audition because they stop you. So I thought that was failure. I didn't have any real support.**

Her narrative in the context of her relationships with her parents and teachers, while not typical, is an example of the range of participant experiences and outcomes. She was

reluctant at a later age to pursue music as a career, but so were some other participants who were nurtured very closely by parents and musical mentors and provided with lots of performance opportunities. Confirmation of skills and commitment to music work frequently overlap and can happen anytime in the process of becoming a musician, and are not wholly dependent on consistent support by parents and teachers. Several participants like Michelle show signs of sheer determination and unwillingness to walk away from many years of music study and what they feel to be their strongest and most comfortable skill.

#### **4.d Self-taught Musicians**

Twelve (22.2%) participants did not take formal private lessons. All twelve work as non-classical musicians; there are no self-taught classical musicians in this study. There are two types of learning experiences in this group. Some grew up in musical households where at least one other family member was an experienced musician; others banded together with friends in high school and trained in music by listening to one another and working together. In all cases, though, conscious learning is said to take place through keen observation, listening, mimicking, and working to differentiate one's sound from others'. Therefore, when musicians say they are self-taught, it does not mean that their learning was unstructured. They instead took it upon themselves to acquire their skills and development in partnership with other like-minded musicians, listen to artists they like, and work to learn their instrument and create music on their own. Green (2001) calls this process "informal learning." Some of the twelve of my study who are self-taught grew up in a household with a strong musical tradition and received affirmation and training from their parents and siblings.

*“Gary”*

**I grew up in a house where playing music was not unusual. There was always kind of a sense that this was a completely legitimate enterprise, that you would go and you would work and this was a job that people did. I got to see that up close and personal. A lot of band rehearsals at my house. On Saturdays, generally two bands rehearsing at the same time. Yeah. (*laugh*). Poor Mom and Dad. They were great. Mom and Dad were great, tolerant, wonderful people.**

Gary grew up in a musical household and he considered no career option other than music. Another self-taught participant likewise grew up in a household of musicians but studied and worked in non-music disciplines before deciding on music as a career. Once again, there is evidence that timing of commitment to music as a career varies widely and is not entirely dependent on whether there is a proliferation of music in the home, or on strong parental support, or on a close relationship with music educators. Two self-taught musicians eventually exited the professional music scene, while the remaining ten have realized successful and lengthy careers.

#### **4.e Considering the Career**

Even though many participants described in detail their earliest recollections of music from a very young age, the point at which they decided on music as a career would not happen for 30 (55.6%) of them until they were in high school, university, or later. Meanwhile, the other 24 participants (44.4%) claim to have always known from their earliest recollections that music is what they wanted to do for a living. Various timing of commitment to an occupation is not unique to music, but the pairing of career commitment and a years-long, methodical process of formal learning usually starting in childhood does set music apart from most other occupations. It would be extremely difficult for an adult without any musical knowledge,

training, or experience to decide to become a musician, no matter how much they have dreamed about it.

Timing of career choice among this study's participants varies from early childhood ("I always knew") to adulthood and has a great deal to do with family circumstances and income. It is important to recall that many musicians in this study were not raised in wealthy families. It is difficult to balance the many years of investment against awareness of the reality of earning a living in performance alone and the likelihood of needing to seek additional sources of income. Precarious employment in the context of music will be discussed later, but many of the traits of precarity seem to be built in from the earliest stages of music engagement and tied to mixed emotions from an early age. These emotions seem to emerge from being aware of one's own talents and of the difficulty of parlaying talent into long-term economic success.

Career commitment appears in some cases to be considerably affected by parents' support and knowledge of what a career in music involves. It appears that the absence of parents and/or music teachers as positive role models and sources of musical motivation delays or casts doubt on the decision to pursue music. Even though there was no evidence in this study's data of poor relationships between participants and their families, non-musician parents who show low support or some anxiety about their child's desire to work for a living in music force the young musician to forge ahead into their careers autonomously.

*"Mitchell"*

**I remember saying to my parents, "Yeah, I think I'm gonna go to music school." And they were like, "What? You don't really play that much." You know, I was like "Yeah, I'm gonna work on that. Figure it out." So I had no idea about a career in music. All I knew was that I enjoyed playing music.**

*“Hannah”*

**My parents were very supportive of me playing music, but not pursuing it professionally.**

Two other participants who referred to their parents’ hesitation pursued other non-music work before deciding to switch to professional well into adulthood. The career path they had dreamed of was disrupted by the concern of their parents over whether they could establish a music career. In these narratives, family members later in life – spouses/partners – would become as significant as parents in endorsing a career. Once participants became more independent of their parents’ influence, spousal support was a key determinant in music career commitment, and considered separately from, or combined with, parents’ support.

*“Jamie”*

**I came to a crossroads when I was nineteen. I could have gone into music, or the business. I think our parents back then carry a very powerful stick, for lack of a better word. As soon as Dad said, “The business is here and I’m hoping you’re going to come into the business” and all of that stuff... The heartstrings and “Daddy wants this,” and, “music is a tough life, you know. It’s not a bed of roses. Lots of competition. The money is not that great, unless you make it big.” It was a huge influence.**

*“Simon”*

**Living with your mom is very different than living with your partner. And suddenly somebody does care if you’re going to a lot of rehearsals and if you’re coming home late. So that is an adjustment, and... a little less... There hasn’t been as much band performing since *Bridget* and I have been living together**

Some participants who grew up in what some called an “organic” environment (that is, where music was a part of everyday life in the home) appeared to strike a more cautious approach in their choice of music as a career. It could be that musicians who grew up in those environments delayed their choice of music as a career until adolescence or adulthood in order to take time to assess some of its challenges and benefits. The narratives that follow are of two professional musicians whose parents were active, working musicians. These participants have

no clear recollection of a defining earliest moment in music because music learning and performance for them was always a natural part of their life, having grown up seeing and hearing their parents working in music. As examples of contrasting responses of musicians from similar childhood environments, Rodney would follow directly the example of his mother, while Joshua would later pursue education and a career in non-music fields before exploring a music career.

*“Rodney”*

**I can’t recall a time when I wasn’t involved in music. My mother was a junior choir leader, and from the time I was four, I remember being involved with that. My earliest recollections are involved with music, so I suppose to some degree it was just always a part of absolutely everything I did, everything *we* did, as a family.**

*“Joshua”*

**I was lucky to have grown up in a family where music was just the rule. So I was surrounded by it right from out of the womb. Dad was a performer, and was still doing that quite heavily when I was born. When I was born, he was starting to move a bit more away from that and the family kind of took over. Mom was a singer, still is (...) She had no academic intentions for it at all. So they were singing all the time. Whenever they got together with friends all of those gatherings, if they didn’t start with a few songs, they ended up with a few songs. That became so normal for me. (...) Really lucky to have been born into an organic and authentic singing tradition (...) I look at that as a blissful time because it didn’t have any implications for money or finance. If Mom never got a cent for walking on stage and singing a song, she’d never question it. I’m so glad that hers was the ethic that I drew on. What I was born into was not a music business at all. That’s not the way Mom and Dad saw it. And the type of people they gravitated towards, it was totally social.**

It may be that encouraging and enabling their children to learn music at an early age is “the thing to do” in Newfoundland. But it is clear that parents respond differently when their children become so attached to music-making over the long term that they want to attempt a career in music. Many participants attended university or college music programs only to enter an occupation that is abundantly supplied with musicians, all seeking work and generally



working for low remuneration. In spite of their parents' extensive prior investment in music, continuous support of a music career would entail entirely new levels of commitment, including assisting with basic costs of living, higher quality instruments and equipment, tuition, and travel costs. Commitment to music as a career demands continued investment possibly beyond the point that was ever foreseen or intended. Several field notes on conversations with university music students revealed that their parents resisted their child's pursuing music as an occupation after graduation. Young musicians who by this time are on their way to becoming young adults seem to be more aware of their parents' concerns for their economic well-being which in turn may have an impact on full-time or long-term commitment to a career in music.

*"Mitchell"*

**Most of my family are of the blue collar realm. There are a lot of labourers and a lot of workers My Dad was a construction worker but he did his own company. Yeah, they (*parents*) have been supportive in a way, but they've really been pushing a kind of more stable job. My parents weren't too pleased that I chose to do a performance degree and not an education degree, because they thought "What are you gonna do with a performance degree?" And they were right. What have I done with that? I mean, I really haven't done anything with it (*laugh*).**

Non-musician parents seem to be less informed of the challenges of establishing a financially viable career in music. It is not that they think of their children as untalented or unambitious. Mitchell's story points to a struggle in his own motivation and commitment that appears rooted in his parents' wishes that he pursue other careers. The experiences here of Rodney, Joshua and Mitchell demonstrate differences in prioritization of social and economic capital. Rodney's and Joshua's commitment to music is rooted in its strong presence within

the social fabric of their household growing up. Mitchell is conflicted between his love for music and economic realities he is presently facing.

#### **4.f Considering the Career in Adulthood**

Two musicians in this study demonstrate an interesting overlap of earliest identification with music, confirmation of skills, and considering the career, all happening after adolescence. While these experiences are uncommon, the outcomes speak further to the vast array of possibilities in the process of becoming a musician. “Denise” has an ongoing career outside of music and earns music income part-time with no aspiration to full-time music work. “Roland” on the other hand is also well educated but has been unsuccessful in establishing a stable career in any field, picking up temporary and part-time work wherever he can. Denise is married with children, and entered the music scene with the endorsement of her family. Roland is single but the influence of his parents is potent, even in his 30s.

*“Denise”*

**I wanted to understand how it worked. I had taken a couple of lessons. The whole process was kind of fascinating for me. (...) And then I realized that I actually could do it, and also that it was taking up really a lot of time and I was going to have to be paid if I carried on.**

*“Roland”*

**I started playing music in 2006 with a bunch of my friends who were on EI. We’re all on EI. (...) Sometimes they (*parents*) say, “You gotta quit that fuckin’ band and go to Alberta to find a job.”**

Denise chose to work in music part-time having already established a non-music (though arts-based) career, while Roland aspires to a full-time music career. What they have in common is their university education in non-music fields. It is unknown if this delay in their

commitment to music is a consequence of non-exposure to music in childhood, or if it is simply a matter of their having waited until they felt the time was right for them.

#### **4.g “What am I?”**

Genre classification of research participants was derived from my asking participants prior to our interviews to categorize themselves in the genre with which they most closely identify. Many participants stated a primary performance genre but qualified their classification by indicating other genres in which they have also been trained and/or professionally active. The classification for research purposes was ultimately made based on the genre that represents most of their work in music.

Twenty-one (38.9%) participants are classified as classical musicians. That is to say that most or all of their income as musicians is (or was, for three who later changed careers) in classical music. However, another 11 (20.4%) participants received extensive classical training throughout their childhood and some through their university education, but chose other genres as their primary musical identity and source of music income. Therefore, 32 (59.3%) musicians are at least extensively classically-trained. An examination of the responses to earliest childhood recollections reveals that of the 43 earliest recollections of music that happened up to age twelve, 27 (62.8%) are classical musicians and/or classically-trained, while 16 (37.2%) are neither classical performers nor classically-trained. Meanwhile, 20 of the 21 classical musicians surveyed are included in those 27 childhood recollections. Of the 11 earliest experiences that happened after the age of twelve, 10 (91%) presently identify as non-classical musicians (though five of those were classically-trained). These numbers seem to

suggest an association between age of music training and genre, with training happening for classical musicians at a much earlier age than for non-classical musicians. However, the numbers are not indicative of career longevity or success according to genre. Rather, they highlight a relation between genre and the timing of music training before the music career is considered.

As examples of the range of possible outcomes from within classical music: Frances (more than ten years experience as a professional musician) described her earliest recollections and interest in music dating back to as early as she can remember, but did not begin formal training until her last year of high school. Sheila (fewer than ten years experience in professional music and considerably younger than Frances) started her training at age four, the time of her earliest recollections. Both are classically-trained and are achieving steady work but with substantial differences in the type of work in classical music. The opportunities and reputations both musicians have realized are comparable but apparently independent of when they began their training. Though Frances started her training and chose to pursue music at a relatively late age, she received the wholehearted endorsement of her parents and a teacher to whom she was introduced by a peer. Sheila's parents enrolled her in music at age four without discussion, but she would receive the continual support of her parents and teachers throughout her training and career. Two very contrasting early experiences in terms of timing within classical music have resulted nevertheless in career success for both because of ongoing support from parents and teachers.

Having drawn attention to genre implications, the findings above should be cautiously interpreted. While participants were categorized primarily based with respect to the style of

music from which they earn most of their performance income and by which they are known to their audiences, in a small city like St. John's genre-crossover is common and often necessary in order to get as much work as possible. As one participant succinctly put it at the start of our interview (trained classically but frequently and equally performs classical, pop/rock, jazz and traditional), "What am I?" The ambiguous character of music as an occupation is manifested across the entire trajectory of the career, including in the process of becoming a musician. As will be seen in the following chapter, the next stage is also rife with ambiguity, based on a wide range of circumstances. At the core of transitioning from becoming a musician to starting out professionally will be an essential support network of family, peers, educators and the music industry.

#### **4.h Conclusion and Summary**

The findings reveal a profoundly strong attachment to music and vividly-detailed first recollections of music. Participants were often wistful, a few becoming quite emotional, when describing their earliest exposure to music due mostly to the context in which it happened. The presence of family members, teachers and/or peers lends a deeply personal association to their first musical experiences. The eventual decision to pursue music as a career appears to be influenced by continuing parental support and seems to demand increasingly active engagement between parents, their children, and music teachers, a finding that supports the findings of earlier research (Sloboda & Howe, 1992; Sosniak, 1985).

The narratives illustrate a huge range of individual experiences, which I have loosely categorized across three key stages that commonly overlap. The first stage, early identification

with music, has been shown to occur at any point in a musician's life, though for a majority this occurs in childhood. Musicians whose earliest experiences with music happen in childhood generally recall enjoyable, intimate musical experiences taking place in their home. Often music experience begins as *play*, and is associated with family leisure time rather than with work. The effect of those early experiences, in terms of whether someone eventually chooses a career in music or not, does not appear to depend on whether parents are themselves musicians.

The second stage, confirmation of skills, usually involves a combination of parents and private music teachers. Confirmation of talent and career potential are usually assessed by a music teacher. Other musicians who grew up in musician households did not work with private teachers and were instead mostly influenced by direct and continuing exposure to music in their home. There does not appear to be a significant difference in the timing of career choice between musicians who were privately trained and whose skills were confirmed in childhood and those who were not. Those whose first close identification with music occurs in adolescence are more influenced by school music teachers and peers with similar interest.

The third stage, considering the career, seems to present the most varied experience because the ultimate decision is usually the result of an emergent process. Many musicians who describe their earliest recollections from early childhood say that they have no recollection of when they decided to pursue music as an occupation because it was the only interest they ever had. Others indicate that they began considering a career in music in high school, influenced by a school music teacher or friends. A few would not consider the career until they were adults. Even as adults, the process is highly varied, sometimes involving

establishment of a non-music career before pursuing professional music or limiting music work to part-time status.

We may have in these findings an early hint of Crossley's (2015) assertion that connections within networks of social interaction, particularly in the development of culture, are variable over a lifetime. Furthermore, and even though some participants say they were influenced only by parents or only by teachers, it is essential to our understanding of the complexity of work in music that a multiplicity of relationships be considered at any given time along the career path (Hollstein, 2014). These features of musician interactions, even as children, point the way towards a broader, relational enhancement of Bourdieu's structural views of social interaction and the effects of various forms of capital (Crossley, 2011; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Crossley (2011) notes that a social relationship is "the lived trajectory of iterated bouts of interaction between actors" and that "past experiences shape and frame present experiences" (p. 35). For most participants of my research, music was introduced as leisure activity that gradually developed into more serious effort, which in turn necessitated increasing investment of time and income by parents and, in most cases, the introduction to the child of a music teacher. These early relationships vary across participants and, therefore, come to shape the future music career in various ways. The next chapter will examine the experiences of starting out professionally as a musician and the complex challenges involved in balancing music as a form of work and play.

## **Chapter Five: Starting Out**

Once the decision has been made to pursue a career in music, most participants next choose between auditioning for university music schools or heading directly from high school into the professional music scene. At this stage, an ongoing effort is undertaken to capture the attention of new and multiple kinds of audiences that include concert-goers, audition panels, funding agencies, sponsors, media, and fellow musicians. Musicians redirect their energies from playing for family and friends to competing for critical favour of the public in an industry searching for the “best” musicians in which to invest.

Chambliss (1989) wrote in the context of athletics that talent does not precisely explain excellence and success. This seems to bear a striking parallel to the experiences of musicians. The narratives in my research show that what musicians feel they require when starting out, at least as much as artistic ability and family support, is additional education, confidence in marketing their product and themselves, and the ability to manage professional relationships in a tightly-knit music “community”, while weathering their first doses of criticism as professionals. There are as many experiences of starting out professionally as there are musicians, but they have some things in common. All involve strategically seeking means of support, including various potential sources of income and media attention. Many participants also continue to require the support and endorsement of their families. All participants recognize from the start of their careers that music work - particularly performance - pays very little, with only very few musicians able to rely exclusively on a steady flow of performance-related employment over the long term.



This chapter will examine some of the realities of launching a music career, with emphasis on the influence of peer and familial relationships, education following high school while attempting to initiate wage-earning music work, building relationships with established artists and industry agencies to gain acceptance, balancing their continuing education and early careers with other employment, and trying to establish professional status while taking non-paying gigs and learning to respectfully distinguish from amateur or non-career musicians of similar calibre.

### **5.a Parents**

Parents' support remains important when the career begins. But turning music into a career may or may not be what parents had in mind (Randle & Culkin, 2009). Emerging professional musicians feel obliged to prove to their families, teachers, and peers that they have enough talent and other skills to sustain a living in music. Moore, Burland and Davidson's (2003) research indicates that there is no discernable difference in parental support between non-professional and professional musicians. But the authors note that parental support in childhood is essential and add that parental support *by itself* is not a determining factor in music career success. This suggests the emergence in this career stage of other connections in musicians' networks.

Some participants of my research said that the support they received in childhood from their parents would later take on an air of concern over whether and for how long they could realize a long and fruitful music career. Three of the nine participants who exited the music profession described their parents' relief at their career change, although there was no

evidence of lack of parental support when starting out or while working in music. After many years of endorsing their children's intense musical studies and praising their abilities, parents find themselves faced with reconciling their reluctance to completely support their child's music career with their past years of investment and encouragement.

*“Paul”*

**I do remember their (*parents*) holding the same reservations that pretty much any parent would. Rooted in just wanting the best for your kid and not wanting your kid to live a hard life. They too had heard all the things about how you can't make a living. But they very quickly came around and were supporting me from the get-go, so that helped a lot in the early hard days.**

In spite of continuing family moral support for most participants, the narratives show that many are encouraged to establish their careers as independently as possible. Some parents helped with initial costs of instruments and tuition for the 32 participants who chose a university or college music education, while many others had their costs offset by scholarships, gigs, and other work.

*“Charlene”*

**My darling parents, yeah. And whatever work I do over the summer mostly helps. Every year I do a SWASP program, so I always have a tuition voucher. Normally I pay for my first semester and my Dad pays for my second semester. That's from a savings plan they set up before I was born. (*SWASP – Student Wage and Service Program – a Government of Newfoundland and Labrador program that subsidizes employers of university students and offers tuition vouchers to students*)**

Evidence of reliance on families and/or educational institutions for economic support in order to launch the music career seems to support the Bourdieuan convergence of economic, social and cultural capitals as essential for career success (Zweigenhaft, 1993). Economic capital has been seen as essential for music career development (Scott, 2012), and certainly my research points to economic considerations as central to many music career

decisions. But we gain a much deeper and more complex relational understanding of music careers in my examination of how individual musicians interact within their respective networks. Charlene, Paul and many other participants relied heavily on both the moral and practical support of their parents at the launch of their careers. But many other factors emerge that will come to highlight the importance of examining individual career-life trajectories.

### **5.b Balancing Act: Education, Work and Audiences**

Most participants paired continuing education with the start of their efforts to earn income from music. Fifty-two participants (96.3%) attended university or college, with 46 of those 52 (88.5%) having completed at least one degree. Thirty of those 46 (65.2%) completed degrees in music. Two participants started but did not complete (or have not completed) a university/college music program. Specific comparisons to national statistics measuring musicians' education are difficult to make because musician education and employment numbers are often hidden within all-inclusive statistics on artists. Nevertheless, some useful measures are available for comparison from the most recent statistical profiles<sup>12</sup>. Sixty-nine percent of all artists in Canada held a college or university certificate, diploma or degree in 2011 (musicians make up the largest segment – approximately one-quarter- of artists in Canada). While it is unclear whether these certifications are in arts or non-arts fields, artists with post-high school educational achievement have been shown to earn considerably higher income than those artists who have not furthered their formal arts training beyond high school.

---

<sup>12</sup> A Statistical Profile of Artists and Cultural Workers in Canada: Based on the 2011 National Household Survey and the Labour Force Survey. *Statistical Insights on the Arts*, 12 (2). Prepared by Kelly Hill of Hill Strategies Research Inc., funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage, Canada Council for the Arts, and Ontario Arts Council. Retrieved from [http://canadacouncil.ca/~media/files/research%20-%20en/artists%20cultural%20hr/a%20statistical%20profile%20of%20artists%20in%20canada/artists\\_cw\\_canada2011.pdf](http://canadacouncil.ca/~media/files/research%20-%20en/artists%20cultural%20hr/a%20statistical%20profile%20of%20artists%20in%20canada/artists_cw_canada2011.pdf)

The survey notes that musician employment, income and education statistics do not include school music teachers or university professors. Many musicians of my research teach privately, work in additional non-music employment, and/or aim to teach in public schools either in addition to or instead of performance. Classroom music teaching requires a university degree, while employability in other fields is more likely and higher self-employment rates more justified with higher education.

*“Karen”*

**That’s partly why I went to grad school. I really wanted to go to another level of teaching. So I do feel like it’s a different rate. It should be. I really wanted to go teach at MUN, which is why I went away initially.**

This high rate of university education may be one reason why most participants’ parents continued to support their child’s interests at the start of their work in music. While it is not clear from the interviews whether going to a university or college was an outcome of discussion with parents or something informants decided on their own, many musicians described further education as a necessity, whether in music or not, for achieving financial stability. Abbott (1988) suggests that academic knowledge is more symbolic than practical. Musicians’ choice to pursue advanced education, especially in music, may therefore be a function of gaining as much academic knowledge as possible to legitimize their work, therefore expanding on their symbolic as well as cultural capital. Furthermore, if a career in performance begins to appear unlikely to succeed or is no longer desired, a university degree is seen as a cushion against career instability, potentially opening options in other fields of music and non-music work.

*“Beverley”*

**One thing I always knew... You are nothing unless you have an education. Even through hard times, I kept at school. I knew I had to get an undergrad. Have to, or it's not gonna happen.**

For the 32 musicians who attended university/college music programs, there was a shift in audience type, from family and friends to more influential and critical feedback of professors and fellow students. These musicians first had to audition for a place in the school, and if accepted were placed into a concentrated studio of similar-aged musicians focusing on the same instrument and taught by the same professor. As the demands on their efforts and expectations of their talents at this point change dramatically, they would need to work harder than ever artistically and socially to achieve a balance between fitting in and standing out.

Weekly master classes and end-of-year recitals are intended to acquaint university music students with some of the realities of life as a performer. Applause at the end of a performance is followed by constructive commentary. The recital in particular, the pinnacle of a student's university music education, is at once a celebration and a defence. It marks the end of a lengthy process of preparing their music to the highest level of technical and artistic proficiency that they can manage. Recitals are attended by family and friends who represent the kind of gathering that would have been present for the young musician's first performances in the family living room many years before. But also in the audience now is a panel of professors who are grading the performance and determining the student's potential as a future graduate student and professional musician.

The panel's grade is an average of a collection of learned opinions, and a potential source of angst for the young musician. One participant who performed his graduation recital

to a rousing ovation several years ago recounted his dismay with his final grade, only to discover later that two of the three professors on the panel gave him an A, while the third gave a B-minus, nearly dipping his final grade into a B average that would have rendered his performance unsatisfactory overall – in spite of the standing ovation and celebration afterwards. Variation in the evaluation of the quality and importance of musicians' work is a condition they have to live with for the duration of their careers. Even in a small city like St. John's, there are disparate scenes, audiences and interests that can lead to a wealth of exciting performance opportunities, but also present conflicting messages, and the MUN School of Music represents the first real hint of that.

*"Kim"*

**I don't want to offend people. I don't want to upset people. But I do think we have this false idea that everything we do is fantastic. No it's not. Then there's no levels. Then there's nothing to strive for. But I also think it's part of this new narrative we have about non-competition leagues in sports and all this garbage. Grow up! Everything is a competition. So the sooner kids learn that, I think the better it is for them. And that's the problem you have in university music schools today. "Oh, we're all great." No you're not.**

Interestingly, though, nearly all participants who are, or were, university music students spoke fondly of their years in university, especially those who attended the MUN School of Music. Participants recalled opportunities that came available as a result of their studies. Most recounted their hesitation in auditioning for acceptance in the school and showed their humility in appreciation for the chance to study for the first time as adults, working closely with university professors.

*"Harry"*

**I had gotten in music school by the skin of my teeth. It was not good. A lot of people think, "You're a musician! You have this gift!" I didn't! (*laugh*). And my first semester, I**

**remember how I felt. It was hard. It was really hard. But I worked my ass off. I still look back on that time during my undergrad and, like, everything was so new.**

Twenty-one of the 32 participants who enrolled in university music degree programs attended the classical-based MUN School of Music. The remaining eleven studied music entirely at universities outside of Newfoundland: seven in classical music programs, four in non-classical programs. Therefore, 28 participants in total studied in university classical music programs. Seven of the 28 who studied music at a classical-based school went on to performance work in non-classical music. They said they chose to study classical music in their instrument to expand the breadth of their music knowledge, to be able to apply some of their classical knowledge to professional work, and to make themselves employable in areas music outside of performance, usually in music education.

St. John's has a diverse and lively performance scene, and the enticement for university music students to seek gigs outside of their studies often proves powerful. While training in university, many participants took the opportunity to perform extra-curricular gigs in what would eventually become their professional genre, beginning to develop their post-school audience base. While these musicians considered themselves fortunate to have studied in a university located in a city with such a lively performance scene, the MUN School of Music often conveyed mixed signals about its approval or disapproval of students working outside the school curriculum. Approval seemed to depend on the professors' own assessments of whether their students could effectively balance their responsibilities as emerging professional non-classical musicians and classical students, as each style carries its own heavy demands on students' time and health. Participants generally appreciated their

professors' concerns over their well-being, but some struggled with the perceived conflict between the school's objectives for its students and the students' career objectives. "Charlene" and "Winston" are graduates of the MUN School of Music who established their careers in genres other than classical. While respectful of their professors, there is evidence of disconnect between their eventual careers and the school they hoped would help advance their careers.

*"Charlene"*

**I did feel an overriding sense of disapproval from many other professors in the music faculty, but the voice teachers were just worried about my best interests. (...) I could be a better classical musician, but I wouldn't be nearly the well-rounded musician that I am. I don't regret taking time from one to improve the other. I didn't have the time to study or practise as hard of some of my colleagues, but I think I'm a lot happier with my four years, and I made the degree and time work for what I wanted.**

*"Winston"*

**I had some issues during my first two years with some of my profs treating me outright like I didn't belong. Some profs were very supportive. (...) My grades picked up and many of the profs who had looked at me negatively before started to see I was going to stick with it and maybe I was worth investing in.**

Commitment to the MUN School of Music meant adhering to certain highly disciplined technical and artistic demands. But commitment to their future work outside of school meant building audiences, forging industry relationships, friendships and working relationships with like-minded musicians, and opportunities to earn income. In this early stage of the music career, a great deal of power lies with the professor of a music school. For some, earning the endorsement of a professor is crucial to taking additional steps in their careers. A professor's confidence in a student can lead to recommendations for graduate programs, scholarship applications, promotional assistance, and music jobs.



As for the school's perceived ambiguity and inconsistency as to approval of students' extra-curricular performance, there may be a need for more open conversation to clarify teachers' and students' objectives, especially given the absence of written policy. The School might give an early glimpse into the implicit, understated nature of communication in the industry as a whole.

*“Eamon”*

**When (*professor*) didn't want me to go downtown, she had a good reason. “I don't want you to blow your voice out, or go downtown, get drunk, scream through a microphone and lose your voice.” Which I wouldn't do anyway. I can see if you're not involved in that world having reservations and being scared of it. I understand the reservations of the teacher in that respect. But at the same time, you need to have the conversation. And it's the same with grant applications and stuff. “Where do you see yourself in 3 months, 6 months, or a year, or two years? Why are you here? What is it you want to get out of this?” I honestly think you would get people there for the right reasons... and maybe a lot of people would leave after having the chat.**

Eamon's insight, as well as those of several other participants, support literature that similarly advocate efforts to mesh music school mandates with career realities and objectives of its students (Dockwray & Moore, 2008; Pearce, 2000; Carey & Lebler, 2012; Carey, 2008; Renshaw, 2004; Bolan 2002).

Relationships among fellow students represent another set of interactions for many participants. In the process of developing artistic skills in school, some students are more assertive than others in trying to gain a foothold in the music profession. Most participants who tried to live as both student and professional were usually met with support from their student peers - but not always.

*“Charlene”*

**I think any resentment came from the fact that I was happy and busy and thriving where they may have felt stuck. Again, I worked hard in my own way, but many just saw it as slacking off. From some views, it was self-indulgent. For me, it is a job, a networking**

**opportunity, and experience. It's a joke for others. My colleagues' reactions to my version of work made me a stronger person, and able to not take people's opinions to heart. If I was insulted every time someone disapproved of my resumé, I'd never be where I am.**

Music school students need their professors' support to become as artistically and theoretically informed as possible. They also need the support of the professional scene in order to grow an admissions-paying audience base and to establish themselves as commercially-viable in the eyes of the local industry. In spite of a lively music culture in St. John's, these are two distinct social worlds that often do not overlap.

The membership of MusicNL, the key funding agency for musicians throughout the province, consists mostly of non-classical musicians, has a staff and board of directors made up mainly of musicians whose careers are in non-classical music, and its office is located downtown, where nearly all performances of non-classical music happen. Classical music on the other hand is mostly taught/learned and performed in the centre of the city, on or near Memorial University's campus, away from downtown. Even though the city is small and some musicians in this study cross over to multiple genres, the contrasting genre settings and social worlds can make it challenging for musicians to be noticed consistently across the scene and by its different audiences. Crossover efforts are attempted, however. The Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra (NSO), for example, will invite guest rock, jazz, or country artists to headline special concerts, while some classical musicians play or sing in non-classical bands downtown. Also, classical ensembles periodically popularize their repertoire to appeal to non-classical tastes. Even so, no matter what style a musician might visit once in a while, the home base for classical music in St. John's is unquestionably distinct from that of non-classical

music. The ways in which these different music worlds are structured to help their respective participants achieve career goals are different, and this can be frustrating for musicians attempting to be accepted as members of both.

*“Ernest”*

**I saw something greater than just being a classical singer. I wasn’t content to be a one-trick pony. I wasn’t content to just pursue a career as a classical singer. I loved too many styles of music. I loved too many outlets in music, in terms of singing and instruments. I loved it too much for everything else to just become a hobby. (...) I loved music too much to be in a box. To be a classical singer, that’s a box.**

Another participant, who also went through Memorial University’s music school, did not see classical music as confining in the way Ernest described, but did note a substantial disconnect between institutional cultures and occupational realities, with implications for musician employment in St. John’s.

*“Russell”*

**I saw this with so many of my peers going through music school. A lot of them have no grasp on what kind of work is out there, or they have a misinformed grasp of what kind of work is out there, only to find there are no jobs. But if you want work, look down that street. You can be playing every single weekend if you wanted to. You can be making thirty or forty grand a year. Now you work your ass off in clubs and stuff like that, but that’s how you get your name out there, and you can start to pick and choose your work. But people don’t realize the opportunities that are in this city for music. It results because there are three or four institutions and they don’t talk to each other, and everyone has a different idea of what kind of work there is. It’s the same amount of ignorance on the George Street perspective looking into the university perspective. They don’t understand how the orchestra works, how the union works, stuff like that. So it’s mind boggling.**

Meanwhile, twenty participants (37.0%) pursued degrees or diplomas in disciplines other than in music. Five did so primarily to rely on non-music careers for their livelihood, but they maintain frequent work as music performers as an additional source of income. Two attained non-music degrees to work in those fields in order to save enough money to invest in

their music work that they hope would eventually replace their non-music employment. The remaining thirteen have degrees in other fields, as a potential vehicle towards other work if their music work proved to be economically unviable. Only three (15%) of those twenty who did not pursue a music degree have either left their music careers or are considering leaving. One of these participants derives a substantial portion of her overall income from music performance, yet does not identify as a professional musician because she does not hold a university degree in music and has employment in arts administration. Her work in music is principally oriented to the conception of her art as a business.

*“Barb”*

**I think that’s why I never offered to be part of your study before, because I don’t call myself a professional musician at all. I refer to myself as a community player. But I guess rationally a professional is someone who makes a living by playing and making music, which is actually what I’ve done... which I’ve always done. My main source of income is music and not from my work in business (*laugh*). But I don’t feel like one (*a professional musician*). Because I never finished a university program, I never felt validated as a professional. Although I’m learning now that I’ve made more money than most professionals (*laugh*).**

Barb’s self-assessment as a non-professional in spite of making more money from music than from other sources speaks to a status that she feels accompanies a university degree in music. She has a popular reputation as a professional in her instrument, but rejects identifying as a professional because she feels she has not acquired sufficient cultural capital (and, therefore, symbolic capital) to claim this status. This is consistent with Lena and Lindemann’s (2014) finding that the presence or absence of certain markers of cultural capital, including acquiring a university education in arts fields, can have an impact on whether artists identify as professionals.

Seventeen of the twenty musicians who pursued degrees in fields other than music are established with strong, popular reputations. None of the twenty have careers in classical music. While not specifically referenced in the narratives, this difference in genre representation is interesting. Participants who identified as classical musicians appear to be more solidly entrenched in their fields, perhaps due to their formal training beginning at an earlier age, than participants who are not classically-trained and whose specialty is in non-classical genres. It might be that the later childhood starts in non-classical music allowed for additional time to consider and prepare for potential alternative education and career paths. This group also contains six of the nine total participants whose careers are based entirely in performance. This seems to confirm distinct differences between the experiences of classical and non-classical musicians in St. John's as was first noted in Chapter Four. Classical musicians not only receive their training from a much earlier age than non-classical musicians (Creech, 2008a), but the narratives show that they also have to work at least as hard to establish their careers as their non-classical fellow musicians, even after experiencing many more years of formal training.

Two musicians chose not to pursue additional formal music education, instead immersing themselves in the music profession immediately following high school.

*“Cecil”*

**We started playing originally at this young musicians stage thing that we could go to. We'd play there and from there people recognized us, and we got more comfortable on stage obviously (...) and people were like “Whoa, these kids are pretty young and really talented at what they're doing, so we should start having them play gigs.”**

Cecil has not attended university or college, and created a band that became popular. He divides his time between his band, solo performing, and his non-music day job, which he

estimates takes up close to 70% of his time but the money for which goes to support the costs of his low-paying music work. In spite of the time and income imbalances between his music and non-music work, he identifies primarily as a professional musician, dedicating his nights and weekends to his music.

Cecil's self-teaching did not result in a fundamentally different experience from those of the 52 participants whose trajectories included extensive university education. Self-employment in music is more flexible than most other types of work, and a valuable opportunity to discover how much control musicians can have over their career direction. Meanwhile, non-music work provides support for music work as well as for possible career alternatives. The narratives show that keeping both alternatives current, at least in the early career phase, enhances their chances of employment somewhere. All participants appear to have consciously prepared for either the best possible work options available in music or the best possible alternatives - including combining two careers, or eventually exiting the music profession with higher education in an alternate field.

Both the School of Music and the downtown music scene attract emerging professional musicians with the promise of career opportunity. Field observations over the course of this research, as well as my own career observations, show that the classically-trained trombone player, composer or opera singer who graduates from Memorial University's School of Music faces no more or less career certainty than the folk singer-songwriter or punk electric guitar player. The School is a place of formal learning and a place to be officially graded. Downtown is not a place where musicians are graded, and is a place of leisure and entertainment. But that casualness of the downtown musical world disguises a no less critical audience. In spite of

contrasting ways of preparing new musicians, neither scene is a route towards protection against uncertainty, even for those with university music degrees and a lifetime of learning. The greatest chance for career advancement for any musician in any genre goes to those who can withstand the huge waves of emotional highs and lows associated with constantly changing audiences throughout their careers.

*“Sam”*

**When you’re 16 or 17, you’re making deadly money. And then all of a sudden, you know, you’re in your 20s with a masters degree, and you’re like “I’m still making the same money!” Thanks to the oil boom, it’s getting really expensive, so...**

Sometimes those unpredictable waves of temporary support for music work exacerbate frustration, impatience and anxiety over whether one will ever be able to make a living in music over the long term. This is a time for many when some of the first realities of trying to turn music into a long-term, wage-earning job are encountered.

### **5.c Dealing with Rejection**

Among the first objectives participants identified when their careers started were to gain fundamental career skills, establish niche markets, and earn acceptance with industry agencies and among established musicians. In spite of the presence of several musician-oriented institutions (MUN, MusicNL, ArtsNL, CFM), the inescapable reality for most participants is that they are entering a world of self-employment, armed mainly with talent and education, but with little training in some of the most essential administrative skills necessary for managing their careers. Many participants become adept at making themselves likable and maintaining a core of strong friendships and professional partnerships. In spite of considerable

competition for attention and funding, there are few instances in the narratives of longstanding damaging relationships. Establishing and maintaining friendships, some of them professionally strategic, is critical throughout the entire career process (Zwaan & ter Bogt, 2009; Brown, 2012) and can serve as protection against employment instability and rejection.

Severe criticism can dash music career plans in an instant for musicians starting out. In the course of this research, the following experience was observed in fieldwork. A young St. John's singer planning a career in classical music was told by a professional musician that his voice was "not viable." The critic went on to let the singer know that with more technical vocal work in a graduate program, he could vie for a career in the classical world but that at this early stage he was not professionally ready. The critic's comments were devastating to the young singer who hastily decided over the next twenty-four hours to end his music career plans and return to school in an unrelated discipline. Until that moment, the young singer's voice had been the envy of his peers, and he had received only praise throughout his life from family, audiences and teachers for his vocal skills. This critique from a professional, no matter how truthful and well-intentioned, served as a massive blow. But such is the daily reality of living life as a musician, as confirmed by many of this study's narratives.

*"Ernest"*

**That's what sets musicians apart. You put so much more of yourself in what you do in your profession. It is so personal. To be a musician is to put yourself out there, everything you're capable of every day. And it's really hard to not take stuff personally because what you do is so personal. So you gotta have a really thick skin and you've got to be receptive, because ultimately you make a living based on the people who buy your music and come to your shows and invest in you.**



Ernest is describing the challenge of converting cultural and social capital into economic gain, especially challenging if economic viability is not considered early on. The interviews left a few questions unanswered. What distinguishes a young musician starting out who chooses to respond to critique with greater determination to succeed from one who decides to exit the scene entirely? Are those who are able to withstand critique necessarily happier or more successful than those who choose another occupation in which performance is less likely to be met with criticism? On the cusp of entering the professional world of music making, critique takes on a much more serious tone that can make, alter or break plans for a music career: liked by some, disliked by others, told one day how fantastic they are and the next day that they are “not viable” or as “good” as someone else.

*“Kim”*

**Everyone in this generation is told they’re special. And the truth is everyone is expendable. Everyone. And they don’t get that. And that’s a problem for a lot of up-and-coming musicians. When it doesn’t happen, they don’t believe it. It’s somebody else’s fault.**

So what is all this preparation for, then? Young musicians become committed to music at an early age, supported by family and enjoying enriching relationships with their teachers, only to be graded, sorted, and ranked for work that comes and goes, or might not be available at all - depending on how much they and their music are liked by others. As “Cindy” drew closer to her career in music performance, she encountered a professor in her graduate degree program who she says was anything but supportive. She would like to establish her performance career locally then expand it abroad. Her ambition, however, seemed to clash at times with some teachers she perceived as set to slow or bar her entry into the professional world.

*“Cindy”*

**I had a really nasty teacher. A really nasty well-known teacher who, in my first lesson, she was like, “You sound like crap. This is shit. I can’t believe you’d bring this to me. You can’t play like this here. You’re blah, blah, blah, whatever.” And that just destroyed me. There’s a way to be tactful and say, “This is not prepared up to the standard that it should be.” (...) I went to undergrad super-confident. Whatever. My masters, I was not in a good place.**

It is interesting to note sharp contrast between the fondness with which musicians spoke of their music teachers as children and the way they refer to their university music teachers. Of the 32 participants who attended a university or college classical music undergraduate program, only 15 mentioned their instrumental or voice professor at all, and usually not with pleasant recollections. This is dramatically in contrast to their fond recollections of being mentored and encouraged by private teachers and parents at a younger age. Childhood memories of music learning seem to be what many participants prefer to recall, describing vividly their surroundings, the fun of music-making, and love for their teachers. By the time young musicians enter a university school of music, some may already have experienced professional music work and are now being taught by fellow professionals – music professors working in an institution where employment as teachers and performers is secured – whose experiences as musicians can be in contrast with the experiences and goals of the students. As a result, students at this level of training may regard relationships with peers as beneficial to advancing their careers, if not more so, as their relationships with professors (Adler, 1979).

As Kim suggests (page 151), praise showered on young musicians’ by their families might not be a realistic representation of their talent, career potential, or of trying to earn a living in music. When settings and audiences shift from apprenticeship to professional life,

praise is hard to achieve and criticism difficult to accept. Cindy's experience almost forced her exit from music. A lifetime of artistic development that leads to more years of trying to convince one public after another of one's worthiness for the work is not for the faint of heart and is likely a reason many musicians opt for alternative employment: not always as an outright exit from professional music, but certainly as a means of financially and emotionally shoring up their musician lives with some normalcy, predictability, and routine manageable expectations.

#### **5.d Day Jobs**

Most participants started their careers, and many continue, working in other jobs to supplement their low performance income and to offset early career costs, including tuition and purchases of instruments and gear. The term "day job" is used here to refer to musicians' work outside of their primary activities as musicians. While "day job" implies work that takes place during the daytime, it is a term commonly used by musicians in this study to refer to any work that is not their music work, including jobs that take place at night.

At the time of the interviews, all participants were actively engaged in performing music (including the nine who had left the occupation who now perform mostly for free). All but two participants at some point in their careers combined performance with other work, usually starting at the earliest stage of their career. Twenty-seven participants (50%) combine their performance work with various kinds of non-music jobs. Fourteen (25.9%) teach music as their only other non-performance work. Nine (16.7%) earn their entire income from

performance (that is, not combined with other music work or non-music work). Four others (7.4%) work in fields of music other than teaching but not in other non-music work.

If the goal is to remain in St. John's as a performer, then a career based solely on performance in only one band, or as a soloist, is unlikely given the small population, limited number of venues, and diversity of music audiences can choose from. Two of the participants who only perform music for a living started out, and have since spent most of their careers, working in multiple groups simultaneously. Multiple performance opportunities for them proved to be a satisfying and lucrative substitute for taking on non-music jobs, but such experience is not common among participants.

*“Ernest”*

**In St. John's there is a large degree of “The more you do, the more you get.” The more you're seen in the public eye... and when I say “public eye” I don't mean audiences. I mean musicians. The more active you are, the more work you will get. It's the same reason why earlier on in my career when I was trying to get more work and trying to be more active, I'd be downtown all the time just walking around, just going to coffee shops, to just sit there and have a coffee and just socialize. That's how you got work.**

Ernest once again speaks of the importance of starting early in the career to acquire social capital for the purpose of converting it eventually into economic capital. Many participants either could not afford, or were unwilling for other reasons, to start their careers exclusively in performance without other income sources. Instead, they balanced performance work with other music work, including teaching music privately, songwriting, composing/arranging, sound engineering, or management of other musicians' work. They also expanded their performance capabilities beyond one style. Willingness to adapt to a variety of requests from prospective hirers is essential to creating a reputation of reliability and flexibility, helping to position the musician for success in obtaining future work (Dobson,

2010). Some participants say that focusing on one specialty at the earliest career stage can be limiting, depending on the instrument and genre. A classically-trained pianist, for example, who wants to work in Newfoundland as a classical pianist can only earn sustainable income if willing to adapt to any style of music requested for weddings, conferences, and other private functions, as well being able to learn additional like vocal coaching, accompanying and private teaching. Most classical musicians in this study regularly accept performance opportunities in non-classical styles, and there is plenty of crossover between genres. Such adaptability enables more performance income. The downside is that their initial performance objectives can be compromised, at least in the short term, as attention shifts to areas outside of their initial interests.

*“Mitchell”*

**It was just trying to acquire the financial stability that I needed to pay rent and to do things that I didn’t have student loans for. I ended up teaching close to seventy students a week. I did that for two years, and I made more in those two years than I’ve probably made since (*laugh*). But what ended up happening was I looked at my life and realized that I hadn’t written much music in those two years. I was playing some shows but not a lot. And I quickly realized, “Hey! I’m not a musician right now. I’m a music teacher.” And I didn’t want to do that.**

Many participants also take on non-music jobs at the start of their music work, including food service, retail or office administration. A career in performance alone seems to be sustainable only after many years of building up a financial reserve from a combination of performance and other sources. Musicians with a performance-only goal also have to be willing and able to travel frequently outside of St. John’s. That costly requirement is made easier if they have enough recognition to consistently attract a large audience and/or are successful in attracting financial support from other sources such as funding agencies.

Participants who eventually were able to concentrate their income-earning exclusively on performance first spent more than a decade doing various other types of work in combination with performance.

*“Joshua”*

**One leg of a tour might suck, or two of the three nights in a place might be brutal and you’ll feel like you’re being robbed. That’s the nature of going full time. But I’ve waited until I could minimize the number of those gigs as much as possible. The only way I can do that is by keeping a job where the music has been supplementary to a certain degree. Now it pays me more than my day job, which is the ideal goal. But it took a lot of years to get there.**

The dilemma for most musicians comes down to having to surrender their focus on specific music work for the sake of making enough money overall to support their artistic endeavours (Shank, 1994), while never knowing for certain how long they will have to do so. Some participants revealed that undertaking other types of work, in spite of generating more income overall, rendered their music careers more unstable. Many of those other jobs come with predictable, regular pay. This is a welcome alternative for some participants who start considering other career choices in addition to, or possibly instead of, music. Their focus becomes more dispersed as jobs and interests compete for their time and energy, and compromise their confidence with a music career.

*“Alexis”*

**(Non-music job) is twenty hours a week, and music is the rest (laugh). It’s when I’m not asleep. It’s constant. To the point where I actually just got carpal tunnel and I’ve had to slow down, ‘cause I’ve been playin’ like three gigs a week. I will always devote as much time as humanly possible to this. My dream obviously is to quit my day job, go straight to full time music. I haven’t done that yet. I haven’t thrown all my eggs in one basket yet, for the fear of “Oh my gosh! How am I gonna do this?”**

Alexis is facing a career conflict that many musicians experience, choosing between the work they love and the work that is more likely to deliver greater stability. Musicians can

be so committed to and entrenched in music that it becomes the only work they know, and they may be eliminating other career alternatives if financial viability from music alone does not work out (Nagel, 1988). The narratives reveal that few musicians, their parents, or even music teachers explicitly discuss the earning power and career potential of music. This might explain why many musicians' work commitments at the stage of starting out in the career can appear to outsiders as somewhat haphazard: an assortment of part-time jobs in addition to part-time performance, even with university degrees in hand.

### **5.e Working for Free.**

All participants spoke of the start of their careers as consisting of non- or low-paying performances to build their audience base. Even into their careers, some continue to accept unpaid work to keep up their profile. Participants agree that getting paid for music-making lends credibility to their efforts as professional musicians. Deciding how much to charge and how long to accept work without pay lingers throughout most musicians' careers. Much depends on the stage of the career, the event, and who is making the request to perform. But there are no standardized rules or even traditions to follow in making these choices. Musicians set their own personalized standards of acceptable remuneration, and even those are movable depending on a number of factors. Are they being asked to play for a family function, a charitable fundraiser, a conference, a wedding? What if the wedding is for friends or if the conference is organized by someone they know personally?

*“Keith”*

**I try to get paid for the most part, but I also know the reality of trying to get people to do stuff. So sometimes I don't ask about the pay. If something's coming up and it seems like something that might be a self-funded project and it's someone I really respect**

**artistically... But I do try to get paid as much as possible because everything takes so much time.**

Most other professions explicitly state how much workers will get paid, generally based on seniority, type of work, organizational hierarchy, and so on. In the local music scene, there are rarely circumstances where professional fees are clearly stated. Frequently, there are verbal agreements on remuneration not supported by written contract. This informality can result in an opportunity for payers to renege, delay, or renegotiate payment after the work has been started.

*“Isabel”*

**It was awful. They wanted a different sound than what we were. So a big group of people came in and we had all of our stuff set up to play, and he asked us not to play. As soon as we set up, he said “I just got a DJ.” He wouldn’t allow us to get up, and then he didn’t pay us. He pretends he doesn’t know me when he walks by. But that’s something that I will never do to someone. I will look them straight in the face to acknowledge them. I’m not gonna burn any bridges.**

Musicians are reticent to reveal how much they make, or else are unaware of it themselves, as suggested by vague responses to the income questions. Several participants also said that they do not know how much their colleagues who do similar work are charging. A few participants command substantially higher fees for performing and teaching than others doing similar work, but the matter of when a certain rate of pay is acceptable and whom to charge for a variety of music services remains highly individual and arbitrary. Pianists in St. John’s, for example, often charge a different rate for teaching than for accompanying, and sometimes accompaniment rates vary depending on the importance of the event as perceived by the pianist.



An informal conversation in addition to my interviews revealed one instance of an album recording in which several professional musicians collaborated with the main featured recording artist. Instead of being paid a standard fee across the board for equal contributions to the project, the guest artists were asked individually and privately by the leader what their pay expectation was. The result was a massively divergent pay range, but the musicians did not appear to object to the inconsistency, each apparently satisfied to work within their own means. One took part in the project for no pay at all because of a personal friendship with the project leader.

Perhaps musicians are reticent to share information on remuneration because of concern that their income is not representative of their efforts, worth, success or lack thereof, and therefore their status as musicians. It might be uncomfortable for musicians otherwise treated as equals in the music scene to know one another's income, particularly if there are wide discrepancies in spite of their doing similar work. Or they may feel that by emphasizing earnings they are violating the value artists place on creating art for art's sake. But as long as the conversation is hushed, there really can be no way to precisely measure musicians' true rates of pay, or to determine whether common occupational measurements, like years of service or hours of work, can be used to develop a standard. Most participants said they accepted lots of work for no pay when they were starting out, and many still occasionally do. The challenge they face is in trying to emerge from a reputation as a musician who will happily work only in order to gain some public exposure.

Based on my field and career observations, what a musician eventually charges, even if not consistently, has a lot to do with their instrument and genre. Pianists and guitarists are

often asked to play accompaniment for other musicians, or as solo background music, and their rates may vary according to the event because they happen to have a higher volume of work as performers than, say, a singer or percussionist who would not normally perform without other instrumentalists to join them. Because the gigs of these artists might be fewer, their rates may be different. Some may charge more as kind of a premium for their quality but also to compensate for infrequency of work; someone else may charge less because they do not have a lot of experience, or because they must accept just about any amount for the opportunity to perform.

How much to charge also has a great deal to do with the relationship musicians have with the people in their social and professional networks. Remuneration can depend on the degree to which the relationship is intimate or impersonal (Zelizer, 2004). Impersonal relations can lead to less room for fee negotiation than, say, a personally-connected work situation that may instead result in a kind of barter system involving, for example, lending instruments or gear, or doing free or low-paid work in exchange for the same.

Musicians starting out might need to become aware of income discrepancies for music work, bracing themselves to accept some work for no pay, while taking care not to develop a reputation of being a “cheap” musician. The solution to this conundrum is not easy and seems to take, as Ernest believes, a leap of faith in oneself.

*“Ernest”*

**You don’t call a plumber up to come over to your house and negotiate their wage or decide what they should be paid based on the work that you want them to do for you that day. The plumber would walk out. (...) It’s so grey because it depends on where you’re at in your career. If you’re starting out and trying to fill a portfolio to get your name out there, it’s pretty hard to just turn down a gig, to turn down work, even if the pay isn’t great. But at the same time, if you’re early in your career, chances are the pay isn’t**

**gonna be so great because you don't have the experience to back it up – the experience to demand the higher wage. It's like a "Catch 22."**

Some interviews indicate that when starting out, it is useful to be flexible, but aware of the perils of being too flexible. Emerging and established professionals alike have significant costs to cover and want to command a fee to establish their reputation and to offset costs; but their world also consists of other similar musicians who might be equally qualified, with significant costs to manage, but are eager to work for free nevertheless. This is a problem, as hirers are seeking a professional service in a market where some expert musicians are willing to give their work away for free for the sake of gaining a performance opportunity. It also highlights the difficulty of distinguishing between amateurs and professionals, and of defining oneself as one or the other without offending anyone or harming one's own reputation.

Fletcher and Lobato (2013) write that musicians will, in essence, pay to be heard, even if they know the transaction is exploitative, but that there is a reciprocal relationship in that the sponsor is seeking favourable profile by supporting the artist and the artist may secure future work. Tension between economics and creativity is common among participants. Some report feeling conflicted between being paid for playing familiar music that audiences know and want to hear, and their desire to create new music which might not receive popular support but for which the musicians will receive a different kind of reward, as it taps into their highest levels of expertise.

*"Harry"*

**I just can't do it. Someone of my experience and training, to pay me a few hundred bucks for a week's worth of rehearsals and a weekend of shows, I just can't do it. Sweatin' my ass off, trying to get to rehearsals, bringing thousands of dollars of musical equipment, and years and thousands of dollars of practise and training to get paid like five bucks an hour. (...) If I'm just going to make music, I'd rather have something**

**creatively and artistically for me pushing my boundaries and making me think, and maybe making the audience think, and maybe make nothing, rather than, you know, playing some musical for some money.**

While Harry has decided to refuse low-paying uncreative work, there are many other musicians, perhaps younger, less experienced, or amateur, who will gladly play those same shows for the same amount he was paid, or even for nothing. There seems to be general acceptance that the possibility of being paid little to nothing is firmly entrenched in the local music scene, and this replicates how music performance begins in musicians' lives in the first place – playing for free because people want to hear them play. The earliest commitment to music was always to its fun and play, not to work in an occupational sense. The narratives on the start of music careers indicate the challenge of transitioning into a world of remuneration based on arbitrary and shifting benchmarks of value.

Most participants spoke passionately on the issue of working for free, with widely diverging opinions. Some regard colleagues who perform for free as undercutting opportunities for others and perpetuating a general perception of low value. Numerous other musicians, however, are glad to donate their talents to charities or to fellow musicians. When starting out, some musicians do not contest working for free because they place more value on the opportunity to work than on what they or anyone else thinks it is worth. The risk is that hirers come to believe that some musicians will be satisfied to play for no pay in exchange for an opportunity to perform, and musicians themselves may unwittingly foster that belief because of their humility and reluctance to ask for more. Some musicians achieve a high fee-for-service almost immediately after starting out, but for most it is a slow, years-long process of easing their patrons into accepting certain standards of remuneration.

*“Joshua”*

**A free gig is a precedent every time. “Sorry I’m unable to do that. Thank you for asking.” Making it so that the decline is not suggested as “I don’t support what you’re doing.” Free gigs don’t get you anywhere. Fairly early on when I started to get into more of it being part of my income, I got pretty hung up on the idea of not giving it away.**

There are some questions left unanswered by the interviews. Are audiences and other patrons actually unwilling to pay more for local talent than they have been paying, or are local musicians simply reluctant to take their self-determined pay rate to a higher level out of fear of pricing themselves out of the market? Why might local audiences sometimes spend more than \$50 per person to see some local talent but not as much as \$10 to see other local musicians who are equally talented? Are local musicians hurting themselves with their humility and hesitation to raise their fees, leading audiences to believe that low prices somehow represent a lower calibre of talent? The answers might never be known without speaking with patrons, but certainly many musicians’ pay expectations when starting out are very low and are often not much surpassed even when they are well into their careers. It is unknown whether this is due to competition in a labour market that cannot restrict entry, to lack of self-confidence, or to fear of putting a price on a “gift.”

## **5.f Fitting In: The Music Industry and the Music “Community”**

In a city where there are few managers of music careers, musicians are usually left to their own devices of self- management and self-promotion when starting out. Some emerging musicians access project funds as well as public and peer attention by joining one or more of the local musician-oriented organizations. For the purposes of this research, the music industry for St. John’s musicians refers to the network of professional agents that serve musicians’

career interests. These include two key funding associations (MusicNL and the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council [ArtsNL]), a musicians' rights association (CFM), alternate sources of funding and sponsorship (for example, government or private sources), music venues (most commonly concert halls, bars, and churches), music retailers, studios, technicians, media and other promotional outlets, and fellow musicians.

The careers of even the most dedicated musicians are restricted if they do not have the courage, motivation, or access to promote their output to media and other industry supporters. Their work demands an interesting mix of confidence and modesty, and this is a balance they must weigh when asking for support from the industry. In some instances, humility can be a barrier when jostling for attention among a throng of ambitious musicians for potential income sources. Too much humility risks being overlooked and having one's work not taken seriously enough to gain support. Musicians must show enough self-confidence to sell their products to promoters and buyers, but also take care not to seem over-zealous or publicly critical of their competition. Coming across as too confident can put people off. Local musicians are so well known to one another that their reputation, for better or for worse, can last a very long time.

*"Todd"*

**I think that most musicians recognize that the musical scene in St. John's is very complicated. It's a complex series of relationships and expectations. And the ones who are happiest here seem to be the ones who manage those expectations. I can think of a few who are constantly griping about certain aspects of the scene and then trying to make changes but in a belligerent kind of way. We have this stubbornness, and those are the people who are the less happy. So I don't think you have to be complacent to enjoy yourself in the St. John's music scene. You have to strive for change, but you have to accept that it's really complicated. It's like a family. And you can't suddenly decide to just start kicking things around and getting things the way you want, because it's just going to backfire.**

The music scene described as “like a family” features through all stages of musicians’ careers and lives and in some ways is a reflection of Zelizer’s (2004) “circuits of commerce” wherein work negotiations are dynamic, meaningful and based on a long spectrum of relationship intimacy between the negotiating parties. It was seen that in the earliest phase of identification with music that musicians’ talents and interests are enabled mainly by parents and teachers. Their music occupations, however, are fostered by key industry agents who critically assess musicians’ potential to grow an audience and generate revenue. Musicians are expected to create a similar sense of coming together with discerning audiences whose support must to be captured and retained to ensure career viability.

Informants’ narratives suggest that the idea of a “music community” is both genuine as well as deliberately constructed. Audiences enjoy the atmosphere and tradition of the music community as part of their leisure activities, while musicians carefully cultivate that experience as a necessary part of their work. On the part of musicians, the music community is a product of strategic planning and partnerships promoted as something pleasant and relaxing. It is shaped in part by long-term friendships, but also by short-term partnerships of convenience among musicians, between musicians and audiences, between audiences and venues, and between musicians and venues.

Participants described a wide variety of daily interactions among themselves ranging from pleasant and supportive to quiet jealousy. Most relationships among musicians work very well and lend themselves to creating for patrons the intended effect of camaraderie. What might appear to an audience as musicians having fun together on stage is often the product of a carefully managed appearance, involving behaviour appropriate to the venue and audience, a

dress code designed to appeal to the crowd, a style and quality of music suitable to the occasion and venue, and emotional conveyance of the music (Auslander, 2004). An audience satisfied with the appearance and sound of the musicians and venue will return for more, and the venue will hire or invite the musicians to return.

Performance, therefore, involves considerably more than playing “good” music well for an audience, and professional musicians know this. When they perform music, they are also performing emotions involved in playing it (Palmer, 1997). But not everyone in a band, choir or orchestra shares the same career goals or even opinions about the quality of music at hand. There usually needs to be compromise in accepting the music chosen and in accepting the leadership of one person, even though everyone in the ensemble might be equally skilled (Faulkner, 1973b). This is something that is learned as part of becoming a professional musician. Getting along is a relatively new demand that becomes part of the work, and if not successfully mastered can mar the music itself, threatening to pose a strain on the career and on the idea of a music community. “Jeffrey” describes his frustration with his ensemble taking more time on stage than he feels is necessary.

*“Jeffrey”*

**My blood would be boiling when they wouldn’t know when to get off the fucking stage because, “Oh they like me!” So they’d keep fucking singing. This stuff would just make my blood boil. Can you just get off the stage and let the people go? Let them go. Let *me* go. Now, these people are friends of mine. (...) I shut up and got paid.**

Jeffrey’s experiences show how emotions can cut across the physical world of being on stage for long periods of time and the social worlds of interaction with his audience and fellow performers. His performance expression on stage and his private expression to me show



how emotions are often the product of a range of events that ultimately have to do with the musicians' public reputation and professional relationships (Fox, 2015).

The music community is referred to by some musicians as "tight knit." That idea is challenged in some interview discussions on competition and conflict among peers and within the industry, but certainly musicians do tend to support one another especially within established cliques of friends and colleagues. Musicians starting out in their careers may find the music community so tightly knit that it is not easy to break into pre-established friendship/partnership cliques, and even harder to separate from them if it is later found that they do not serve their own career objectives. Signs of competition and disagreement are fairly common, but many participants did not seem comfortable speaking about this. This may be an outcome of my role as a fellow musician-researcher, known to each other and working in the same community as my research participants.

One of the biggest challenges on the local scene is to manage competition or conflict with grace and respect, while retaining their work and cooperative reputation in the community. This is perhaps why competition is deliberately muted and underplayed. Jealousy and envy can and do happen, but musicians appear to be quite sensitive to their destructive potential. When working closely together, they go to great lengths to ensure that competitive feelings do not interfere with work and that disagreements are quickly resolved.

*"Rebecca"*

**I think we're gonna be able to talk through it and sort it out. It's not an interpersonal conflict. It's just something we have to sort out. It is a challenge given that we're all friends and we want to support each other. But we also have to come to an agreement that is fair for everybody. It's not a big thing. With my playing colleagues, I don't think I've had any big issues. I don't know. It seems like a pretty healthy community here.**

Music work in St. John's, with no standardized fee structure even among musicians who play the same instruments and styles, demands a personality that can withstand a mix of genuine friendships, fruitful work partnerships, competition, envy, and mixed reviews from many sources. Cultivating professional and personal networks, a reputation for collegiality, and the ability to navigate conflict appear essential to securing a place in the local music scene.

### **5.g The Amateur Conundrum**

Stebbins (1979) made numerous distinctions between amateur and professional work, as well as between several types of amateurs. Music as an occupation stands out from many other occupations because of the frequent co-existence of professional and amateur workers, sometimes making them indistinguishable. Stebbins further noted professional and amateur musicians' prioritizing creation of music over the business of music, and adds that amateur involvement in an occupation is possible only when amateurs and professionals have access to the same tools and participate in the same work. Relevant to my research, he notes that the transition from amateur to professional status is more gradual in the arts. The gradual process is evident in my findings as well as the common occurrence of wage-dependent and decidedly amateur musicians working together. Emerging musicians aspiring to become financially viable commonly accept work for little to no pay for the sake of gaining experience and recognition, working under similar conditions as their amateur fellow musicians who do not rely on music work for a living. At some point, usually out of economic necessity, the aspiring

professionals must set their work and demands for pay apart from amateurs, even though many non-career musicians are of similar calibre.

The narratives reveal that professional musicians do not want to lose their connection to amateur status for at least two reasons: the community places a high value on amateurs; and all musicians began as amateurs. This is why it is important for professional musicians to appear respectful of their humble beginnings. But for some professional musicians, non-professionals without a music career motivation may compromise artistic integrity.

*“Harry”*

**“I’m just doing this for fun” which leads them to be very conservative in perhaps their music-making, which to me, there shouldn’t really be a difference between your philosophical views and your musical life.**

When musicians start out, there is a good chance they are sharing their early career path with friends. Upon becoming professional, they set new performance standards that might include working only with professionals. The choice is defensible in that amateur and professional musicians in the same band will have very different career goals with respect to pay and notoriety. It is difficult to set an artistic and professional standard when there are widely diverging views within a single ensemble.

*“Simon”*

**I would never suggest that there should not be an outlet for people that want to get together and jam, because I think that’s ridiculous. But sometimes that can really muddy the waters between the ‘weekend warriors’ and those who are trying to structure it and trying to do it and pursue it.**

*“Harry”*

**I know teachers in the city who are like, they’re gonna play in a pit band. They’re great players. And they’ll play for whatever because they’re already a teacher. And so they don’t really need the money. Music in this city has a lot to compete with in that you have scads of people who do it for fun and don’t need the money. And then you have an entire industry built on feeding people a certain type of music. That’s a big, huge thing to**

**contend with. A huge thing. So I think those are the kinds of things that make me question some of my gigs.**

Professional musicians tend to be like-minded with respect to dedicating time and money to recording, touring, bookings and so on. Some amateurs with alternate full time careers do not have the same time flexibility, goals or willingness to take on the same costs and career-defining projects as their professional friends. But removal from playing with amateurs risks harming friendships that helped professionals get to where they are in their careers. The balance between protecting prestige and protecting friendships sometimes involves making painful choices, as noted in field discussions with one band leader who replaced his friend in the band, an amateur musician, with a career musician more willing and able to help develop the band and tour. Most musicians take care not to seem ungrateful or forgetful of their own roots as amateurs. Meanwhile, professionals and amateurs alike will be called on to perform for charities, or to help out friends starting their own music careers. So even after the choice is made to become professional, musicians continually alternate between the two worlds throughout their careers.

## **5.h Hoping Someone Shows Up**

Audience attendance is often unpredictable, and musicians' pay dependent on how many people show up. If bad weather interferes, musicians get sick, or media has not taken an interest in promoting an event, income is lost forever unless the gig is rescheduled. These risks can be frustrating, especially for a beginning career musician, and can determine future commitment to the work. Participants who eventually left the scene described conditions of working for long periods without consistent pay, starting from the early stages of their work.

Those who are considering transitioning away from music speak of the same issues. Those who remain long term have managed to endure the early money and attention struggles, most achieving a mix of performance and non-performance music work. No participants realized sudden work success or found a predictable path to a life of financial independence and regular work. Even the most prominent participants had been performing and working in other music and non-music fields for longer than a decade before realizing consistent work and an audience base. Even then, it would take years longer before their income would begin compensating for the earlier years of working for very little.

*“Winston”*

**It is extremely rare for a musician to make their entire living based on one aspect of that career. Only songwriting or only production, for example, are reserved for folks in the upper echelons. The rest of us have to always be multi-tasking and able to balance several income streams at the same time, nearly all of the time. There is no such thing as a day off.**

It takes a high level of emotional endurance to withstand the early part of the career, often to settle for a life of portfolio employment. Winston suggests that the choice to remain in the music profession, exit the profession, or modify music career goals has a great deal to do with whether participants have secured a social network that can advance their careers, and whether they consider the effort to build an audience worth the costs of time and money.

## **5.i Castaway**

Despite a plethora of private and public music teachers, a focused university music program, and a concentrated downtown core of performance opportunities and industry presence in St. John’s, informants’ narratives indicate that there is little career-structured guidance offered to those starting out, especially in fundamental self-employment skills

including basic accounting, marketing, promotion, and financial planning. One participant revealed some time after our interview that he applied for a non-music job because he was not yet making enough money from two years of CD sales and gigs to offset his costs.

In a 2014 media interview<sup>13</sup>, a prominent local musician and manager generated some controversy by stating that local musicians are ignoring the “business side” of their work as musicians and “fail to recognize” the importance of having an audience for their music. One conclusion from his assessment might be that musicians are too humble to be assertive enough to commercially position themselves securely in the volatile, competitive music industry. But it can be countered based on some of these participant experiences and other field discussions that musicians, particularly the youngest and newest, are inadequately informed or educated in becoming and remaining commercially viable and may not have secured the “upper echelons” of networks to which Winston referred.

The media interview also highlighted a discrepancy between the classical and non-classical music worlds in St. John’s in terms of career preparation. Discussions with faculty and students revealed that the MUN School of Music offers a course in career skills, but it is available only to School of Music students. MusicNL offers periodic “town hall” meetings, but those usually have been sparsely attended. The musician interviewed in the media piece advised that musicians can only be successful in these ways - “You need to tour, you need to

---

<sup>13</sup> CBC News. (2014, April 19). Aspiring musicians need to ‘work hard,’ says Bob Hallett. “The business side of it is definitely neglected. A lot of artists are just kind of waiting for something to happen, or they sort of operate in fits and starts,” said Hallett. “They fail to recognize that the biggest part of their job right now is not to be writing a great song — it’s going to be making sure that somebody hears it.” According to Hallett, the music industry is facing big changes, and artists need to learn to keep up. “The days of the industry being able to create rock stars out of nothing are over. An artist really needs to be in a position to do it themselves as much as possible, so you need to find every marketing opportunity you can,” he said.” Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/aspiring-musicians-need-to-work-hard-says-bob-hallett-1.2613872>

find retail opportunities, you need to find opportunities to get on any radio station or show that will play you, you need to cultivate blogs, you need to create an online presence and you need to have something to go on You Tube. That's a lot of work." He is not incorrect, but for many musicians these are all costly and difficult tasks to achieve without significant experience, guidance and financial resources. Radio stations will generally play only music that is artistically and technically well produced. There are few retailers of local music recordings in St. John's. If an artist based in St. John's cannot afford the time or money to tour extensively, then finding retail support outside the city will be difficult. Online presence is more manageable in terms of costs, but competition there is fierce as local and non-local musicians of all genres proliferate. What seems to be lacking is structured guidance for beginning local career musicians to realize those opportunities: a program available to all musicians to show them how to craft a funding application for a specific project, how to market themselves to appeal to mass media, and how to efficiently manage income and revenues. Sporadic courses catering to classical music students or irregularly scheduled community meetings for musicians with diverse career objectives are not enough to help beginning career musicians gain a sound footing in the music scene.

*"Winston"*

**While there is a big scene in Newfoundland, it is easy to get your hooks in there somehow. It's not necessarily easy to hang on and it's not necessarily easy to make a lot of money at, but it is easy to get in with the right people and get to know everybody (...) Be polite, be professional, show up on time, have gear that works, promote your shows as much as you can. Get people out. Be cool at your shows, don't be a jerk. Keep people wanting to come to your shows and try and sell some beer, and eventually you work your way up. Just keep writing, keep playing. You're not fighting anybody else. You're always fighting yourself. You're the only one that's gonna hold you back. You're the only one that's gonna make you succeed. And nobody's gonna do anything for you. Don't expect favours.**

Winston's prudent advice is not unlike that offered in the media interview, but with the added caution that a musician should be prepared to go it alone. He has been composing and performing throughout his career with some success, though with an alternate non-music job to help support his work as a musician.

Without a focused means of acquiring the skills to manage a self-employed career from the start, musicians are often left on their own to acquire essential career skills. Participant interviews reveal that this stage sometimes necessitates living at home with parents into the career, sharing a home with other musicians, accepting gigs for free, teaching privately even with little experience, working in non-music jobs to support music endeavours, going to school to further music education or to create a back-up non-music occupational alternative, competing for funding, or sharing a stage with musicians of varying calibre simply to maintain a presence on the scene. Launching a music career involves compromise, sacrifice and acceptance of a mix of work until a musician is able to focus on one specialty, if that time ever comes. This early career stage is long and filled with uncertainty.

## **5.j Summary and Conclusion – Visibility and Viability**

With age and experience come new venues and audiences. The excitement of performing for appreciative listeners outside the family motivates musicians to continually develop their skills in order to appeal to bigger audiences, but with big tolls to pay, including learning to compete for attention and manage costs of instruments, equipment, venues, promotion and all other tasks of running a music career. Their audience, meanwhile, shifts away from family and towards scrutinizing and fickle publics who bear no responsibility to the



young musicians if they do not like their music. Musicians' intrinsic valuation of music and music-making can thus become clouded by a new orientation that demands administrative skills and assigning monetary value to their work.

Career support comes in several forms in addition to audiences, including taking on other employment, applying to funding institutions, media attention, and befriending fellow musicians whose collaboration might advance the career. But such ancillary support can also detract from music work if, for example, attempts to gain media attention are unsuccessful, or if musician friends have differing artistic and professional objectives. Musicians starting out quickly realize the need to keep adjusting their networks as risks and rewards continually change, along with audiences and collaborations. Changes in professional relationships have to be handled sensitively to retain a reputation of being agreeable and diplomatic.

We have seen evidence in this chapter of the interdependence of cultural, economic, social capitals. Analysis of how musicians' careers are started – by taking into account different genres, career goals, individual family backgrounds, and different kinds of music training – reveal a highly complex career that depends on continuing family support as well as other social and professional relationships that may convert into economic capital. The St. John's music profession is in part forged by a music community, but is also characterized by independence in terms of gaining attention of the music industry.

Wage-earning potential is vague because of a massively diverse range of individual and non-standardized objectives and experiences, as well as divergent ideals among various institutions with respect to career preparation. University music schools and music teachers have their mandates for guiding artistic development, but evidently offer little in the way of

practical career guidance. This appears to be common across many higher education music schools (Thoms, 2015; Bennett, 2009; Juuti & Littleton, 2012; Bennett, 2007; Bauer, Viola & Strauss, 2011; Bauer & Strauss, 2015). Musicians starting out in their careers are essentially cast adrift, armed with exceptional talent and passion for their work, but without certain fundamental career skills.

Bourdieu's capital theory has been criticized because he does not specify genres and subfields within his "fields of cultural production" (Giles, 2015). He has been further criticized because of his implication that artists' are positioned in particular fields because of their social status (Giles, 2015; Coulson, 2010). De Boise (2016) writes that the best way to understand Bourdieu in the context of musicians' work is to examine details and individual contexts of music engagement. As the different experiences among my participants are unpacked, we see far more complicated, individual aspects of music career decisions, especially in the first signs of the importance of constructing networks that they see as beneficial to advancing their careers. Insofar as networks connect groups as well as individuals to one another (Stoddart & Tindall, 2010) and that art worlds are produced from networks of a wide spectrum of participants (Becker, 1982), we can then move beyond Bourdieu's broader notions of artistic fields and into a more descriptive and meaningful understanding of music as work that is derived from "collective action" of "actors with specific interests," interaction that is shaped and re-shaped to suit particular career interests (Crossley, 2015, p. 78).

In spite of the precarious, uncertain nature of music work, many musicians forge on for years, hoping that their work is recognized and economically viable. The following chapter will examine the economic realities of this study's participants.

## Chapter Six: Costs and Rewards

This chapter reveals some practical realities faced by many musicians as they commit to the career and attempt to build their reputation as professionals. It will examine the ways in which earning income and managing costs are interwoven with personal and professional relationships, and the ways musicians balance music work and other employment against the backdrop of their personal lives. Since music industry agencies are common and important sources of revenue and exposure for many musicians, their impact on music careers will also be explored, as well as the challenge musicians face in distinguishing their professional work from that of their highly valued amateur peers.

### 6.a Income

For all of their years of training, education and talent, musicians generally do not realize commensurate pay and experience<sup>14</sup>. Several participants described earning the same for gigs today as they did many years ago, even though their costs have continued to rise. Though most participants forge on as self-employed performers, many say that they are ill-informed about fundamental economic and commercial business practices essential for managing revenues and costs. Some participants are reluctant to label what they do for a living as a “career” or “profession,” and are even reticent about calling themselves musicians - as though they might denigrate people who work as professionals in other fields, or expert

---

<sup>14</sup> Government of Canada, Service Canada. (2013). “As can be seen, this occupation attracts many candidates. It is an occupation that conveys a positive image while also providing creative satisfaction. Competition is nevertheless fierce, and can be seen in many different aspects. For example, according to 2006 census data, approximately 49% of all musicians and singers earned an employment income of less than \$10,000 in 2005, a proportion that is between two and three times higher as that for all occupations (20%), despite a much higher level of schooling.” Retrieved from [http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/qc/job\\_futures/statistics/5133.shtml](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/qc/job_futures/statistics/5133.shtml)

musicians who do not practise music for a living. Adding to the ambiguity of the work, some musicians prefer not to identify exclusively with one genre or sub-genre<sup>15</sup>.

*“Eamon”*

**I don’t think we’re a rock band, but I guess there’s some of that in there... I don’t know. It’s hard to... Singer/songwriter, that’s got its own stigmas. Every genre has its stigma attached to it. But I don’t write for a genre or whatever. I just, like, follow the feeling and wherever it lands, it lands. Um... I always thought it was kind of alternative folk music. But... um... there’s a bunch of artists in the same boat, you know. And “alternative” is just a broad term. Kind of like the same way people would use the term “indie.” When it first came out, it was pretty specific to this basement garage rock. And now it’s just a general term. Same thing with “alternative.” So I dunno. Blanket terms I guess. But somewhere in the folk world, I think anyway.**

Others have identified their work as a calling first and a job second, making it difficult to command a fee. Music work is often performed out of love and regarded by its practitioners as a craft more than as a job, leaving musicians with the challenge of justifying the worth of their product, often by comparing their work to other occupations.

*“Fred”*

**Pipe-fitting is a job. You wouldn’t be doing it if you weren’t getting paid. That’s the difference with music. It’s art versus trade. Musicians, it is their life. No one is doing it for a job, so we would be happy to spend all day and night just making music. Usually the limits come from external factors. So it’s not something that we’re doing to get paid. It’s something that we’re doing anyway, and then people can realize that you can also still pursue that and find a way to earn a livelihood from that. So it’s not the livelihood first and then the music. It’s the other way around.**

---

<sup>15</sup> Snow, Z. (2015, October 1). *Heather Nolan of Lady Brett Ashley speaks on her new album*. The Muse. p.6. “It is ever evolving. We write such a natural flow in each individual song basis that it can be difficult to pin the sound as a whole. There’s some old rock and roll in there. There is indie-pop-meets-indie-rock feel. There can be post-rock moments, funk at times.” – Heather Nolan; Also, Browne, L. & Hayward, S. (2010, April). The New Age of Newfoundland Music: Young Musicians are Bringing Traditional Tunes to a New Generation. *Downhome* (n.p.) “And I think there’s other influences from outside Newfoundland. There’s Irish fiddle style... there’s influences from pop music and rock music. We try to blend it into something that is presentable and other people will enjoy.” - Danny Mills. “I like to consider us ‘New Newfoundland Music.’ We take the music that we grew up listening to and add in a lot of different influences we’ve gathered over the years. It’s traditional Newfoundland music for a new generation.” - Zach Hall.

Fred implicitly identifies Bourdieu's fields of capital production (Hesmondhalgh, 2006), as he notes the predominance of symbolic capital over economic capital in musicians' work, and the opposite prioritization in the work of pipe fitters. Symbolic capital is difficult to quantify and convert systematically into economic capital. Lack of clarity with respect to definition and measurement of musicians' work can leave potential audiences and funders unclear as to exactly what kind of music or artist they are supporting, and the implications for how musicians balance their professional and personal lives are substantial. Numerous participants of my research do explicitly identify with particular genres but also receive very low pay from music, and resort to alternative sources of income to continue their work in music, a finding supported by Throsby and Zednik (2011) and Throsby and Hollister (2003).

No participant was able or willing to precisely state their income from any source over the past year, and some gave minimum-to-maximum ranges spanning thousands of dollars, even though their income was only in the low thousands of dollars. Nevertheless, useful information was provided. Thirty participants (55.6%) estimated that they earn less than \$20,000 annually from performance. Ten of those thirty have been working professionally as musicians for more than ten years. Twenty-three out of those thirty earn less than \$10,000 from performance annually. Six of those twenty-three have been working professionally in music for more than ten years. Only seven participants of the total (13.0%) claim to earn \$40,000 or more per year from performance; all seven have been working professionally for more than ten years; five of them work as classical musicians.

In comparison to the most recent available national data<sup>16</sup>, Canadian musicians earn on average just under \$23,000 annually, barely above the national standard for low income (\$22,600) and more than income reported for this research. For cities with populations ranging from 50,000 to 165,000, the average is higher, at \$28,865. The national median income for musicians is just under \$16,000 (\$20,000 in cities with populations of 50,000 to 165,000), far below the median income of all workers in Canada. Statistics Canada provides employment and income figures only for musicians of Quebec in 2006<sup>17</sup>. It found that 49% of musicians earned income from performance of less than \$10,000 annually, which is in keeping with the findings of my research. It is further notable that my study does not account for inflation and other costs of living and was conducted nearly a decade after the Statistics Canada findings. If performance incomes of St. John's musicians are comparable to income of Quebec musicians, it can be concluded that income for performing musicians in Canada has been static for a decade while costs of living have increased, resulting in a relative diminution of musician income. This is further supported by the Throsby and Hollister (2003) survey of Australian

---

<sup>16</sup> Canadian income for musicians derived from A Statistical Profile of Artists and Cultural Workers in Canada: Based on the 2011 National Household Survey and the Labour Force Survey. Retrieved from: <http://www.hillstrategies.com/content/statistical-profile-artists-and-cultural-workers-canada>

<sup>17</sup> Statistics Canada. Retrieved from [http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/qc/job\\_futures/statistics/5133.shtml](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/qc/job_futures/statistics/5133.shtml). "Finally, some jobs will be filled by self-taught musicians and singers who may have taken private training that does not necessarily lead to a recognized diploma. An indication of this phenomenon is only half of the people in this occupation held a post-secondary degree in the visual and performing arts (including music and voice) in 2006, according to census data. As can be seen, this occupation attracts many candidates. It is an occupation that conveys a positive image while also providing creative satisfaction. Competition is nevertheless fierce, and can be seen in many different aspects. For example, according to 2006 census data, approximately 49% of all musicians and singers earned an employment income of less than \$10,000 in 2005, a proportion that is between two and three times higher as that for all occupations (20%), despite a much higher level of schooling. The labour market situation for graduates of college and university programs also reveals the high degree of competition in this occupation. According to the Quebec Department of Education, Recreation and Sport's Reliance survey, most graduates with a diploma of collegial studies (DEC) in professional music and song techniques usually decide to continue their university education. The small minority who find education-related jobs must get by on a salary that is much lower than the average salary of graduates of technical programs. In fact, this training appears to be used more as a way to access university music programs than to access jobs as musicians and singers."

musicians that found musicians' income from all sources averaged \$30,000 annually, unchanged since the 1980s. Throsby and Hollister's study also confirmed increased investment by musicians in training and education, with little effect on their income. It can be argued based on the findings of this research that musicians, most of them formally trained since early childhood, and with high levels of university education, do not realize pay commensurate with their education and expertise.

In addition, 72% of all artists in Canada report having worked 40 to 52 weeks annually in some capacity (either full time or part time) in their primary field, with 50% claiming to work full time in the arts for the 40- to 52-week period. Few participants in my research were able to estimate the number of hours or weeks per year they work in music performance. Without a specific breakdown of performing musicians, it is difficult to compare national statistics to the numbers reported by my participants. There is, however, one summary statistic available showing that St. John's artists comprise 4.37% of the total St. John's labour force and that the average and median income for St. John's artists is more than 30% less than for the overall St. John's labour force<sup>18</sup>.

What is interesting in my research is the claim of lack of knowledge, and wide approximations, of performance income. Most likely, this is due to the informality of work obligations, variety of payment methods, and quick absorption of income into related costs. But it may also speak to a lack of consistency in what is agreed to constitute musicians' income. While I specifically requested that they distinguish estimates of performance income

---

<sup>18</sup> Artists and Cultural Workers in Canada's Provinces and Territories: Based on the 2011 National Household Survey and the Labour Force Survey. Retrieved from: <http://www.hillstrategies.com/content/artists-and-cultural-workers-canada%E2%80%99s-provinces-and-territories-canadian-municipalities>

from other income, “performance” itself constitutes a host of possible revenue streams that include getting paid per on-stage gig, getting paid per contract, or receiving public or private funding for performance-related projects, CD sales, and more (Thomson, 2013). The many possible revenue streams for musicians obscures an accurate assessment of musician income and highlights even more the complexity of the occupation.

#### **6.a.i “It’s a good profile”: Paying to Play**

No participants said that desire for financial security was a reason for their taking up music as an occupation. All participants entered the field apparently fully aware that it would mean working long hours and making little money. Even though concerns about income eventually become the prime reason most musicians decide to adjust their work balance and modify their career goals, or in the most extreme cases leave the music occupation altogether, musicians generally begin the career with modest objectives. Several participants further said that they would take stock of their career progress in the short term and re-assess. “Frances” and “Mary” work in two distinctly different genres.

*“Frances”*

**I’m not doing it for the money. However, I did say to myself “I have to own a house and I have to have a nice car, and I have to be able to travel every few months.” So, you know, if things are not working out, I’ll just go do something else. But things have worked out.**

*“Mary”*

**Two-and-a-half years ago, we said we’re going to give it two years, and that’s it. Even though things were progressing from a media standpoint, they weren’t making us exist better financially. That wasn’t happening. And we gave our guts for those two years, and then it worked out. That’s what it takes. That’s what this industry... That’s what it takes to make it, is that. I think I’m a workaholic now. (...) My hobby is work (*laugh*).**



Frances was, at least at the start of her career, preparing to move on to other work if music did not meet her financial needs. In spite of their eventual success, she and Mary entered their careers thinking only in the short term. They wanted to make their careers economically viable and were willing to transition away from music if those plans did not work out.

Field observations revealed many instances of low or modest pay objectives. For example, there are numerous musical theatre productions in St. John's that hire live bands and orchestras to support the cast. "Pit" (orchestra pit) musicians spend many hours on their own learning their music, attending rehearsals for up to three hours at a time for at least several nights, then perform a nightly run of several shows each requiring two to three hours of commitment. A young musician who recently completed such a gig excitedly stated to me that he was paid \$650 for a show. He estimated he worked 75 hours in rehearsal and performance, which equates to \$8.67 per hour, well below statutory minimum wage. But he also stated that there are other similar gigs he has played for the same number of hours for no money at all, or for substantially less than that pit gig. So he was quite pleased with getting paid anything, never mind the minimum wage comparison. When I made that comparison his response was, "I never thought about it that way."

In the pit and throughout the music scene, statutory minimum wage does not factor into musicians' pay as performers. There are few guarantees or contracts, many are unwritten, and musicians' pay frequently depends on profit margins that in turn depend on audience attendance – factors unknown until the show is over. The young pit musician could work in a coffee shop for a few dollars more per hour, or take on private music teaching for a

significantly higher rate of pay. But his passion has always been to perform. He was so honoured by the opportunity to play his instrument that any payment was a reward, and he did not even question its falling below the legal minimum for non-self-employed work. Employers paying below minimum wage in any other occupation would face labour and legal repercussions.

Fifty (92.6%) participants said they have worked for no pay, and many who are well into their careers still occasionally agree to perform for free. Only four participants said that they had never worked in music without being paid. Alexis has realized first hand the possibility that musicians who agree to work for free not only threaten to undercut remunerative expectations in an industry that already pays its workers very little, but also unwittingly develop a reputation of willingly giving their talents away – a reputation from which it is very difficult to emerge.

*“Alexis”*

**I wish that musicians would stop playing for free, ‘cause it’s really bad for all of us. Whenever we go to get a gig, people just expect us to do community work or do it for the exposure. And I think that’s insane. I wish that were different.**

There are at least two different types of free work: choosing to play for free, and risking playing for free – that is, not intending to play for free, but ending by doing so. The first type can cover a fairly broad spectrum including benefit shows for charities musicians feel are worthwhile, benefit shows to aid fellow musicians who have fallen on hard times, or benefits musicians may not necessarily have an affinity for but for which they accept to work without pay to further their exposure and reputation.

Some participants said they selectively choose charity concerts depending on the exposure they can give them - potentially to a large radio and television audience. The bigger the production value of the event, the better the musicians will come across to the donating public in appearance, sound and generosity. Participants say that they feel they are kindhearted, but that they also want to look and sound their best as professionals. Some participants view these kinds of choices as a response to the low value placed on their work by the industry, even showing remorse for sometimes doing charitable work for other than wholly charitable reasons.

*“Roger”*

**It’s the type of a business that pays you so little and gives you so little help in so many ways, it forces you into being somebody who thinks the types of things that you really don’t want to think. “It’s a good profile.” Who the fuck would be the type of person that looks at it that way? But the industry that I’m in doesn’t really give me enough money or enough help, so it forces me into being sort of scummy. I feel kind of scummy because it forces you into survival.**

Alexis and Roger draw attention to the struggle between the commerciality and emotionality of musicians’ work. Musicians want and need exposure, feeling on the one hand that they owe the “opportunity” to perform for free to their benefactors. They perform their hearts out, emoting in ways that are appropriate to the occasion, sometimes disguising how they actually feel, managing their emotions and appearance on stage in their own best career interests (Hracs & Leslie, 2013). Alexis enjoys her work immensely, but quietly resents those who gladly work for free. Roger, too, loves his work but is remorseful for performing for strategically-selected non-paying events. Both are examples in the music world of Hochschild’s (1979) social exchange that represent another form of “pay,” of “trying to feel” (p. 17), appropriate to the rules of the occasion or circumstance. Roger adds that the

expectation that musicians are generous with their time has the effect of muting their financial success.

*“Roger”*

**You say it tongue-in-cheek, then you get close to these things and you’re going, “Fuck, we never thought the last thing was gonna happen. Maybe the other thing is gonna happen.” And then one of those things in the end always ends up being financial. “Sure we never thought we’d do this, so maybe we actually can make a bunch of money doing this.” When you’re in music, you feel like you’re never supposed to say that. And this is something that pissed me off from the beginning. For some reason, being an accountant and all these things “I do it for the money, man.” In music you can’t say that. Gonna work for the money. You can say it in every other job. You can’t say it in music. And not that we’re doing it for the money. We do it because we love it, but...**

Occasionally, the merits of performing for free are debated with reference to the merit of the cause itself. Recently, a prominent music retail store in St. John’s closed after many years of serving musicians with specialty instruments and repair service. The owner was noted for being generous with terms of repayment for his musician customers. When news of the shop’s closure was announced on local media, musicians rallied on behalf of the owner and produced a benefit concert with many prominent local artists participating. The benefit was not an effort to keep the shop open, but was more a kind of “thank you” concert for the owner’s years of service to the local scene. All of the proceeds went to the shop owner, who had realized many years of income from musicians, a point not lost in some online debate about the appropriateness of musicians donating their talents in this way.<sup>19</sup>

That particular event illuminated two aspects of St. John’s music culture: the genuine kindness that can be quickly mobilized to produce a no-questions-asked concert to raise

---

<sup>16</sup> Bradbury, T. (2014, October 24). It’s time to return a favour. *The Telegram*. “When one of our own is down and out, we all step up to the plate to help them out. That’s the way musicians roll. “This is going to be an epic night of music and friendship.” – Mark Hiscock. Retrieved from <http://www.thetelegram.com/News/Local/2014-10-23/article-3912967/%26lsquo%3BIt%26rsquo%3Bs-time-to-return-a-favour%26rsquo%3B/1>

money for someone seen as deserving; and the expectation that musicians will respond to a call to help in this way. The latter quality can be problematic. Professional musicians want to be paid for their work and also want to be seen as agreeable and generous. But once the expectation is established that musicians will rally behind certain causes freely, it can become difficult for them to draw a line in the rest of their careers between their professional and charitable selves. Albert is one among many participants who often have difficulty reconciling the two, speaking of one instance when he felt remorse for declining a request to play at a non-paying function, while stating firmly in another moment that he refuses unpaid work. He and some other participants have internalized the belief that music is a *gift*, and as such something that should not be withheld on the basis of pay.

*“Albert”*

**I was out a while ago and she was like “Play the guitar.” I had such a long week. I think I was playing a lot, I was recording, I was singing. I was like, “No, I don’t want to.” I went home after that and I was like, “What do you mean you don’t want to? Why wouldn’t I want to do that for people?”**

**(...)**

**Paid or nothing. I’ll do some if it’s a fundraiser or charity or something like that. Sure. I don’t do shows where it depends on the door. That’s a popular thing these days, is to do a show and everybody splits what’s on the door. I can’t feed my kids on that, right? I’m always trying to work as few jobs outside the entertainment industry as I can.**

A reputation for generosity is part of the charm of musicians in St. John’s, but it also seems to have implications for how much they are paid or how much they are willing to demand. As Roger suggested, no one wants to have a reputation for “not stepping up to the plate” or for being selective with charities based on how much they can enhance their profile.

In 2010, local St. John’s musicians gathered to perform a benefit concert for victims of Hurricane Igor. Ambiguities concerning musicians’ generosity, rights to pay and desires for

exposure were publicly on display. A local television station recorded the concert and broadcast it several times, it said, to help fundraising efforts. Some musicians performed before recording began, while others, oblivious to the ensuing controversy, performed without asking questions about remuneration. Legal and ethical questions emerged after the local office of the Canadian Federation of Musicians (CFM) stepped in to address concerns of some (but not all) musicians over copyright issues and lack of pay by the station, even though this was a benefit concert. Some musicians were aware of these potential issues and others were not. No preceding inclusive conversation about them had taken place among musicians themselves, nor had any industry agency stepped in to inform them of their rights before the concert.<sup>20</sup>

Musicians generally seem uncomfortable questioning the budgets of charitable organizations, even though some are supported by significant backing and well-structured administration. Some participants reasoned that if a charity can afford a concert hall, sound system, and advertisements, then there should also be a budget for entertainment.

*“Beverley”*

**I’m sure the caterers don’t discount, or the flowers aren’t free. So I have a big problem with that. Sometimes you want to do something nice for somebody, and I have a big heart, so I usually say yes. But the times like (*charity*), I’ll say “No. But if you put this much money behind it I’ll do it.” And they go “Oh, okay” and they give it to me which is fine. If I know the organization has lots of money, I’ll...**

---

<sup>20</sup> Bradbury, T. (2010, November 26). Musicians meet to discuss broadcast rights: Concerns highlighted by Igor concert re-broadcasts. The Telegram. p. B5. “They (NTV) didn’t do anything wrong – the crews gave a lot of their time, trying to help out in a time of crisis to raise money for those in need, but we still have artists who are thinking, ‘Oh jeez, they have this footage of me. What’s going to happen to it?’ It raises a lot of questions, and if there had been an agreement, there wouldn’t be those questions.” - Jordan Young.

*“Jeffrey”*

**I used to do benefits for a plethora of causes until I realized you could have a benefit and raise ten thousand bucks and still pay people. I always had a problem with the figure zero. Zero was never working for me. I’d end up taking a cab, moving gear, eating dinner, whatever. So zero was always a problem. I understand tight budgets. But how about fifty bucks? Call it an honourarium. Just something. But zero is a big problem. Always had a problem with that figure.**

The matter can become so unclear and inconsistent that some musicians refuse to perform for free, declining charitable events altogether in spite of the risk of losing potential future spinoff paying work. To those musicians, the time they are being asked to dedicate to a cause is not worth the donation of their talents in hopes of a follow-up paying gig they may never get. In deciding whether to perform for free, Paul uses as one criterion whether the event is for someone who has helped him out financially in the past.

*“Paul”*

**I call it discounted work based on certain projects that I really want to work on, or based on some of the budgets for things. Truthfully, I try to look at it as a golden rule. I’ve had people, incredible people, do work for me at discounted rates or have done some free stuff for me. It was really what allowed the project to happen. The money wasn’t there to do it. It would not have happened if they had not done that.**

The second type of free work happens when profit is the aim, but audience and industry support do not cover costs. St. John’s venues have fairly polarized rental costs. For instance, the few large concert halls in St. John’s, most notably the Arts and Culture Centre and Mile One Centre, are prohibitively expensive for most local musicians without funding support, popular reputation, outstanding promotional efforts, and the type of music for which audiences normally expect to be attentively seated. Most other venues are at the opposite end of the cost spectrum: bars and nightclubs where overhead is relatively low but audiences usually stand, mingle and talk, and where alcohol is served during performances. There are

exceptions, but those are the main general distinctions between venue types in St. John's. In the former case, low audience turnout can mean a financial deficit for the performers. In the latter case of downtown bar/night club venues, audiences will be relatively small given the size of the places, so overhead is low. But if bad weather interferes, or another more popular band is playing at another bar down the street, playing for free can be an unintended outcome.

*"Bruce"*

**In this city, you pretty much have to (*work for free*). If you play a show, you never know what the crowd is gonna be like. You have to accept that fact that you're probably gonna be playing for ten or fifteen people, you know? You're not going to make anything. In fact you're probably going to end up paying to play, because you're probably gonna have to get a cab down, you're probably gonna have a couple of drinks. (...) I was saying to someone the other day, there's only one solid way to make money playing music in this city, is if you want to play covers. Other people's songs.**

Bruce's experience speaks to an issue introduced in the previous chapter where Harry stated his preference to play for nothing if it means preserving the opportunity to create something innovative and thoughtful, as opposed to playing for token money to satisfy popular taste. Bruce is asserting that the best likelihood of making any money is by doing what Harry so detests.

The question of why musicians are so poorly paid is longstanding and highly debatable. Most musicians, because they are self-employed and in portfolio employment, are not protected by wage labour regulations. There is a formal international organization, The Canadian Federation of Musicians (CFM), of which some local musicians are members. It is structured, among other things, to establish pay standards for musicians depending on their role in particular events. The CFM has a St. John's office and, for an annual membership fee of \$155, offers performance contracts for pay, opportunities to contribute to pension plans, and



other services designed to protect musicians' performance rights, complete with a rate sheet of performance fees (Appendix 3). However, not all local musicians are members, so there is disparate pricing happening in the local music scene between members and non-members. Even some members of the CFM do not abide by the rate sheet, sometimes requesting a higher fee, other times a lower one, depending on the hiring party and the event. It does not emerge from the interviews as to why this is the case, but it may simply be due to preference for quickly accepting non-standard, non-binding terms in order to secure a needed gig.

ArtsNL, MusicNL and the CFM have distinct mandates and membership requirements. At a "town hall" meeting jointly produced by the CFM and MusicNL espousing the benefits of membership in either organization (May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, The Ship Pub), there was curiously no representation of ArtsNL even though many musicians receive financial support from that agency. When the moderators were asked why ArtsNL was not represented at the meeting, their response was that ArtsNL is not membership-based. With contrasting membership requirements and procedures for applying for grants and other protections, there is at the institutional level some inconsistency with respect to fees and availability of funding. In spite of the existence of these organizations that have proven beneficial for many musicians, the "town hall", attended by fewer than ten musicians, revealed the absence of formalized occupation-wide standards of pay. And this absence is confirmed by the range and inconsistency of admission prices to music events in the city. There is evidence among participants of this study that some local musicians feel left on their own to determine compensation for work in the music industry, based loosely upon tradition, past experience, or discussions with colleagues.

*“Sophie”*

**It’s hard to navigate because you’re trying to garner the respect that you know you deserve. And if you ever went anywhere else in the country, there’d be money, and people wouldn’t be like “oh, you do this for fun.” I think it’s something about St. John’s. It’s a community, and we’re all friendly and nice or whatever, but I think here is the worst for paying people what they deserve.**

In performers’ private teaching work too, income diverges widely. Private teachers’ revenues are self-determined based on overhead, number of students, fees that are at least partly based on their own perception of demand for their work, and their level of education and/or experience as performers and teachers.

*“Karen”*

**It’s a hard thing for me to think about. How do I put a value on what I’m doing without feeling like I’m being greedy or to give off the wrong message to the public. Then you end up researching what other studios are charging, so then where do you feel you fit? It’s confusing and difficult. (...) I have heard through students and parents different amounts that are happening around, and I guess that’s where it started. Where should I be in relationship to them? I am concerned that I don’t overcharge or undercharge, probably because I do things for free and I just get what I should get, I guess. I don’t know.**

The St. John’s community is described by some participants as being “close-knit.” Close personal and professional relationships are essential, and sharing of experience and even instruments is relatively common. But knowledge – even among friends and close colleagues – of each other’s fees and income is not always shared. When questioned for this study, musicians were unclear about their own income as well as about that of their peers, colleagues or competitors. This lack of clarity might partly be owing to non-standard adaptations unique to each musician. From my insider-researcher position as someone who has not changed performance or teaching rates for many years, it might be that inattention to others’ rates and income has as much to do with securing working relationships – and therefore income - with

clients. As another instance of the emotional labour involved in music work, musicians find it necessary to remain publicly respectful, quietly competitive, and private about their own income.

### **6.a.ii Income and Relationships**

Given the close tie between the social and occupational fields of musicians, it is unsurprising that occupational choices made in the course of working in music have much to do with consideration of one's peers and others in the music industry. It can be assumed that a band of musicians is also a band of friends. The choice to terminate a band may be a result of tensions arising out of money issues – rising costs, too little income to go around – in a field where market and non-market relationships intersect. Money is therefore invested with many career-determining qualitative meanings. This supports Zelizer's (2004) assertion that economic choices and money management are best understood by attentiveness to the interaction of social and economic activities in everyday working lives. Income choices – employment choices, in the context of this research – are affected by type of transaction and by the people involved in the transaction.

*“Paul”*

**It's hard. Even the door cover - the cover charge at a bar - which is a major part of how a lot of musicians playing in bars are paid. It's not changed much since the 60s probably, the 70s. Five bucks to get in for a lot of places. I've noticed in the past few years that's changed. It has gone up. But even at \$15, if you got a small bar that fits 100 people at 15 bucks a band, that's fifteen hundred bucks. You got a ten-person band and a sound man, the money goes away pretty quickly. Even if you were making a \$150 for a service, it's not gonna be consistent because you're not always gonna get a hundred people there. And you can only work every couple of weeks doing something like that making that kind of money, given the population base here. Tricky thing. But what's fair? Charge people \$30 to come to a bar, have a beer and watch a set? I don't know. \$40? \$50? I**

**think it's fair. I don't know if I'd have the money to do it (*laugh*). The audience doesn't seem really diverse I find. We're not a small town. We're a small city, but there's a lot of people around. A lot of people with money. But I don't know that they're engaged in the musical community and what's presented. (...) You can learn to get good at something here and be able to perform, which is one of the most powerful learning tools. But the audiences... I don't know where it is or how to build it. There's a lot of competition for people's entertainment time and money.**

Prices vary between musicians and venues from one performance to another depending on negotiated fees and mutual benefits. Free or discounted tickets are given out to family members, friends and sponsors. Determinations of how much to charge, or even whether to charge money at all, may fluctuate depending on the musician's perception of the relationship at hand – friends, family, venue owners (who might be friends or family), advertisers, fellow musicians, and so on. In Zelizer's terms, negotiations and transactions concerning monetary remuneration not only reflect the type and location of the work, but also are concerned with defining the nature of the relationship between the parties (Zelizer, 2004).

Of the 24 participants who are married/common-law, eight are married/common-law with another musician. Two of musician partners only perform, while six are engaged in portfolio employment, as are their spouses/partners. Of the remaining sixteen married/common law participants, three are retired, four are in standard full time professions (for example, teaching or engineering), and nine are in other forms of part-time and full-time non-music occupations. Income of the partner was not asked, but there is evidence of income sharing among partners to support the household. However, partners were never mentioned when it came to acquisition of instruments, scores, and other equipment. Participants either claimed to have purchased them, or they were acquired by some other means (renting, scholarships, grants, or handed down from other family members). But participants in

committed relationships often describe the unequivocal support of their partners, and the strengthening of their relationship by living with someone who understands their career struggles.

*“Albert”*

**We both have to work, which is hard. She’s an artist as well. She’s a ‘Jackie of all Trades.’ She kind of does everything. So we do a lot of that work together too. But we don’t have any babysitters, so basically when I got the kids she works, and when she’s got the kids I’m doing interviews (*laugh*). All the time.**

*“Rebecca”*

**I feel like I have the career I would want here. And (*my husband*) also feels really settled here and has great work opportunities that he enjoys. So two years ago we bought a house, so we’re really here.**

*“Hannah”*

**It’s how we met, was through music. I think that we developed an even stronger relationship because of it. We understand. He goes off in the middle of the night to play a gig... I understand (*laugh*). I don’t think it’s really hindered any kind of relationship. If anything, it’s made them grow.**

Though personal relationships in music are often compromised by musician employment and lifestyles, Albert, Rebecca, Hannah and other participants of this research enjoy lasting personal relationships because their partners understand the flexible nature of artistic work and are themselves engaged in similar types of employment.

## **6.b. Costs**

As self-employed workers, most without management, it is up to the musicians to keep track of their own income and administer their own careers. While most are university educated and have extensive training in their instrument, there is no indication in the findings that they have been taught to treat their music careers as a business. Many performers, for

instance, are paid in cash, distribute portions to ensemble members and sound technicians, and then use the remainder to cover other costs (equipment rentals, payments on instruments, food and drinks). Many transactions take place by verbal agreement among peers, and the absence of record-keeping reflects that fluidity and trust, but can also wear on musicians who are not predisposed to managing the administrative weight of music making.

*“Simon”*

**When you’re the guy standing in front with the mike in your face, everybody else gets their money before you do. The sound guy has to get paid. The venue has to get paid. The door guy has to get paid. You know? I usually had two or three guys on stage with me and it was, you know, everybody made fifteen or twenty per cent, whatever it was. The insurance on the band had to be paid every month. Every year the MusicNL fee and the AFM fee. But it was paying for itself because I was living with my parents (...) And then there got to a point where it wasn’t and where I would be at home on EI the winter, and EI was making the band payment and the insurance payment every month.**

Musicians’ pay, again especially in the downtown scene, often varies depending on how many people show up to the venue and how much importance they place on the event. Keeping close track of, and declaring income to government at the end of the fiscal year would mean having to pay overdue withholdings from meagre revenue that has largely already been spent on incidentals. Whether deliberately or not, some musicians become part of an underground economy of work where costs are so high and income so low that they try to protect their livelihood by hoping that some economic transactions go unnoticed. The alternative, reporting all income, would be disadvantageous.

*“Gene”*

**It’s awful what musicians have to go through in terms of government, you know. It should not be that difficult, but it is. Prime example - I have my own company. I had to form that for HST for my taxes and stuff like that. I have to pay Workers’ Comp for myself. If I got injured, say, on the stage it would cover. But I’m not sure if I’m covered driving to and from. I’m not sure if I’m covered in my house if I trip up. I don’t know, and you can’t get a straight answer. And so I don’t know what I’m paying for really. So**

**just things like that, you know? They don't understand. And talk about gas. Again, the tax person will tell you, "Okay, well you can only claim what you're doing going to and from work, or this, that and the other thing." But everything that you do... I mean, me driving down here today is work. If I drive anywhere, it's work. Even if I go on a trip out to Gander, I mean... If I meet somebody and talk about work, surely that's work. It's work-related. I'm sure you're hearing that from all the people you talk to, that it's a really misunderstood idea that musicians are just, you know... when you're up there (*on stage*) that's it.**

All participants of this research, like Gene, say that they try to regard their work in music as a business. But he, like many others, divides his time between performing and non-performing work to financially secure his music-making. Musicians spend many years struggling to make ends meet in hopes of making their music economically viable. After many years of exorbitant costs and low revenue, they are sometimes resentful or confused by the laws governing their income and costs, feelings that are exacerbated by lifestyles of holding down more other jobs that sometimes obscure their identity as musicians (Hracs, Grant, Haggett & Morton, 2011).

Musician costs most commonly include instruments, gear, housing, travel, food, rent for teaching space, rent for recording studios, rent for performance venues. Responses to the question of how they manage costs were varied but can be categorized according to several sources: pay from other work; support from parents; scholarships; support from funding agencies; income from performances; financing arrangements; salaried ensemble leadership, or artistic management.

Classical instruments are especially expensive. In the most extreme instance in this study, one classical musician acquired two instruments totaling nearly fifty-thousand dollars afforded through university scholarships and financial assistance from parents. Another was

gifted an expensive instrument by parents, then began earning income by teaching privately, thereby affording additional instruments for rehearsals for performances. Twenty-four participants (44.4%) credit their parents with affording initial startup costs and underwriting some ongoing costs including housing, rental of instruments and gear, travel.

*“Bruce”*

**We were touring a lot. I worked at a couple of places where I had to ask time off for a tour. They didn’t want to give me the time off, so I ended up having to quit the job. I was like, “Well, I’m not missing this tour” You know? I’m gonna do it. Working for my parents, they didn’t care. They understood that this was a part of my life. This is what was most important to me. So they would just be like, you know, if I had to go for two weeks they’d let me go and they’d pay me while I was on the road too, which really helped. So my parents have been extremely supportive.**

Very expensive instruments are not frequently replaced over the course of a career. There is little difference between genres in this regard. Ten of the 21 classical musicians interviewed (47.6%) credit their parents or grandparents with providing the initial means of support for their careers, either by purchase, inheritance, or borrowing. Instruments costing thousands of dollars would not have been afforded by gigs and part time occupations alone, but are essential if a career is to emerge, develop and continue. This is not to suggest that a classical musician cannot realize a career in music without a high-priced, high quality instrument. But participants and observations reveal that access to better quality instruments is generally seen to enable greater artistic expression and a professional sound quality, placing musicians in better standing among peers in competition for work opportunities. Singers’ costs are not as substantial as instrumentalists’ costs, but voice lessons and scores are expensive and most singers are trained in piano to assist in their vocal learning.



In no case are parents credited alone. Start-up parental assistance is eventually combined with or replaced by other sources of revenue, usually private teaching. While private teaching, like performance, involves self-management and a fairly fluid clientele, it does offer a relatively fixed schedule. Some teachers attempt to secure their income flow through written contracts with families that include clauses stipulating compensation for cancelled lessons. Private teaching takes place either in the musician's home, rented space outside of the home, or as an employee of an owner of a private music school. In spite of its own precarious traits, it can provide some fairly regular income and stability when gigs are not plentiful.

*"Sam"*

**The main thing I've been trying to build up is the teaching because it's a bit more regular. It's a bit more structured. You can actually make plans with people, which is nice. Then it's like, "Okay, I know my hours are this." Gonna be in a little bit more in control. If you're constantly gigging all the time, unless you're doing a steady weekend circuit, the late nights downtown can definitely wear on you after a while. If you're just touring on the road and stuff, if you're gone for months and stuff, it's really hard to keep in good touch with anybody at all.**

Non-classical musicians invest overall just as heavily as classical musicians, as they generally require more instruments, technical equipment, and more frequent repairs and maintenance over time. In a ratio similar to that of classical musicians, fourteen of the 33 non-classical musicians interviewed (42.4%) credit their parents with assisting in the acquisition of their first career instruments and some ongoing costs of living. Startup instruments often remain in their possession as part of performance and recording activities throughout their careers, not unlike their classical counterparts. Interviews indicated that instruments for non-

classical musicians, though expensive, tend to be somewhat cheaper than classical instruments.

A significant distinction between non-classical and classical musicians in terms of cost management has to do with how relatively few non-classical participants rely on teaching for additional income to support performance. Only 13 out of 32 non-classical musicians (40.6%) teach, and only one of those in a public school (part-time). This difference between genres might have something to do with the fact that classical music is generally learned privately beginning at a very young age. The format of learning in close contact with an older adult was discussed earlier as integral to classical musicians' career development. That timing and way of learning are somehow expected in the field of classical music, whereas non-classical musicians are often self-taught or family/peer taught and show keen career interest in music later in life than classical musicians.

Other sources of income to offset costs of living include the most expected but perhaps ultimately the least reliable: gigs/performances. Only one participant has relied on performance income entirely throughout the career. For all others participants, performance income has been supplemented with other revenue sources. Thirty of the 33 non-classical musicians (90.9%) say some of their costs are offset by gig income, contrasted with fourteen out of 21 classical musicians (66.7%). The grand total of participants who relied at least in part on gig income is 44 (81.5%). That is not to say that ten other musicians do not gig (a requirement to participate in this study). Rather, those ten who said that gig income did not compensate for their costs of living seek income as performers but have earned so little by performing that additional sources of income were necessary and more substantial in offsetting

costs. This discrepancy between classical and non-classical musicians in reliance on gig income versus teaching income suggests that classical musicians rely significantly more on teaching income than non-classical musicians, while non-classical musicians rely more on gig income than their classical peers. The difference may also reflect a more fluid, lively and geographically compact downtown scene of non-classical performance contrasted with fewer and less varied paying solo or ensemble performance opportunities for classical musicians.

### **6.c. Employment**

Twenty-five of the thirty participants earning under \$20,000 annually from performance also work in other fields including non-performance music work and non-music work. Combined income from music performance and other work for sixteen participants is under \$30,000. The three most common job types across all participants include: performance only (9, 16.7%); performance and music teaching (14, 25.9% [eleven teach only privately, one teaches music only in a public school, two teach both privately and in public school]); and performance along with music teaching plus additional jobs (10, 18.5%). Twenty-one participants who do not teach have one additional job. These include an array of work including retail, finance, civil service, marketing, communications, other entertainment (which includes, for example, hosting events and acting), other music (non-performance and non-teaching but music-related work, including instrument repairs, technical work or production), retirement income (pension), and other uncategorized non-music work (specific descriptions withheld due to risk of identifying participants). Of those 21, nine participants had departed from music altogether as a source of livelihood. They still perform, but only casually, generate

little or no income from performance, and no longer actively promote themselves as professional musicians.

Of the nine participants who work exclusively in performance, eight have been working professionally as musicians for more than ten years. Income for performance-only participants ranged from \$20,000 to \$65,000 annually. Five of those nine participants working exclusively in performance perform in more than one group or ensemble.

Of currently active participants who hold down other jobs in addition to performance and who were able and willing to estimate their income from all sources, performance represents a massive range of percentage of combined income - from 0 per cent to 95.6 per cent. Experience, age, gender, and genre do not predict where musicians will fall in this range, nor can this be predicted by musicians' level of renown or performance income. For example, among the arguably best-known musicians in the survey who engage in non-performance work, their estimates of performance income as a percentage of total income range from twelve per cent to ninety-five per cent. Of the participants who earn the lowest income from performance and who work in other jobs (musicians whose performance income is under \$20,000 annually), performance income as a percentage of total income ranged from two per cent to fifty-five per cent. All of these percentages, however, must be analysed with caution, given that almost all participants said that they did not accurately know their income, with many giving widely ranging estimates. These findings show that musicians are required to search for additional income sources to supplement their work in music. The numbers and types of additional jobs they undertake are relative to their music career goals, which range

from aspiring to a career entirely in music to transitioning out of the music career, with many other possible career objectives along the spectrum.

Even a relatively stable source of revenue like private teaching is subject to variability, as students quit or start music in mid-year and payments to teachers may be made by cash, cheque, or online. Some private teachers have just a few students, while others have several dozen – and all private teacher participants in this study are also performers. Though just two participants are classroom music teachers who actively promote their performance careers, the salaried, pensioned income provided by teaching institutions reduces the urgency of earning income from performance.

*“Katherine”*

**I can still keep performing, but at least I won’t have to be living out of a suitcase.” For me that was just too terrifying. (...) I get an amazing salary, so I have no problem delivering free lessons or performing for free. (...) I mean, sure if I sing at (*event*), well they’ve got money so, you know, you can take that. But I have no problem performing for free. I’m in a completely different category.**

*“Frances”*

**Going here and there, I knew I didn’t want that. I knew I didn’t want that career of being away, alone, doing that kind of solitary lifestyle. I know you get a big payoff on the stage. But that kind of life of being away from home, being away from family, I knew I didn’t want that. So at the point I said I knew I didn’t want that, I just turned the page and did something else musically.**

Teaching is commonly chosen as an attractive alternative to other sources of income because it keeps musicians engaged in the music profession and provides regular employment, strict scheduling and more predictable income than performance. But some participants who do not teach, or who work in other fields in addition to performance and teaching, welcome non-music jobs to supplement performance income because they may be part time, offer a break from music, and provide regular pay when performance periods are lean. Some

participants even embrace non-music jobs as opportunities to network with other types of clients or continue to develop their music skills.

*“Eamon”*

**I work in a bar usually one day a week. Cut back a bit now, but it’s usually one day a week. Every Saturday. So normal outside-music work week for me is Monday, Tuesday and Thursday I teach usually for about three or four hours at a time. Mostly kids. And then on Wednesdays and Sundays I work at (*retail*). That’s usually seven hours I guess, which is great because I’d just like bring my guitar and hang out because there’s not many people around. Scribble some stuff down on napkins, so I don’t forget it.**

Musicians’ assessments of the comparative advantages of working, say, as a bartender or as a music teacher depend on their artistic and financial goals. Participants who choose to work as one or the other do so to ensure that their work as performers is able to continue. Their portfolio work tends to be diverse and episodic, but they are deemed necessary. While multiple job-holding can exacerbate the instability of musicians’ working lives (Bartleet et al, 2012), some participants say that it also supports their creative work by offsetting performance debts, permitting flexible scheduling, providing a mental break from music, or affording time for creativity.

Participants seem to have little economic choice but to compile portfolio employment to uphold their principal career choice, but their narratives reveal some sense of stability and satisfaction derived from their assortment of temporary, short-term and/or part-time work. Participants who focus entirely on performance, though generally satisfied, also show signs of anxiety at having placed all of their energy into one field which, over time, might preclude career alternatives should their performance career not work out in the long run.

*“Russell”*

**I’m trying now to figure out career paths, because I’ve never looked at anything. Very challenging. First you have to find something that you like, then you have to commit to it unquestionably.**

No participant experience seems to fully represent non-precarious work. But those who choose one or more alternate jobs, whether in music or not, potentially open opportunities for transferring their creative skills to other fields, or vice versa.

*“Joshua”*

**So the music career, if you want to call it that, has been building and building and I’ve developed enough of a base so that I now know that if I wanted to I could play music full time, doing the kind of gigs that I want to do. Anybody can go into music full time if you’re willing to take anything, but I don’t want to take anything. So the testing of the full time phase of this is right upon me. It’s on my terms (...) One of the things that makes me hesitant to use the word career is that there are people out there who are slogging day in and day out, touring, away from their son, daughter, wife, on the road. It’s all for the sake of investing, but man, oh man... There comes a point when you don’t want to walk out on stage every night. You want to go home and chill out with your wife. To me, that’s career. Because of my day job I’ve been cherry-picking gigs, so I don’t want to lump myself in with the people who are just absolutely devoting their life to it like it or not. Talk to me in a couple of years time when I’m doing that. I got a feeling that if I go more at it and really put in the weeks and months that have their ups and downs, I’ll probably be like “Yeah, I’m a professional musician.” But I feel like where it’s been somewhat supplemented so far, I can’t really confidently use those words (laugh).**

Participants reveal a wide array of portfolio employment, from unanticipated to purposeful. Some participants exhibit signs of frustration or weariness at working outside of the performance realm for prolonged periods, while others – like Joshua and Katherine – seem to have enabled security in their performance work by establishing careers in music education and non-music that would eventually offer time and opportunities to continue to explore performance with fewer economic barriers.

Nine participants purposefully work full time in non-music fields, usually by day, for their main source of income so that they can seek out paid music work at night and/or on weekends. They have accepted that they can enjoy the best of two occupations of non-music and music, intending to surrender neither their perceived less-precarious day jobs nor their paid work as musicians. The lives of these musicians appear more structured and less vulnerable than those whose non-music work consists of multiple sources of part time income because their musical output is limited to weekends and evenings. Despite scheduling restrictions, these musicians are at least as much in demand as most other participants who perform full time.

One such ensemble at the time of our interview was booked for many consecutive weekend nights for downtown performances and private functions, all paid appearances, and was in the enviable position of having to decline performance opportunities for which they had no additional time. They have found that the best way to realize steady work and income from music is by scheduling it neatly to conform to their structured full-time/single-job non-music lives. Their music work is tightly compacted into specified times each week, forcing quick resolution to complicated matters as they arise. These musicians appear very satisfied in their active sideline of music work perhaps because it has been kept so regulated and predictable.

*“Grace, Vic, and Liz”*

**Grace – Oh my God, gig days are crazy. It’s a collaborative day and we all have to communicate. I go to work at 8:00. I have this meeting there, a lunch there, a meeting here. I’m super busy. Vic can get a lunch break. Liz doesn’t teach until 3:00. So they are responsible to go and bring down the instruments. And then if they can’t, 5:00 comes around and we all boot it down to the place. So then we’re sound checking, we come back for a quick supper if we have that time and then we’re there.**



**Liz - And then I jet the scene because I have to teach early Saturday morning, so they go down and pick up our gear and set up at the next place for Saturday night.**

**Vic - And luckily I have a job that's flexible enough that I'm always on the road. So if I do need to set up in the afternoon, it's okay to just run out, grab our stuff and bring it down.**

**Grace - Oh, if you didn't, I don't know what we'd do.**

**Vic - If you didn't have a strong relationship with your boss, he wouldn't recommend us for gigs.**

The success of this ensemble depends on very wide and supportive social and professional networks, as the members balance their non-music and music schedules around each other, and rely on their non-music employers for some of their music work, in addition to their wide network of musicians and other music industry professionals. Though they are unable to precisely track the number of hours they spend making music, they appear to work no less than full-time workers who hold single jobs.

Participant experiences show that music work bears traits that closely resemble non-standard employment: insecure in many respects, and ambiguously defined and measured because of the variable ways in which music can be supported by other full time or part time income sources, and the degrees to which music making is employed and valued (Conference of the Arts - Status of the Artist in Canada, 2010; Cranford, Vosko & Zukewich, 2003). Full-time musicians revel in having achieved successful and satisfying careers. Others appear content not to be performing all of the time, settling on other income sources inside and outside of music work, and uncoupling their creative output from the business side of music.

Which of these adaptations is more or less favoured depends on the participants' career goals and financial needs, and their refusal to completely let go of music making. While most

participants lament not making as much in music performance, recording and touring as they would like, currently active musicians did not express regret about their respective work scenarios, apparently having come to terms with the necessity of compiling portfolio employment to make ends meet and glad for being able to work in music in St. John's. Some career decisions are also influenced by particular family circumstances.

*“Karen”*

**To me, success is being content with the income you're making but just so happy working every day. I'm just so happy. It's not work for me. It's just a joy and I'm just very grateful that I get to do what I love to do. I just think I'm in a minority. I see my husband who makes a great deal more but doesn't enjoy what he does at all. I'm thankful for what he does because it allows me to do what I do in this home and this space. (...) I just wanted to be happy and not stressed out, and just really content and just see what happens from there. See who I meet and see where that takes me. Really it was never focused on money. And I think I'm very fortunate because that's completely a result of my parents saying they both felt like they made poor career choices for themselves and that they wanted their children to just love what they do.**

Karen and some other participants have the benefit of time to consider alternatives without having to deal urgently with employment or income, usually due to a stable career and/or a family that financially supports the career. However, participants with similar supports as Karen's reveal different experiences and show a greater sense of urgency with respect to their career direction. This outcome seems to indicate that while economic wealth offers flexibility and time in making key career decisions, music careers are interpreted and acted upon differently depending on personal and professional goals as well as economic circumstances. Regardless of wealth, most participants say that they have at some point struggled with deciding between sacrificing day jobs to pursue the art full time, and sacrificing the art in favour of day jobs. Income from music making, regardless of wealth, seems to represent to most participants a validation of their choice to pursue a career in music.

The “pay to play” concept was alluded to by several participants, referring to their experience that it may not be possible to rely on performance revenue alone. Trade-offs between employment and art featured prominently through all interviews, but not always unfavourably.

*“Bruce”*

**In every band I’ve been in, we would get in these arguments where it was costing us so much money to make these albums and do these tours. And then we’d play the shows in St. John’s and we wouldn’t be getting paid at all because we had to be paying off our debts. And, you know, we’d get in arguments because we would be like, “Listen, we’re basically paying to play in this band.”**

*“Cindy”*

**Yeah. I’m the kind of musician that, like, I can’t do music all the time. I need the other (...) I’ll teach full time, and, like, just do music full on with my (*retail*) bit on the side to kind of keep me going in the slow, slow period, which is why I keep that job. ‘Cause in the summer when gigs are less and I’m not teaching thirty students, I work at (*retail*) and that pays the bills.**

Balancing of day jobs and music commitment result from personal or professional reasons that are independent of age and genre. There are veteran classical and non-classical participants who only perform, and others who have settled on several income sources in addition to performance. The same is true of musicians who have been working for fewer than ten years. Such decisions also appear independent of whether musicians perform in groups or as soloists. A well-known Newfoundland band, “Sherman Downey and the Ambiguous Case” ended its work and split into solo efforts in part because tour costs were multiplied and low-budget events less lucrative for bands than for soloists.<sup>21</sup> However, as was seen in the narratives of Katherine, Frances and Karen, while solo performing might yield more reliable

---

<sup>21</sup> Sherman Downey and the Ambiguous Case Calling it Quits. (2015, March 9). *CBC News*. “He said economics makes it hard for full bands to land gigs. ‘Quite often you get venues or festivals who are looking for acts on their bill, and if it is a full band, then they often pass over for smaller acts.’” Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/sherman-downey-and-the-ambiguous-case-calling-it-quits-1.2986748>

income, it can also yield a more unstable life with frequent travel. Life on the road, even if it generates more performance income, can thus be less preferable than life performing without extensive travel, with less income, greater likelihood of portfolio employment, but greater social and personal stability (Hracs, Grant, Haggett & Morton, 2011).

#### **6.d Perspectives on the Music Industry and the Professionalization of Music**

Two important sources of income for many musicians are the Music Industry Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (MusicNL) and the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council (ArtsNL). MusicNL is dedicated principally to “professional” musicians who pay a membership fee and must be in good standing (that is, fees paid and membership active for at least six consecutive months) in order to qualify for consideration for funding. The funding application process is highly competitive, across all genres, and for member musicians from throughout the province. Depending on a project’s budget, non-repayable grants of up to several thousand dollars are awarded to successful applicants. Projects include recording, touring, and professional development. Applications require detailed budget and marketing plans as well as demo recordings, which in turn require access to recording equipment and decidedly detailed knowledge of finance and accounting. Selection committees are set up for each project. Membership fees vary depending on musicians’ primary activities (annually, \$35 for students, \$50 for individuals, \$125 for ensembles, and \$150 for non-profit organizations, businesses and venues.)<sup>22</sup>.

---

<sup>22</sup> MusicNL membership and project information was retrieved from [www.musicnl.ca](http://www.musicnl.ca).

ArtsNL is also a granting agency but is open to artists of all disciplines, also involving a competitive, juried process, but not based on membership. Its programs support projects including recording and professional travel, and emphasize projects that partner with education. ArtsNL also requires detailed applications that include budget forecasts and market plans. Its competitive application process has musicians competing with fellow musicians and artists of other fields. Grant amounts depend on the size of the project, but generally range from several hundred dollars to several thousand.<sup>23</sup>

Analysis of MusicNL's membership database (available online at [www.musicnl.ca/members](http://www.musicnl.ca/members) and analyzed on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015) shows that only twenty of this study's participants (37.0%) are members of MusicNL, and only four of them are classical musicians. Therefore, this agency is not regarded as a significant factor in offsetting costs for most participants. Though it is somewhat beyond the scope of this research, it does nevertheless beg the question as to why nearly two-thirds of participants are not members in the province's only musician-dedicated agency, through which they might attempt to secure non-repayable funding for expensive projects. Some musicians claim to have repeatedly applied for funding, which they were denied. Others go further, suggesting the organization exhibits bias towards artists believed to be more lucrative, or known to committee members.

*"Alexis"*

**I've had personal issues with them (*MusicNL*) rejecting absolutely every single application I've ever put in. Ever, ever, ever. To the point where I refuse to apply anymore. To the point where I'm funding my own recordings via my own gigs. I don't wanna... I can't collect any more rejections from them, 'cause it tore me apart.**

---

<sup>23</sup> ArtsNL grant information was retrieved from [www.nlac.ca/grants](http://www.nlac.ca/grants).

Several other participants spoke highly of MusicNL and of the benefits of membership. Those whose experiences with funding opportunities were negative had been rejected multiple times. But their commentaries were less about MusicNL and its mandate and more about having to compete stringently for money doing work they loved, while running a high risk of being denied access to funds on the basis of the quality and merit of their music. Alexis preceded the above commentary with remarks about how much she values what MusicNL does for the music profession in the province. It seems she, like other participants, has decided that it is preferable to cover her costs in her own way rather than endure ranking, rejection and competition with fellow musicians.

For its part, MusicNL has taken a significant turn towards the professionalization of music work. This was clearly in evidence at the 2015 MusicNL conference of member musicians and other industry leaders<sup>24</sup>. Panel discussions and open forums took place bearing titles including, “Jargon Slayer: De-mystifying the Business of Music”, “Audio Production: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly”, “Town Hall Meeting: Marketing in a Visual World - Technology & Content”, and “Paper + Time = Money – Royalty Rights and Registrations.” The meetings of the organization are well attended but take place generally only during the annual conference. At least two meetings addressing the importance of bookkeeping, accounting, budgeting and the like were moderated by longtime industry professionals who generally do not perform but who instead serve as presidents of their own companies, specializing in the promotion of musicians. Some presenters were not musicians at all, and

---

<sup>24</sup> MusicNL annual conference panels. Held October 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at the Delta Hotel, St. John’s, Newfoundland. Field observations.

others were from outside the province. The missing link was any suggestion as to how musicians are to acquire those skills without formal training. Few musicians in the audiences spoke or asked questions even when prompted.

The questions that were asked were of a relatively specific nature, having to do with each musician's own activities. Phrases used by the moderators included "You have to maximize your profit," "Grow your revenue," "Control your expenses," "Build your team." Attendees, almost all in their 20s, were told that "the venue is your client" and, "You're in the wrong place if music is your hobby. Music is your career." It was obvious that one prime goal of this conference was to encourage young musicians to transition from viewing their art as their passion into treating it as a commercial enterprise, but the lack of response and ages of the attendees seemed to indicate that some of the message may have been beyond the scope of their careers at present. One attendee, apparently overwhelmed by the business focus of the session, told me after the MusicNL meeting, "I'm going to look for a job in a bank."

Industry professionals in Newfoundland, including college music instructors and professional musicians, have similarly advocated that musicians place greater emphasis on their craft as their business, declaring that in order for Newfoundland and Labrador musicians to be considered as business professionals, they have to grow their audience base by touring<sup>25</sup>. What is missing in that narrative and the likes of conference gatherings is the means to acquire the skills that the entrepreneurs in the industry claim are integral to realizing financial

---

<sup>25</sup> Clarke, A. (2010, March 7). Newfoundland musicians rock the island. *The Troubadour*. (n.p.)

"You need to remember that music is a business. You must be a business person to succeed. Talent is not enough.... Expand to the Maritimes, then west to Quebec and Ontario. A tour can be set up that includes the four Atlantic provinces fairly easily through the bar or the college and university circuit." - Wade Pinhorn

"I'm doing a lot of different things. It's what you have to do if you want to be a professional musician." - Mike McDonald.

viability. It may be essential to expand and tour, but if funding applications are unsuccessful and income from local performance is insufficient, then there is little recourse for some local musicians but to work in other employment.

Along with these advocates of the “business” of music are musicians on the local scene who themselves are in leadership roles of ensembles and organizations, and who likewise see the path to success as more assured if art is meshed with commercial skills.

*“Kim”*

**You have to run it like a business. A lot of performers are not told, “You are a business. Figure out how to make your business better.” And schools don’t do it.**

Kim, who leads a successful arts enterprise that is not affiliated by membership or otherwise with either of the province’s arts agencies, suggests that music schools need to incorporate into their education the means for musicians to treat their work as a commercial enterprise, a point supported by other research (Andrews & Higson, 2008; Fallows & Stephen, 2000; Brown, 2007; Beckman, 2011). Her enterprise, however, like most others in the city, is geared towards providing artistic opportunities, not commercial skills. MusicNL meanwhile grants money to successful musician applicants, but does not have a structured program in place to help musicians develop commercial skills. The School of Music provides the facilities and instruction necessary for high level artistry but does not consistently teach commercial skills. The same is true of ArtsNL.

MusicNL meanwhile is in a difficult position. It is the province’s lone granting agency exclusive to member musicians and it is in its interests to attract as many musician members as possible: young student musicians; educators; new musicians on the scene; the most advanced, prolific and successful musicians. But its resources are limited, competition is heavy, and the



agency declines far more applications than it can accept. Complicating matters is the fact that, as evidenced in this study, not all musicians are on the same career path towards full professionalization at the expense of other work. In fact, many seem to prefer keeping their work options open and flexible. Rejection of MusicNL membership and the absence throughout the local industry of essential commercial skills may speak to hugely varied career goals, experiences, personal circumstances and work balance of musicians. It remains to be seen what impact this tendency will have on musicians entering the occupation or on the agencies themselves who risk having few musician members on whom they rely for survival.

In spite of the help MusicNL has provided in launching numerous performance careers, rejection is sometimes internalized by musicians and can spell the end of a career.

*“Simon”*

**There were certain people that seemed to keep sopping up grant money. There certainly was a trend there (*MusicNL*) for quite some time of it being very insular and it being very cyclical, in terms of people giving their friends the grants they needed to do meaningless things, or not to strive, or not to try to want to do more for themselves. And that made it hard being one of the only bands who was trying to go at it and trying to make a go of things beyond. That made it hard to ... ah... financially to try to do that.**

If musicians decide to no longer pursue funding opportunities, then they have only audiences and other jobs to offset their costs. Many musicians are satisfied supplementing their music with other work. A mix of different kinds of jobs, in spite of fairly low income, does afford some freedom with respect to time and helps musicians cover their costs. But, as Simon revealed, many years of working in music with prolonged low financial rewards despite advancing experience, can wear.

### 6.d.i Professionalism

Most participants report that a major determinant of music career success is to behave “professionally.” Only twelve participants (22.2%) equated professionalism entirely with being paid. Even those who place money at the top of the list of important measures of professionalism described additional qualities including calibre of musicianship, showing up to rehearsals and performances promptly with music prepared, showing respect for fellow musicians and other colleagues, and some of the hallmarks of emotion work in having a positive attitude, treating audiences with respect, and disguising conflict when on stage.

One field observation of a master class of classical singers at the MUN School of Music was of a student who apologized for a lacklustre performance because of exhaustion. The professor exclaimed, “We don’t care about that!” Certain aspects of professionalism are closely connected to income in that if a musician is rude to an audience, unprepared, late for a rehearsal, or brings private emotion into a performance, then s/he risks not being asked back to rehearse or perform and will not be paid. Income is ultimately derived from professional behaviour. Professional behaviour is often the product of emotional labour. Emotional labour is embedded in the work of musicians, and is often a vivid example of how emotions can be both the product of work as well as the work itself (Waldron, 2012).

*“Frances”*

**I think that’s two-fold. One is that you’re going to demand a fee for whatever it is that you do. A professional gets paid. And along with “professional” is the idea that you understand what it means to be professional. That has to do with being on time, knowing the ins and outs, knowing your audience. I think that’s a big thing that we don’t really get taught anywhere. You have to play to the audience that’s in front of you (...) You have to be able to communicate and let them know “Hey, we’re here for you.” Not this thing that’s behind a glass wall. That takes time and experience.**

Professionalism is also shown in the ways musicians manage conflict. In separate interviews, two participants described what they believed to be their own “professional” responses to a dispute that had ended their working relationship. Following a disagreement, one musician confronted the matter in a way s/he felt to be professional but which was regarded by the receiving party as highly unprofessional and detrimental to the relationship. Ultimately both chose not to speak out publicly against one another – and this was seen by each as a mark of “professional” discipline.

At least two participants – both longtime veterans of the St. John’s music scene and from contrasting genres – illuminated the challenge of defining professionalism in music work. One participant distinguishes among four classifications: professional, amateur, professional amateur and amateur professional. The difference between the first two according to this view is livelihood or income: professionals derive livelihood from music, amateurs do not. The latter two terms, however, have more to do with behaviour and attitude than income. Scott believes that professional amateurs do not derive a livelihood from music but contribute to the music scene as much as possible and in many cases as much as professionals do. They arrive on time for rehearsals and performances, know their music well, and are respectful in interactions with fellow musicians. Amateur professionals however, fall at the lowest end of this participant’s ranking in terms of behaviour. They derive livelihood from music but are unreliable, unprepared and generally disrespectful to their fellow musicians in the process of making music together. While he laments the existence of the amateur professional, Scott praises the St. John’s music scene across all genres for what he perceives as a culture of

respect and reliability. He cautions, however, that the younger generation of musicians bears responsibility for reproducing it.

“*Scott*”

**Yes, it is about money. But it is also about integrity to the art and one’s fellow artists. I think we are lucky here because we rarely see the latter (*amateur professional*) type. Most musicians are here because they want to be. And what is more, there is a very strong inter-relationship between the so-called amateurs and professionals. There is a mutual dependency which does not happen in most communities. We are all very lucky, but it is up to the next generation to nurture this environment.**

Another participant has a rather different perspective. Nicolas notes that professionalism has changed over time. He says that earlier in his career, his view of professionalism would have been more equated with the goal of deriving income than it is currently. Over the past several decades, he says that the province’s music profession has been heavily influenced by musicians of legendary reputation who were never or rarely paid for their efforts. He says that community musicians in St. John’s and throughout Newfoundland and Labrador contributed as much as paid professionals to preserving and enhancing the province’s culture and tradition. In that regard, he says it is difficult to categorize those artists as anything other than professional given their calibre and legacy after which many future professionals modeled themselves. He also mentioned some friends of his whose livelihoods are in non-music occupations but whose music and reliability are at a professional level. He notes that they could be making a living from music, but chose not to, instead setting a high standard of music-making without receiving any income. Ultimately for Nicolas, earning income is what distinguishes professionals from amateurs, but with some qualification. Differentiating professionals from amateurs by income-earning alone is difficult given that some musicians’ careers are heavily influenced by the work ethic and cultural contribution of

amateurs whose artistic integrity and activity was at least equal to their income-earning counterparts.

*“Nicolas”*

**It's hard to make a living as a full time musician and arguably harder now than ever. But I think of musicians who played for their communities for decades and entertained and preserved ancient tunes, and when given the opportunity dazzled international audiences. They spent their lifetimes working at whatever occupations they had to raise their families, and still had time to play for dances, concerts, and weddings and funerals.**

Is there also a culture of humility that has an effect on how much musicians are paid and how much they are comfortable charging? Some participants seem to think so, and believe that it partially derives from how musicians are taught that they are “gifted.” Hyde (1983) writes of the complexity of giftedness, a word that is bestowed on artists by admirers and felt by artists themselves, but complicated by the transformation of a work of art or piece of music into an economic commodity. There was some discomfort among participants with being labeled as “gifted” because of the risk that this might negate the hard work and many years dedicated to honing their skills, not to mention the teaching received from musician educators. Nevertheless, musicians often hear: “I could never play like you.” “You’re so gifted.” Should the recipient of a “gift” demand remuneration? Or does giftedness obligate its beneficiary to “gift” others in return? One interview for this research was interrupted by a mutual acquaintance who referred to an emerging young musician as “freakishly talented.” Those kinds of references to being special, different, gifted, freakish, genius, or some other adjective not typically applied to other occupations seems to set musicians apart from the general population and have implications for how musicians interact with each other and their audiences, how much they are paid, and the kinds of work they perform (Becker, 1951).

At the university level of music training, which most participants experienced, musicians are required to perform public end-of-year recitals for free. After years of expensive and intensive preparation, and on the verge of launching their careers, one of the final instructions a university music school student receives is that charging money is not only discouraged but forbidden for the most important performance of their lives to date - as if the student's success and talent is somehow the school's gift to the community and its sponsors. There is little in that experience that prepares musicians for some fundamental administrative realities of their emerging self-employment careers, including promotion and recording revenues and expenses. These are findings borne out in preceding research (Beckman, 2007; Weller, 2013; Bauer & Strauss, 2015; Beeching, 2010; Juuti & Littleton, 2012; Bennett, 2007; Bauer, Viola & Strauss, 2011). The school is the gatekeeper of talent and the only "rewards" that are permissible for its students are applause and unremunerated performance opportunities. If these musicians are discouraged from charging money, then the matter of distinguishing themselves from amateurs, as well as expecting an audience to make the same distinction, is complicated even more.

*"Michelle"*

**I put hundreds or thousands of hours into practise. By the university guidelines, I'm not allowed to charge money for anyone to come. Back then, I wasn't like "I want to charge a fee." But now that I reflect on it... We're not allowed to charge a fee? It's accepted. So is that already an idea that's being engrained in our heads? Think about paid work terms. Other industries like engineering are getting paid. So for us, what would be unreasonable about donation by the door? Even as music students, we are expected to attend however many concerts. (...) I do think that there are certain things from my education at a post-secondary level that encouraged me to be generous with my time, and in no other program would they teach that. Pharmacy program wouldn't be "give your time away," whereas in music, that is encouraged. That was part of the course. You had to have community outreach. You have to have a performance, but by university regulations, there's no fee allowed to be charged.**

Michelle has touched on an experience that may be another reason more classical and classically-trained musicians exit the music scene than non-classical musicians. The oldest participant in this study has strong views about the apparent disconnect between university music education and career realities, stating that it is incumbent upon the province's lone university School of Music to incorporate fundamental career principles into its curriculum to better prepare students for employability. His view is supported by a fast growing body of literature (Carey & Lebler, 2012; Carey, 2008; Bolan, 2002; Hoverman, Kuuskoski, Weingarten & Zeisler, 2010; Comunian, Faggian & Jewell, 2014; Beckman, 2011) that collectively urges increased attention by schools and individual music educators to career preparation. "Lucas" summarizes what he sees as a long-standing divide between the St. John's-based university School of Music and realities faced by its students graduating into the music workforce. Underlying his review of the province's university music training is economic livelihood.

*"Lucas"*

**People have to make a living. They have to be versatile in not all types of music, but certainly in things like songwriting and things like arranging and, you know? Just broaden things. Just give these people, especially in Newfoundland, a fighting chance in getting into some of the stuff that I'm doing, for God's sakes. There's money in that. I just think MUN is still locked into this traditional thing of "We'll tell you what you want, and then you go do what you think you want to do." And I think that's ass-backwards. It has to do with budgets and money and all that, but I just think at this stage that they've got to spread out a little bit. Why isn't there a course at MUN in the music business? There are textbooks on the music business. What's available in Newfoundland besides graduating after four years and private teaching? Do you need four years of university to private teach on your instrument? So that's a little problem that I have with this whole business of "what are people gonna be doing after university." I just think we're short-changing the students. Some of the best performers, the first thing they do is get out of here and teach. I guess in a sense we can't really afford to have the top notch teachers in Newfoundland. The university can't afford to have the top people. That's for the big cities. I'm just seeing no progression in spreading out electives in music.**

Participants who endure the longest as financially viable professionals and who manage their own careers tend to be those whose careers are centred on non-classical genres and/or who earned a university education other than in a classical music school, and/or immersed themselves directly into the music scene without a university education, and/or waited until later in childhood to begin their music studies.

## **6.e Summary and Conclusion**

Musicians' decisions concerning revenue are often affected by vague awareness of what their colleagues/competitors are charging. Though not explicitly stated in the interviews, it may be inferred that their ignorance of each other's pay is willful in order to avoid being seen as undercutting their colleagues for work, or overpricing themselves out of the marketplace. Musicians are also cognizant of the coexistence of amateur and professional musicians in the same music worlds. Settling into a reputation for which patrons will willingly pay may take many years of musicians figuring out where in the marketplace they fit.

Income from performance and from the most common music-related non-performance work - private music teaching - is therefore often arbitrary and discretionary and subject to control by audiences and industry institutions. Self-employment carries with it the allure of independence and self-determination. But musicians have very little control over their labour market. Performers are not licensed and have little or no protection from market forces, and depend on support from audiences, sponsors and industry agencies.

Career uncertainty and financial instability in all genres leads many participants to seek other means of self-employment or temporary, low-but-regular-paying non-music jobs to



supplement their work in music. Hazy standards for fees can also blur distinctions between who is an amateur and who is a professional. Professionalism was seen throughout the narratives to be measured to varying degrees by income, behaviour, artistic preparation and calibre. Whatever standards exist among musicians seem to evolve out of their own needs and experiences.

In spite of the wide variety of employment situations and lack of standardization within the industry, there is substantial evidence among the findings that musicians are required to access, cultivate and negotiate economic capital, cultural capital, and social networks according to their particular goals and circumstances. This individual attention to career detail in my findings represents something of a compromise between Bourdieu's broad theory of capital acquisition and conversion and Crossley's insistence to move beyond Bourdieu and delve into relational sociology in order to better appreciate a myriad of conditions. Furthermore, there is a strong undercurrent of emotion labour weaving through participant interviews that appears to go a long way toward adding to the definition of work of musicians at least on the St. John's scene. Until recently, artistic performance has been used only as a metaphor in illustrating emotion labour in the context of other occupations (Fixsen & Ridge, 2012). Even the most seminal works in the intersection of emotion and labour, Hochschild as the leading example, tend to ignore the work of musicians altogether. The creative process, which could include penning lyrics of personal interest to the singer/songwriter, or performing an instrumental piece with physical movement and facial expressions that the musician feels is appropriate for the music, is intended to convey the meaning of music to an audience, arousing an emotional relationship with listeners

(Gabrielsson & Juslin, 1996; Juslin & Laukka, 2004), in turn creating a potential following of patrons for the musician.

Music's uniqueness when compared to many occupations has been noted throughout my research. But musicians also are part of a special category of occupations – for example, all other arts, sex work, religion, and childcare – where emotion is both produced by labour and *is* the labour. The work of musicians in my research is exemplifying in a single occupation many traits of twenty-first-century employment: labour characterized by precarity, temporariness, emotions, personal relations, and professional relations. It is my view, as we move into the ensuing chapters uncovering the next phases of music careers, that music work has the potential to stand as the richest and clearest example informing future literature on these topics.

The following chapters will outline the work of musicians as they arrive at career crossroads, and when their careers as musicians who depend on revenue from music as a livelihood come to an end. The next chapter in particular will examine how musicians manage their lives and careers, as audiences, families and rewards continue to change.

## Chapter Seven: Relationships and Risks: The Rhythms of Work and Life

This chapter will describe ongoing issues commonly faced by local musicians whose careers are past the initial phases and whose work in music is now central to their lives. Following participants' descriptions of their daily work, the discussion will move into their responses to questions that pertain to the ways in which their personal and professional lives intersect and shape their music careers. The effects on their music work of demographic factors including marital status and gender will be examined, as well as management of competition and conflict, the close relationship between work and leisure and the rationale for the importance of socialization, and how physical and emotional health can impact their careers.

### 7.a "There is no typical day"

Participants were asked to describe a typical day of work in music and how they manage ebbs and flows of work and income. Nearly all responded at first with a little laughter at the mention of a "typical" day, and then struggled to define a routine, choosing instead to describe the day or week in which our discussion took place as one example.

*"Stan"*

**A typical day is: wake up and look at your schedule in your iPhone and see what that day is. 'Cause literally if I'm somewhere and somebody says "Can you do this?", I have to break out the schedule because I have no idea. Every single day is completely different. Sometimes the weekends are free. Sometimes they aren't. I teach every now and then, so that's fairly consistent. So I usually remember when I teach. But at the same time, if I have a good-paying gig, I'll cancel the teaching and do that gig. So I always need to look, "Am I teaching today or am I doing the gig?"**

Many performance opportunities come along on short notice. Unplanned work opportunities are added to the mix of more predictable work including rehearsals, songwriting,

teaching, and non-music jobs. This lends to the rush of musician life. Many participants enjoy the fluidity and mobility of their work. But gigs are short-term and unpredictable, and can give a sense of haphazardness and temporariness to the career. Nevertheless, most participants say that they are kept busy gigging, often juggling multiple schedules, and enjoying the lifestyle.

Some, however, suggest that performing too frequently on the local scene can hinder the career. Many of the most popular solo artists and bands interviewed perform infrequently locally, but much more on tour. For those few local shows, ticket prices tend to be considerably higher and venues larger than if they were to perform weekly. But overall income is not always higher for musicians in those situations. Touring is expensive and could be unprofitable without funding support and/or audiences big enough to cover travel and venue costs. Tours are infrequent, usually depend on funding availability, and income earned on tour usually needs to last for long stretches of time and can quickly be absorbed by costs. Perspectives vary on how often to perform, and choices usually depend simply on whether musicians can afford to travel with their music.

*“Ernest”*

**There are so many musicians who live here, that the gigs here are every weekend, and even more so for some people. Some people play down on George Street three or four times a week. But that’s all they’ll ever get to do. As perfectly respectable as that is, it’s incredibly limiting because you end up restricting yourself. They’ve put themselves into a box. It’s not even so much that the industry or that the audiences place them in a box. They place themselves in a box. (...) I’m not talking about fame and fortune. I’m just talking about allowing your career to grow. Allowing you to become more successful.**

Since the interview with Ernest, I attended a concert by a well-known local musician who told of having just returned from a nation-wide tour without funding support, broke, and needing to undertake non-music work to make ends meet following cost-ineffective travel.

The narratives reveal a huge range of experience on this front, with many unable, due to time and economic limitations, to concentrate entirely on performance work.

Nevertheless, participants delighted in talking about how busy they are, stresses and all, sometimes comparing the routinized structure of other jobs to the ebbs and flows of music work and expressing appreciation for the diversity of experience allowed by self-employment. Most participants who blend different types of work with performance seem to realize a sense of balance and regularity because of, not in spite of, having so much to do.

*“Hannah”*

**I find whenever there’s a concert, it’s crazy. The summertime is pretty quiet actually. That’s when I started getting into working at the store and doing that part time, and then playing some weddings. You can kind of balance things nicely. When fall comes around, it’s all of a sudden just non-stop.**

Concerns with low pay and work instability can be offset by this kind of variety of creative work and freedom from employer control (Umney, 2014). Hannah’s “balance” is characterized by lack of autonomy over sources and timing of her work, and needing to rely on alternate employment to compensate for the lulls in music employment. This is an instance where the concept of the “professional” musician in musicians’ terms differs from the sociological literature that stresses control over the market for music (Frederickson & Rooney, 1990). Because most of performance work involves private rehearsals and other preparations, much of their working time is invisible, and few count their hours or calculate an hourly rate of pay. Even though many participants are unable to quantify much of their experience (years of work, hours of work per week, income, and so on), their descriptions of “typical” days or other periods are filled to the brim with a huge array of music and non-music work, collectively constituting an equivalent to full time employment. Participants defended the need

to work in other capacities for a host of reasons often having to do with there not being enough income from their music making, but also – as Hannah’s and other experiences suggest – as a welcome break from the hectic pace of busy performance and rehearsal periods.

They are employed part time, self employed most of the time, but mitigate a sense of career vulnerability by accepting a variety of jobs that collectively enable them to work as much as they want as a performer and assure a mix of regular and irregular pay and work flow (Chaykowski, 2005). Perhaps these musicians are in many ways less vulnerable to job insecurity than their parents fear or outsiders might perceive, simply because they have methodically structured their work in such a way that merges the best of two worlds – self-employment and other employment.

*“Alexis”*

**I wake up and I spend two to three hours in the morning practicing either my electronic music or my guitar. Then I go to work from 12 to 4, eat supper, go home, and then two to three hours at night get spent on my guitar stuff. I’m recording my second and third album right now.**

*(DC) Congratulations! That’s amazing.*

**Yay! I say second and third because the second album is my guitar stuff, and the other album is for my solo electronic music. So, doing home recordings.**

*(DC) That’s amazing. So in that 12 to 4 block, you’re working in your other...*

**(Company).**

*(DC) So tell me about that.*

**I’ve been a CSR (*customer service representative*) for seven and a half years at (*company*), and they allow me to work Monday to Friday 12 to 4 because it completely accommodates when I play late-night gigs during the week and on weekends, of course. (...) (*Company*) is twenty hours a week and music is the rest. (*laugh*). It’s when I’m not asleep. It’s constant. To the point where I actually just got carpal tunnel and I’ve had to slow down, ‘cause I’ve been playin’ like three gigs a week.**

Meanwhile, musicians whose work involves only performance also appear to be satisfied in their work. They have the appearance of greater employment stability than their fellow musicians who hold down multiple other jobs and perform less. But these full time performers are arguably no less vulnerable. They have to continue seeking and planning the next paying gig, and working to make income last from one event to the next.

*“Gene”*

**I would say the most typical part of my day is on the computer. Sitting in front of a computer researching, contacting, responding, looking for work, arranging work, organizing work. I spend at least four or five hours a day on the computer just constantly.**

Many musicians in this study, particularly non-classical musicians, participate in more than one ensemble at a time and/or move from one band to another in the course of their careers. The narratives reveal that musicians are willing to accept as much work as possible, without lofty financial goals. There was evidence of differences between preparation methods of classical musicians compared with non-classical musicians, made clear by participants whose work and training has been in both classical and non-classical genres.

*“Eamon”*

**It’s easy to get lazy when you don’t have a schedule and you don’t have to practise all the time. Instead of rehearsing with classical music, I don’t have the same structure. Different points of the day I might get to something and might not get to something. It’s easy to get frustrated. So then a lot of booking and all that stuff. And then I usually go to work to another job, like teaching or something for a few hours. And then I’ll come home and write for a few hours. Try to get something. Usually I find the night times are better for myself. Probably be up until like 2:00 to 3:00 (a.m.), and go to sleep, do the same thing the next day. But it varies. It’s not really a light switch you can turn on or off. When you’re feeling it, you’re feeling it. If you’re a musician you’re a musician. You can’t really escape it.**

Many narratives show that periods of seeming inactivity can be filled with creative work that is not directly observable or income-generating. A season of costly rehearsals,

recording and travel absorbs substantial income. Without funding support and/or other regularly paying work, costs can be entirely out of pocket with no guarantees of a return on investment. Why do musicians continue their work, particularly in performing, touring and recording, when faced with these kinds of risks? All participants in this study said that they value appreciation and validation of their efforts as much as they value income. Well-attended shows or record sales feed the desire for affirmation, spurring them on to the next project because of the feeling that they have given something of value to the community, giving audiences some pleasure and relief from *their* typical days, in spite of musicians' own stresses and high costs. Income and costs become significant career-determining factors for musicians, but many participants state only modest requirements for their work to continue, including affording groceries, mortgage payments, instruments and venue rentals. As long as those basic needs are met, their primary reason for entering the music profession usually remains intact: to continue, as they have since childhood, growing their artistic creativity and expression and enriching their community.

*“Tracey”*

**There’s no typical day. I find from year to year, life has been changing a lot. You’re always looking and growing the next project, the next kind of what’s important to you as a musician, what’s important to the community. You’re always growing what’s important and what can you give to these people that you’re working with. How can you make this experience so incredible that these people will feel that their lives are better because of it? So each year you’re looking for that next project. That next artistic feeling, that next artistic event. (...) If you feel like you’re having typical years, then you feel like you’re not growing as an artist.**

Tracey’s view represents the feelings of most participants of this research who embarked on their music careers for fulfillment with creatively satisfying work. Lifelong artistic and professional growth and concomitant relationships supersede pay at the start of and



throughout many music careers, and this prioritization guides towards a better understanding of portfolio work as a conscious, deliberate choice. For most university music school graduates in particular who wish to remain engaged in music employment, portfolio employment has been recommended as a more realistic alternative to performance-only careers and an answer to a lack of practical career preparation by university music programs (Tolmie, 2014).

## **7.b Musicians and Their Families**

More than half of participants are single (never married), and 44.4% are married/common law. Participants were asked whether their choice of music career has had effects on their relationships with their families and other personal relationships. Responses varied widely, depending on whether they are married/common law, have children, are living with their parents, single, dating, and so on. Some responses related only to parents and siblings, while others discussed their work in the context of its effect on their romantic partners and children. These results will begin with an examination of the 24 participants who are married or living common law.

### **7.b.i Married/Common Law, with Children**

Thirteen participants (24.1%) are married/common law with children. Four of them, one classical musician and three non-classical musicians, are older with adult-aged children. All four described their music work as not having a profound effect on future family life because of a mutual agreement between the musicians and their partners at the start of their

relationship that their livelihood would at least partly depend on music. None of the spouses of these four participants are themselves professional musicians. One musician's partner, while supportive of the career throughout their marriage, chooses not to be present at most performances. Another veteran musician who also spoke only of his partner alluded to many of the challenges of starting a music career in the early years of their marriage, particularly late nights and long hours working outside of home, then returning home exhausted only to continue his work there. He spoke of the challenge of finding a healthier balance in his early career between his work and family life so that neither would be sacrificed for the other. His partner is present at most of his performances.

A third musician spoke not of his partner but of his children when his career was emerging. His career has involved extensive touring, especially when he was younger. He sees his work as beneficial to his children's upbringing. If he travelled when school was not in session, he brought his kids, set on ensuring that his children would neither boast of their father's work nor regard it as anything other than normal. He draws a comparison of his work in this respect to other occupations that might not permit that kind of freedom, suggesting that his work has brought his family closer together.

*"Nicolas"*

**We just took them along to everything – rehearsals, and on the road. They didn't even notice it. (...) It was very convenient in that I would have lots of days off when they were young. So I got to spend a lot more time with the kids probably than people who have to go to the office every day.**

The fourth participant in this category was the only one who spoke of both his partner and children, again in the context of his early years as an emerging musician. He too reflected

on meager income from more than one part-time source, and long hours away from home, while his wife worked at home raising their children.

The other nine participants who are younger, married/common-law, and with young children have had similar challenges. A chief difference between their experiences and those of the four discussed above, however, is the make-up of their work. The four veteran musicians above ended up establishing prolific careers, mostly in performance. Three of them did eventually balance their performance work with other music work, particularly in music education (two of them as private teachers, one as a classroom educator). But of the nine other relatively younger musicians with spouses and children, four have income from non-music careers in addition to revenue from partial performance careers. While three of those four continue to perform and teach music for pay, they are transitioning away from music as a main source of income. The other has left professional music altogether for a career unrelated to music. The remaining five appear to be firmly entrenched in music, variously comprised of performance, composing, teaching, and other arts-related jobs. Those participants show pleasure in their choice to not perform all of the time, allowing them to spend time with their families and engage in other interests, while retaining their principal self-identity as musicians. These are luxuries characteristic of the music profession that perhaps few other occupations can claim. “Keith” smiled when describing his typical day.

*“Keith”*

**I try to get up when I can, around 6:00, to do some kind of musical task before the rest of the family gets up. So whether it’s practising or getting an arrangement finished up, it’s what I’ve been doing a lot lately. Then it’s family time. Getting everyone ready for school and breakfast, and making sure everyone’s okay. I usually have plenty of musical types of things to do in the house. I have a studio in the basement so usually most often arranging or practicing, and whatever chores need to be done in the meantime. If I’m**

**teaching, by the time that's done, it's time to pick up the kids, go home, make supper, get them to bed and try to stay awake for another couple of hours to do some musical thing.**

Whether career changes of the current generation of child-rearing musicians speak to changing employment circumstances for self-employed musicians is not wholly clear. But the trend according to age seems to point to a tendency for younger musicians as parents to realize a need to secure their livelihoods with non-music alternatives.

*“Gary”*

**I have done a lot of touring, and I just really don't want to anymore. So I needed to have some kind of an income, but also to have some kind of steadiness to be able to plan. That's the problem. The inability to plan has had a really negative affect on my personal relationships. (...) So even if year over year you're making a certain amount of money that would theoretically make you comfortable, what you're kind of doing is a “feast or famine” thing where you go into debt, you get the big gig, then you pay off the debt, then you go forward. You're kind of lurching forward all the time but you don't know what's coming on the horizon. So, simple things, like you can't plan a vacation in the summertime. You can't make long term decisions about paying for a house or a car or kids.**

Gary's experience is a poignant instance of how music career fluidity and flexibility can take on an entirely alternate meaning when personal relationships depend on and expect stable sources of income and employment. The “lurching” from employment to underemployment may be manageable, and even exciting, for musicians not in personal relationships, but family stability is shown here to alter this career trajectory.

### **7.b.ii Couples Only**

Eleven participants (20.4%) are married/common law with no children. Seven of those eleven are married/common law with a professional musician. For some, deciding whether to have children is weighed alongside the likelihood of an active music career continuing in its present form. Their desire to pursue their music careers without interruption is a significant

determining factor. At least one interview was conducted with a musician couple that performs frequently together. They were asked to reflect on their dynamic of working and living together and the ways in which their collective work has affected their professional and personal relationship. One spoke openly, while the partner did not respond.

*“Alex”*

**We love it. We love playing together. But we have had some serious arguments about how sometimes we’re just business. We’ve had some serious fights about it, and you can’t say that we haven’t. But I have thought, and so have you, we can’t have children right now. If we had children right now, we would be no more. Not that we want to have children, but it’s definitely been a discussion.**

*(Context: When this participant said, “we would be no more,” it was in reference to their music work, not to their personal relationship.)*

Others participants who are thinking of having children said that the decision fundamentally comes down to being able to afford to continue their work and lifestyles as musicians and raise children. Most local musicians are not protected by a musicians’ pension plan (though one exists through the CFM), have few health benefits, and have little or no income support when income is unable to be made as might be the case with pregnancy. As was discussed previously, when the work of self-employed local musicians is slowed or stopped, they risk being forgotten by their audiences and fellow musicians. An independent musician who would like to have children is not only concerned with the obvious costs of caring for an expanded family, but also with the possibility of struggling to recapture music work lost to others who do similar work.

*“Bobby”*

**I think we both benefit from being a part of the music community here. He really enjoys going to all these concerts and, you know, getting to hear my perspective on music and things like that. We don’t have any kids yet because I can’t take any time off. We would like to have children but I don’t have mat (*maternity*) leave. You know, we might have kids now if I had a paid mat leave, right? Or maybe not. I don’t know. It would be**

**certainly more feasible. I don't really know when we have children what I'm going to do. (...) I know people who have taken a year off with their teaching and found homes for their students for the year, then have them come back. But that's disruptive to the students, and you don't know if the students are going to come back. And it's hard on your colleagues if they all are taking short-term students.**

All participants without children and in relationships spoke fondly of their romantic partners and of their home and working lives. It has been seen earlier in this research how significant it is for young musicians to have the support of parents and teachers. As adult professional musicians, it appears just as critical to have the support of their spouse/partner, regardless of whether one or both work in music. In the cases of participants married to non-musicians, their love for their partners was made abundantly clear in the interviews. Music performance often demands considerable time spent away from partners. It is also frequently the case that the non-musician partner is the primary wage earner. Without emotional, moral and practical support, either the relationship or the career risks being sacrificed to save the other, and there is indeed some research which shows the internal conflict experienced by musicians who feel forced to choose between commitment to work and family (Scheib, 2003; Vaag, Giæver & Bjerkeset, 2014)

*“Charlie”*

**My wife... She's my greatest fan when it comes to my music. She wants to be up on stage with me. She just thrives to see that I am in that zone. I couldn't be happier with that kind of support.**

In all instances where both partners are working as musicians, participants agreed that working in the same field as their partner has made their relationships stronger. They state that they are able to maintain creative independence and enjoy openness of communication that invites one another's opinions and assistance in their work. They also claim that their personal

relationship benefits from their respective daily work being dynamic, interesting, and yet different from one another.

*“Dale”*

**We’re in the exact same boat. We’re just lucky people I guess. It’s never been an issue. I think that the fact that we’re both musicians makes it easier on both of us because we completely understand, for example, what someone’s going through when they’re preparing something or what someone’s feeling when it’s not going the way they want. You really understand what that feels like. You understand the frustration when things are not coming out the way you want them to be. You also understand the pride in something that seems so simple. Even though we’re both freelance musicians and it’s all we do, we appreciate what each other does and we take part in what each other does, but we cover completely different spectrums as well. So there’s never any room for conflict.**

Music-making and personal relationships are not always mutually enhancing, however. The marriage/common law relationships of two interviewees ended in divorce, due in part to disagreement over one partner’s choice of a career in music.

### **7.b.iii Single, Never Married**

Twenty-seven participants (50%) are single and have never been married. Though the question was not specifically asked, it was revealed over the course of the interviews that 16 of those 27 participants are in committed personal relationships. Ten of those sixteen are either seriously considering transitioning away from music towards other careers or have already done so, stating that part of their questioning of their music pursuits had to do with their personal relationship. The main concern was with being able to support a family and home without debt. Not all said they want to eventually have children, but those who did were emphatic that having children is increasingly a priority for them and is the primary cause for reconsidering their career path. All of the other six in committed relationships stated that they have the full support of their partner/spouse in their music pursuits and that they are as

committed as ever to their work in music for that reason. It is also worth noting that all six are presently realizing especially fruitful performance careers, with substantial work and prominence within and outside Newfoundland.

Eleven other participants of this group of 27 are either not in committed relationships or at least did not mention a romantic partner. Instead, all but one of them spoke of their commitment to music drawing them closer to their parents and siblings. Only one participant of this group spoke of his parents not being supportive of his music career. At the time of our interview, he was seeking jobs in non-music fields.

The “family” question was perhaps the most challenging to broach with participants because it is such a private matter. Responses to this question for the most part were relatively brief. In such instances, especially if I detected that they did not want to discuss the topic further than their initial response, there was no additional questioning. Nevertheless, much can be gleaned even from brief responses. This is the career stage where independence from parental family support is most apparent, when parents for the most part are generally more removed from providing full financial assistance to their children, who are living on their own or sharing living quarters with fellow musicians, romantic partners, other family members, or (in at least two instances) some combination thereof. Not restricted to this specific question, family matters were alluded to in other parts of the discussions, for example in the context of managing costs, setting career goals and measures of success, entertaining thoughts of moving away, and so on. Family considerations are always close at hand when considering a music career, departing the music scene, and all points in between.



### 7.c Gender

Participants were asked whether they experience occupational advantage or disadvantage in music due to their gender, and whether they felt the opposite gender is advantaged or disadvantaged during their music careers. With respect to their own gender, 25 (46.3%) had no opinion on the matter. Of the remaining 29 (53.7%) who felt their gender is an issue in the local music profession, responses were mixed. Seven (13.0%) said that their own gender is disadvantaged; ten (18.5%) believe their gender is both advantaged and disadvantaged. Twelve (22.2%) said that their gender experiences only career advantage. With respect to opinions on the opposite gender, 29 (53.7%) had no opinion on the matter. Seven (13.0%) believe the opposite gender is disadvantaged, 10 (18.5%) believe that the opposite gender realizes both advantage and disadvantage, and eight (14.8%) believe that the opposite gender has a career advantage.

This question received a wide variety of responses across gender, genre and age, though approximately half of the participants had no opinion, suggesting that it is not a significant issue at least among participants of this study on the local scene. Several began their responses by stating that there is no gender issue to discuss, but then upon further reflection spoke of specific instances they have experienced or observed. Of the 22 women interviewed, 11 (50%) said they had experienced some disadvantage to being a woman in professional music (that is, either disadvantaged entirely, or with some advantages and some disadvantages). Seven of those eleven are classical musicians, and four specialize in non-classical music. This is an interesting outcome insofar as men far outnumber women in non-classical music generally, especially in rock music (Ramirez, 2012; Martin, 1995), yet few in

my research thought of their careers as hindered in any way in a male-dominated scene.

Women generally are outnumbered by men in leadership roles in classical music (Bennett, 2008a). My research contrasts sharply, in that eight female classical participants are leaders (managers, artistic directors, creators) of artistic organizations, while four male participants hold similar roles in classical music. Furthermore, although women rock and traditional musicians are outnumbered by men in my research, most of the women in those genres are in leadership roles in bands comprised mostly of men, or are soloists with prominent careers.

Women who spoke of career disadvantage related to gender gave examples of receiving inappropriate physical or verbal behaviour from fellow male musicians or male audience members. Eight other women noted no particular career advantage or disadvantage and did not regard gender as an issue whatsoever. Three others stated only advantages as women working in music, noting an improvement in their confidence in physical appearance as well as success in generating business.

These outcomes also seem to have some relationship with whether women musicians perform primarily as soloists or in ensembles. Being the only woman in an ensemble that is otherwise entirely comprised of men is both advantageous and disadvantageous as far as some participants are concerned. These women confess to realizing that they stand out from the rest of the group in physical appearance, seeming to enjoy and embrace this difference for reasons having to do either with personal or self-confidence or for furthering their careers. Trying to being taken seriously as accomplished artists is of primary concern for some women participants. “Sophie” clearly states her experiences with certain advantages and disadvantages to being a woman on the music scene.

*“Sophie”*

**Whether you like it or not, I’m different and I want to look good. My confidence in my performance. Representing the band. So I invest in dresses or whatever. I’m not buying expensive things, but when photos are being taken regularly you need to be wearing different things. It seems silly, but it’s part of it. (...) We mingle with people afterwards and they go down the line, “Great playing! You’re just fantastic!” Then to me, “You’re gorgeous!” And the guys get so offended. It’s flattering. I don’t mind. I don’t care. I’m confident in my abilities. If you think I’m pretty, great. I’ll take it. It’s not malicious. (...)**

**People think they can touch me and be close in a way that’s not appropriate. Certain times I’ve had to deal with that, it’s felt very uncomfortable. I think that’s a problem for women in general.**

Sophie’s latter commentary represents an experience echoed by other women interviewed and appears to occur irrespective of genre or years of work in music. Several women participants describe enduring discomfoting behaviour, including inappropriate touching and insensitive comments - experiences not shared by any male participants. Their responses to those occasions are handled tactfully, rarely in a way that draws negative attention to themselves or the perpetrator, usually by walking away. The response here is similar to the earlier discussion on how musicians manage difficult interactions and relationships. Some participants suggest that responding forcefully to unwanted and inappropriate kinds of attention risks creating an aggressive persona that counters what audiences want to see on stage – someone smiling, agreeable, having fun, working hard. This speaks further to the emotion labour of music, which involves performance on and off stage – at times taking care to suppress their true feelings in front of audiences as well as to their colleagues and audiences behind the scenes.

*“Betty”*

**You kind of had to handle it yourself. And if you whined about it, you were kind of looked on as being “What the heck is wrong with you? It’s just someone having a feel, or someone having some fun with you, or whatever.” And it wasn’t. It was quite obnoxious.**

Women who perform as soloists or play lead roles in ensembles reveal very different overall experiences than those who perform as equals within ensembles (a member of a rock or traditional band, or of the NSO, for example). There are also differences among this group according to genre. Generally, women who are soloists or ensemble leaders are accepted by their audiences and ensembles as the chief decision-makers, visionaries, and creative talents behind the ensemble. They tend to embrace the opportunity of being in leadership roles and either ignore troubling gender-related matters or do not experience them. Some go further, stating that being a woman in that kind of role has only been advantageous to their careers, particularly in Newfoundland, where they feel that being a woman musician is a more equitable experience than in larger cities.

Differences in gender-related experiences with respect to genre evidently are connected with competition. Many performances in classical music and musical theatre, whether as soloists or as members of large ensembles are auditioned in competitions where there are far more women than men vying for roles. Women are thus facing strong competition from two genders, while men are regarded (by both women and men) as advantaged in such scenarios. These types of experiences begin professionally as early as in the university years. In 2015, 33 singers auditioned for sixteen available spaces for new first-year students at the MUN School of Music: 27 female; 6 male. Thirteen of the female singers were accepted (one less than half) and 3 (50%) of male singers were accepted. A person of authority at the School offered the opinion that these percentages are a coincidence and that singing quality and academics combine as the primary determinants for acceptance or rejection of applicants, not

gender. Nevertheless, it is clear that far more women are trying to enter this particular scene of the music profession than men, and therefore more women than men will be denied.

Meanwhile, either during their university years or soon after, young women musicians receive a taste of some upcoming lifelong realities of their emerging career.

*“Charlene”*

**It’s harder because there’s more competition. If you walk into any audition for any show, and you’re in a chorus call, a “cattle” call, you’ll see eighty girls and maybe ten guys. If you’re a boy, you’re probably gonna get into that chorus regardless of what you’re gonna do. If you’re a girl, you’re going to go through a week of callbacks. Which is fine because that’s what the business is, in general.**

The “callback” she refers to is a common process of whittling down an abundance of auditioning musicians to the very few who will be considered for the role. Being called back means returning to audition again for the same role but on a shorter list of candidates. The process repeats until the hiring decision is made and involves a longer, more intensive process for women. Even though the callback procedure is not universally applied throughout the music industry, it is quite common for large-scale productions, regardless of how much or how little the auditioning musician will be paid.

As the career progresses, singers and instrumentalists try to build their resumés by competing in local, national and international competitions as well as for coveted roles in major productions. At this career level, and apparently especially in singing, physical appearance also takes on increasing prominence alongside artistic integrity, even to the point where a disagreeable personality can be overlooked in favour of looks - a harsh reality faced by men and women, but particularly by women.

*“Kim”*

**If you’re a soprano, take whatever you get. If you’re a bass/baritone, you can do what you want. You can cack like a horse and be a horrible person. You’re still gonna get hired because there’s none of you. (...) It’s a problem with baritones. They get hired when they’re not very good because they look handsome and they keep getting hired. (...) It’s different as a classical singer. Now you just can’t be fat as a singer anymore. Men or women. You cannot be. So it’s a different experience.**

Male participants at times expressed empathy for their women colleagues. Many initially were unable to recall work-related gender discrepancies, but upon additional thought delivered some fairly specific instances from their own experiences or from the experiences of women with whom they have worked. One participant began by saying that there was neither advantage nor disadvantage to being a male musician on the St. John’s scene and that his preference was simply to play with the best musicians regardless of gender. He went on, however, to state that for women musicians:

*“Simon”*

**I can promise that you’re gonna be the one that the paper (*newspaper*) writes about and you’re gonna be the one that gets the grant.**

There are no available statistics from MusicNL that allow analysis of the relationship between funding and gender. Nevertheless, while Simon’s assertion might be based on some personal experience, it can fairly be assumed that the matter of grants and gender cannot be quite so generalized given that women in non-classical genres are greatly outnumbered by men. An analysis of solo non-classical members of MusicNL based on its publicly-available online database of membership province-wide (accessed and analysed May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 at [www.musicnl.ca/members](http://www.musicnl.ca/members)) shows that out of a total of 150 musicians listed by their individual names (that is, as soloists as opposed to band names), 52 (34.7%) are women and 98 (65.3%) are men. There is not a breakdown of which of these artists are located in St. John’s and which

others are located elsewhere in the province. Nevertheless, while the issue of receiving grants based on gender is an arguable point, an issue Simon does reveal is a difference in perception of equity based on gender.

Of 32 male participants in this study, seven (21.9%) said they feel women musicians in St. John's are at a career disadvantage compared to men musicians. Three male participants (9.3%) stated that women have a career advantage over men in the music profession. The remaining twenty-two male participants (68.8%) either had no opinion on the matter or else felt that career advantages and disadvantages are equally experienced by men and women musicians. Some male participants said that men are sometimes less likely to be asked to perform than women either because of physical appearance or due to a conscious effort on the part of event organizers to ensure that women musicians are equitably represented on stage.

Meanwhile, several male musicians commented that there are more women musicians in classical music than in non-classical. This does not mean, however, that women are treated any more equitably in the classical scene than in non-classical scenes.

*“Rebecca”*

**I'm aware of how some organizations are sort of boys' clubs. In the past, I didn't always feel comfortable speaking up. I felt like there was an 'in' club of mostly men, and you were in or you were out. And if you were out, which I kind of felt like I was on the edge, you were just always wondering “Am I going to get the call for that next concert?” I never did not get a call, but I was always wondering. (...) I didn't have that buddy-buddy relationship with some of the men who were in the behind-the-scenes roles, and I still don't really.**

At least one male classical performer sees an imbalance in that world through a different lens. He feels as a singer that he is disadvantaged in certain gig scenarios, particularly weddings and funerals, because of a preference in those settings for women

singers. He adds that he is also disadvantaged to no lesser or greater extent than women in auditioned classical situations, a thought that in some ways contradicts some of the previous commentary.

*“Jamie”*

**If I was going for a male lead but they wanted someone who’s 150 pounds with blond hair and blue eyes, I wouldn’t fit the bill. You just don’t take anything personally. You just go in there, and what it is is what it is.**

Not taking it personally is difficult, especially for those who experience gender-based career disadvantage directly or observe it happening to someone close to them. Male respondents who feel gender has been an important career-related experience expressed strong views on behalf of their women colleagues, or else stated that as male musicians they too have endured negative experiences. Five of the male participants who feel that women musicians are at a career disadvantage said they believe that women are treated as sexual objects in the music industry, a problem they say male musicians do not experience. However, other male participants believe sexuality places women musicians at a distinct advantage in some respects. They are careful to explain that while women should not be treated as sexual objects, they are sometimes given added attention and opportunity because of their gender. Several male participants agree that at least one down side of added attention is that women musicians hired in part because they are deemed physically attractive have to work extremely hard to prove themselves worthy of the gig.

*“Shane”*

**If you are attractive physically, it opens more doors. But people won’t still take you as serious if you’re female and attractive. They don’t recognize your talent. People don’t think you’re as good. So it’s almost like if you’re female and you’re attractive and you play music, you better practise your arse off and be twice as good as anybody would think you are.**



Green (2016) identifies sexual capital as a “relational resource that signals the relationship an actor has to others in the field and to the field’s standards of attractiveness” (275) and which is convertible into other forms of capital (Green, 2011). Miller (2014) finds that musicians’ masculinity or femininity is convertible into symbolic capital but varies according to genre. Here, Shane is identifying an interesting overlap of this additional kind of capital with economic, symbolic, social and cultural capital. He feels that attractive physical features can be to one’s advantage in some respects but a hindrance in other ways in efforts to be taken seriously and in acquiring employment in music.

The discussions also indicate that because gender representation in classical music is inversely balanced compared to non-classical music, there seems to be less of an assumption that women are not as talented as men. However, that assumption cannot be generally applied across classical music because it can also depend on the instrument. Certain instruments in classical music, just like in non-classical music, are heavily male-dominated and some women believe they have to work especially hard to prove their worth on these instruments. One male participant agrees and unofficially appoints himself as a kind of protector of women’s interests in one particular instrument that is common in all genres.

*“Todd”*

**The disadvantage is assumptions people make. I don’t think anyone’s gonna not hire her because she’s a woman. But I think there’d still be an attitude of “Oh really? Is she as good as the other person?” I don’t have many examples to give because I’m in such a male-dominated field in my instrument. But I do find myself needing to protect the females that I work with from being edged out. Whether they need that or not, I’m just consciously aware of it.**

Whether women playing instruments with a traditionally male connotation need or expect protection by their male peers is not a point that grew from any of the other interviews.

But there are hints that different forms of capital might be valued differently across genders, an issue that has manifested publicly in other scenes. In rock music, participation by women musicians has been noted as a “novelty” or “outside the norm” (Martin, 1995). The annual “Harbourage” Festival in St. John’s was roundly criticized by women musicians for its preponderance of male-dominated bands. In response to the Harbourage lineup, women musicians created a parallel event for all-female bands. The organizers of this counter-festival took care to point out the risk of “tokenizing” women musicians, but also asserted that women are marginalized and underprivileged in contrast to male rock musicians. Their response and the event itself resulted in a public argument over equitable performance opportunities for women musicians in the local rock scene<sup>26</sup>.

There have been several other efforts in St. John’s, especially in non-classical music, to hold performance events that exclusively feature women musicians - in part to compensate for a long tradition of women not being equitably represented in larger events, because organizers believe that women musicians do not draw as big an audience as men<sup>27</sup>. At least one participant believes that those kinds of events have served to create genre out of gender.

“*Paul*”

**Unfortunately, ‘male singer-songwriter,’ as ridiculous as it sounds, is a genre, and so is ‘female singer-songwriter.’ In terms of the sonics you’re listening to, it is considered a genre. So when they hire me or don’t hire me, they’re often going “Do we want to get Ron Hynes, David Francey, or *Paul* (participant referring to himself)?” Because they’re all singer-songwriters, and that is a major disadvantage to me because I’m not the legendary Ron Hynes or the nationally famous David Francey. So that does put me at a**

<sup>26</sup> Bradbury, T. (2015, September 8). Harbourage lineup galvanizes SPAAT. *The Telegram*. Retrieved from: <http://www.thetelegram.com/Living/Entertainment/2015-09-08/article-4270208/Harbourage-lineup-galvanizes-SPAAT/1>

<sup>27</sup> Brake, J. (2012, July 11). All-female songwriters’ circle happening this weekend. *The Telegram*, p. B3. ““(Gender) shouldn’t matter at all,” she continues. ‘But the fact is that up until not long ago it was like, no, we don’t (put too many female musicians on a bill) because you can’t draw a big crowd or whatever.’” - Sandy May.

disadvantage based on that. It also puts me at a disadvantage because I think that the male singer-songwriter and the female singer-songwriter, they're both ideas that have truly ... I could only speak for myself I suppose... They're genres that truly suffer from the internet age. A man with a guitar or a woman with a guitar is a male or female singer-songwriter by nature, and that means that somebody who made a YouTube video. And it means me, who's spend ten years working on my craft and putting out records. And if you get to see us live, the truth will be evident. But the reality is that even getting to that point becomes hugely difficult. First before it gets there, it's a pile of names on a piece of paper for a jury to review. And they're, "they're all looking the same to me. Who do we want? Well I heard of this guy. Get him." There is a lot of that that happens. I think that that can make a difference.

Paul's opinion and experience with gender issues in music also speaks to the issue of competition: a strong and constant current underlying the work of all musicians on the local scene, exacerbated in the internet age by competition online.

In spite of varied and strong views on the subject of gender in the local music industry, it is worth recalling that more than two-thirds of male participants and half of women participants did not see gender as an issue at all, or maintained that gender-related career advantages and disadvantages are experienced equally by men and women. This speaks to a positive shift over the years. Two veteran musicians, one male and one female, and each representing different genres, noted that the idea of women as sexual objects or being outnumbered in certain genres and instrumentation is changing in the direction of greater equality and fairness throughout the local music scene.

Physical appearance was also highlighted by several participants who say that the most marketable musician seems to be one seen as both artistically and physically appealing.

*"Winston"*

**I think on both sides of the gender issue, people think they can rely on their music and that's enough. And they can't. Your music is not enough. Your image is something.**

*“Bruce”*

**I think women in the city support each other a whole lot more so than men support each other. I think if I were a female and there’s this cool female girl playing music, I would go to see that. I find women just in general support other female musicians in this city who are trying to make a living. They know how much harder it is to make a go at it, right? So in a way, if you look at the popular bands right now in the city, they all have girls. They’re actually doing better than a lot of the male-dominated bands, ‘cause that’s just... It’s kind of the joke right now amongst musicians, “Okay, you wanna be popular? Let’s hire a cute female, cute girl, to play keyboards or something or bang on a drum and call it ‘indie rock.’” (*laugh*) You still have to be good. Don’t get me wrong. You’re not going to be bad and still get people out just ‘cause you’re a girl. But it’s definitely a little bit easier lately, you know?**

It may be that gender imbalance in some respects has leveled over the years, but body image remains important in the packaging of music (Hracs & Leslie, 2013), and this may always be the case.

#### **7.d Taking it personally: Borrowing, Lending, Friendship and Competition**

After music careers are launched and in full swing, musicians continue to cultivate personal and professional relationships that favour their work. Building large social and professional networks, and developing effective communication skills, have been shown to reinforce commitment to work in non-music employment (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999) and likewise seen as integral to musician career success (Dobson, 2010; Vaag, Giæver & Bjerkeset, 2014; Bartleet et al, 2012). This is exemplified in a wide spectrum of scenes and interactions among this study’s participants.

Musicians frequently lend their instruments and equipment to fellow musicians upon request, especially if the request comes from someone well known to the lender. It is an unwritten tradition that the narratives reveal as a vital source of camaraderie and trust in the

local music scene. Peers in music compete in auditions, applications for funding, and so on, but they are also each other's sources of referral for work and income, and access to tools of their trade. Instruments get passed around, lent and borrowed without contracts or fees, and the favour is expected to be returned. Music is costly to produce, making it economically beneficial for artists to trade and borrow equipment. It is also likely an attraction for musicians to work in St. John's, given some stark contrasts between mutual generosity experienced in this city and informants' accounts of sabotage experienced in larger cities. But when this longstanding tradition of generosity is broken, it proves to be a significant source of anxiety because exchange relationships are so integral to advancing one's career, and significant to the concept of a music "community."

One participant revealed a contentious exchange when a fellow musician refused to share musical ideas and an instrument. The participant became emotional while telling this story, signifying the value and fragility of social networks in this instance. Non-reciprocity is not that unusual in other fields of work, but in music, where relationships are as important as money, it can be tantamount to non-endorsement of another's work. And the feelings aroused prove to be long lasting.

*"Joshua"*

**I approached Pat about using his instrument. He wrote me about how he was slighted that I was trying to take his sound, and he was slighted about how you're supposed to ask the musician to play the instrument because it's their sound. I was thinking, "If you saw the communication we've had with everybody else in our circle, you'd realize why you're in the situation you're in because that's not how it works. Everybody is out to help everybody." You need camaraderie to save money. The people you call on when you do a gig or do a benefit, people actually do support each other.**

The effects of such exchange among musicians are similar to what has been observed in other communities of artists. Craig (2007b) argues that uncertainty with respect to paid employment for poets' is countered by gift exchanges among them that serve to enhance commitment to their work. Mauss (1990) wrote that in the exchange of goods and services "to refuse to give, to fail to invite, just as to refuse to accept (...) is to reject the bond of alliance and commonality" (p. 18). Joshua's experience indicates that if a musician refuses to lend to fellow musicians, the person doing the refusing could be making an implicit statement about the quality of the work of the musician making the request. In turn, the refusing musician generates a reputation for stinginess and self-isolation. Either reputation can spread quickly and can last. This represents a significant departure from the idea of a music community and the unwritten tradition among musicians of developing mutually beneficial exchange relationships, and accentuates the existence of competition in local music.

There are a few instances in the interviews that show how career advancement, experience and reputation can change earlier patterns of requests and exchanges among friends. Success to the point of hiring a manager can dramatically change how musicians interact and feel about each other.

*"Ernest"*

**There's always going to be some level of discrimination towards people who, heaven forbid, make it. Even from some people, resentment for people who succeed, who actually do better than the status quo. "You're too good for the rest of us, now. You're too big for yourself." You know what, here's the thing. That is often not the fault of the person who is succeeding. Often unfortunately that's attributed to envy, pride, egos who wish that they were doing that – who wish that they were having the success that you're having. I just focus on what I'm doing and what the band is doing. That's really all I care about. I don't care what everyone else is doing, and if friends of mine are successful, I'm genuinely happy for them. There will always be exceptions, but for the most part we support each other and we want each other to do well. (...) I think that the idea that you**

**succeed on the backs of others, that in order to climb up the ladder you have to step on other people along the way, is narrow-minded and egotistical. But all of this is up to the audience. It doesn't matter if I think a certain artist is the shits or is mind-blowingly good. Ultimately what matters is what the audience thinks. That's what will always determine the success and longevity of any artist.**

Ernest and Joshua illustrate the fragility of peer relationships and the limitations some musicians place on supporting others. It has been shown that social capital is necessary to advance economic capital, but here is evidence in musician careers of economic capital being withheld and social networks interrupted when a fellow musician feels his/her own reputation is threatened or that the relationship is no longer on an even playing field.

Some participants work only with one ensemble, while many others perform with numerous ensembles simultaneously. Amateurs in particular (for the purpose of this study, musicians who purposefully do not rely on music for income), with no career opportunity at stake, are free to roam from one ensemble to another if they have a taste for change. Income-dependent musicians, on the other hand, are likely to concern themselves more with ensuring that no feelings are hurt or potential work relationships damaged by leaving one group for another or for solo endeavour. Among the most treasured aspects of the St. John's music scene for most musicians and their audiences is that it affords considerable choice and flexibility.

*“Sophie”*

**I hear stories of people not getting along and not being supportive. Trying to get seen, and trying to get off the island and all the rest. But there's so much support here. It's really amazing. It's something that you really appreciate when you go to other places or when you bring friends or musicians here and they just say “Is this how it is?” You can enjoy a choir, or join the orchestra from time to time. It's ill-defined, the boundaries, the genres. It's not to detract from the calibre of the music.**

Carving out a niche market as a musician in St. John's involves years of navigating relationships with numerous fellow musicians. Along the way, genuine friendships emerge,

endure, and can develop into professional partnerships. Other interactions might not be so friendly, or in the best career interests of the musicians. Departures from those relationships have to be treated delicately in a scene where most musicians know and talk about one another and where artistic and professional reputations can be built or damaged. Orchestral musicians have been described by Faulkner (1973a) as “colleague-competitors” where “one is occupationally constrained to do something on his own to improve one’s position” (p. 342), and there is evidence of this in the narratives across all genres in St. Johns. While some participants in response to the competition question stated that competitiveness does not exist, the topic returned elsewhere in our discussions, particularly in response to subsequent questions about the types of people they interact with in the normal course of their work and whether they have had thoughts of quitting professional music altogether.

More than three-quarters (75.9%) of all participants said that they experience competition in music. The results are similar across genres, though with a slightly higher percentage of classical musicians experiencing competition. Participants took care to point out that competition is not normally outwardly expressed, but is manifested in various ways including performance competitions, as well as competition for project funding, sponsorship, and audience share. It is a paradoxical scene wherein musicians need each other to get by, but do their best to stand out from the rest.

Classical performers on the local scene have various amounts of performance opportunities mainly depending on the instrument they play and how long they have been on the scene. There seems to be plenty of work for pianists, but gigs for certain other instruments go to just a select few who have managed to carve out a longstanding niche reputation and are



thus able to claim the relatively lower number of prestige performance opportunities by getting called ahead of lesser-known or younger players. Those who rank lower on the call list for gigs are careful not to overtly show resentment or jealousy towards their colleagues. Feelings of competition are sensitively balanced with mutual respect. “Joan’s” response to questions about competition in her field demonstrates some of the effects that culturally approved humility can have on getting music work in St. John’s. It seems difficult to balance humility with assertiveness, without seeming either too meek or over-zealous and disrespectful of peers.

*“Joan”*

**The sad part is there are too many (*instrument*) players in this town unfortunately, who have made the contacts, who are first on the list of people to call. (...) The occasional show that comes through, it’s (*name*) who’s always first on the list, which is fine. But really gigging is something that if something comes up, I’m glad to take it. But there’s enough competition here that it’s not something that I can chase after. (...) It’s funny because the same people that you are competing against are the people that will also perhaps get you jobs. It’s friendly competition. So we are there more for each other than we’re against each other. And, I don’t know, maybe I just have an excuse because I am quite young. So I’m perhaps a little bit more respectful of other people than someone who’s a little bit older and who has more experience. So I will defer to them and I will take the jobs that they can pass along and learn from them. And then as I move up in the world, I can keep my contact with them but also be that friendly competition every now and again.**

Other classical participants who have had lengthy careers have created unique organizations and ensembles that had not previously existed in St. John’s. Competitors have since attempted to fit into those markets but most have not met with the same success. Finding previously uncharted musical territory in St. John’s seems to result in long-term popularity and success for those who undertake the first initiative. Nevertheless, even these leaders continually struggle with retaining membership in their organizations. This is not necessarily

unique to St. John's or to the music profession, but can be more pronounced and difficult to overcome in a small population with few resources of audience, membership and financing on which to draw.

While there are successful exceptions, it is difficult for musicians to gain market share with a competing organization or project. Emerging as a leader in the classical world requires long-term vision and good timing in determining whether the economy can support the initiative, and whether there is an appetite for additional music of a similar style. In a small city with diverse tastes and musical choices to support, not only are audiences most loyal to the lone known organization, so are coveted corporate sponsors. Someone who wants to start up another orchestra, for example, would have to compete for audience share, funding sponsorships, and members. It does not take long before tensions arise and work is compounded by efforts not to let competition be spoken of publicly - all in the name of preserving the solidarity of the music "community."

*"Scott"*

**Well it's already a problem now. It's a big problem now. In fact there's more stuff being generated than the public can ... It's a point of diminishing return now on it. I'm surprised that the ones that want to stay and graduate at MUN are able to find work to keep them going. (...) Quality brings the audience. Quality brings the sponsor. But you have to have the money to get the quality to do this here.**

Scott notes an important relationship between audience and money. His surprise that new local professional musicians manage to find work is well founded. While more musicians appear to be entering the scene, there are only so many potential audiences and, therefore, only so much money to go around. Additional fieldwork conversations with leaders in particular classical specialties have shown concerns for market "saturation" in some areas.

Some classical ensembles have been able to distinguish themselves from non-classical musicians and groups by achieving official charitable status. Donating to a choir or orchestra earns the sponsor a logo or note of thanks in a concert program instantly visible to hundreds of concert-goers at a time, and assures the ensemble of a secondary source of financing. However, if a competing similar organization is attempted (another all-male chamber choir, another orchestra, and so on), then the base of corporate sponsorships and donations for the first organization risks being spread more thinly, heightening the sense of competition. Medium to large ensembles of twenty to sixty members have a portion of their audiences built in by way of their members' networks of family and friends. But as the following experiences show, that does not work for all ensembles.

*“Rodney”*

**I’m completely in awe of the number of ensembles that stay afloat. And we’re all vying for the same public (...). The members have their own networks and families and friends. And that’s how it goes around. It’s the members who are pushing the seats. Someone generally has a connection to the ensemble that’s attending the concert.**

*“Denise”*

**Competition for getting people out. I think that’s a tough one. But there’s no time when you’re not gonna have it at the same time as some other group. So I think this is a very competitive town for choral music. It’s tough.**

Non-classical ensembles are neither promoted nor viewed as charitable organizations, even though their members are no less experienced and educated. A choir, concert band or orchestra usually has a board of directors and is incorporated. Some have achieved government-approved charitable status with its many financial implications. A rock, traditional, jazz, or any other non-classical band has only few members, is not a charity and therefore not in the running for potential corporate financial support. They instead rely

principally on two sources of funding: audiences and funding agencies (usually MusicNL and ArtsNL). Those funding agencies are available to all musicians through a competitive formal application process and are differentiated by who they sponsor. MusicNL is exclusive to musicians and tends to predominantly support non-classical artists, perhaps because of the composition of its administration and board membership who are themselves usually non-classical musicians, as well as because of its location in the heart of the downtown music scene.

An emerging musician whose first album and/or tour is partially or fully funded by MusicNL or ArtsNL has the resources and time to produce a visually and aurally more appealing sound because of greater access to more expensive means of production. The better the sound, the more likely is attention received by online and mainstream media, likely yielding a larger following than enjoyed by artists without such financial means. MusicNL's membership is posted online at its website. Its membership includes 229 musicians from across the province (soloists and bands combined), with only 19 of those categorized as "Classical/Art Music."<sup>28</sup>

Given that music is a field with multiple sources of funding and diverse perceptions of value depending on genre and audience opinion, it can be argued that musicians have a good thing going for them that many other occupations do not: a wide variety of available funding (referred to tongue-in-cheek by several participants as "free money"), in addition to employment income from a diversity of work, for projects they might otherwise not be able to

---

<sup>28</sup> Information accessed online on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at [www.musicnl.ca/members](http://www.musicnl.ca/members). The 229 members noted here are performing musicians. MusicNL's membership is larger than this, with additional members listed as industry professionals (recording studios, managers, and media).

afford out-of-pocket. One problem, however, is that there are many musicians trying to earn a living and relatively little funding per source, in spite of the variety of sources. Even musicians successful in achieving funding are likely to have to use it for specified projects, but also to pay down debts incurred up to that point.

*“Paul”*

**There’s not anyone malicious trying to run you over for the gig. It’s that there’s too many of us with too many slots, and we’re all sitting there in our pajamas filling out forms hoping that we’re going to get that showcase or festival stage, and clicking the submit button and twenty-five-dollared to death with submission fees. When 46 people apply for five slots, chances are the actual lack of quality will be weeded out at the top, then there’s going to be 25 quality acts for five slots.**

Being denied funding can result in delay or cancellation of particular projects, or seeking alternate sources of funding, including private initiatives. If funding is approved, the successful applicant has the green light to move forward with the project, potentially placing him/her at a professional advantage at least temporarily. Receiving funding means that a committee of industry professionals (often chosen from media, music or government) has approved an application based on their confidence that the proposed project will succeed. Funding approval is a substantial boost for a musician’s career and confidence, but the celebration has to be somewhat muted out of respect for fellow musicians whose bids were unsuccessful.

*“Eamon”*

**We had gotten the grant and the other guys didn’t get it. But there’s no animosity or anything. It’s just the way it unfolded. Maybe they’ll get it next time and I won’t get it next time. No one’s pissed off at each other for trying to do the work you want to do. I think that’s part of being a musician. Everyone’s in the same boat doing the same thing, regardless of genre. I think everyone has an unwritten understanding of “we’re all in this together,” so there’s no need for any bad blood or anything like that.**

Not only is there no need for bad blood, there is no time for it in a field where musicians regularly form and disband groups, and move through their careers in a diversity of roles – as soloists, ensemble leaders, songwriters, producers – frequently interacting with fellow musicians in the normal course of doing business. It is important to keep old friends while forging new relationships. Professionally, musicians who are artistically sound, punctual and respectful of their fellow musicians and audiences remain in good standing in the music community and are able to find work relatively easily. This type of mobility from one group and audience to another is not unlike that of many other occupations where employees are loyal for as long as the work situation is of some benefit to them and their work is appreciated. If a better opportunity comes along, they will take it (Cheramie, Sturman, & Walsh, 2007)

One advantage the music scene has over some other occupations is its strong network of social and entrepreneurial relationships that endure over the course of changes in work. The social scene of musicians is closely tied to their work and lends itself well to making friends with other musicians while managing undercurrents of competition. Artistic talent by itself goes a long way in music career development, but other qualities are essential, including being easy to get along with, knowing and respecting everyone's responsibilities within a group, being trustworthy, and working as hard as everyone else to further colleagues' interests as well as one's own. The concurrent imperative of appealing to potential funders while carefully maintaining peer relationships represents an instance of social and economic capital exchange in a field of self-employment confirms Becker's (1982) assertion that artists' success depends on a "network of cooperating people" (p.25).

*“Stan”*

**I’m friends with quite a few musicians, and it’s not so much competition as it is certain people always get these gigs because it’s their gig. But for some reason if they can’t do it, everybody has their list. “I can’t do it, but here are three names I know who might be able to.” So there’s competition in the sense that you want to make sure you’re on everybody’s list and stay on their list and stay friendly with everybody.**

Peers can also be seen as patrons through such referral systems. Staying agreeable, sometimes easier said than done, is advisable in a small city where musicians frequently cross paths and share friends, colleagues and venues, and where conflict can be magnified in close confines and public settings. Negative relationships were described by one participant as “creatively stifling.” But some feelings about others also have to be stifled in order to maintain positive reputations and capacities for working together. This reaction speaks to Hochschild’s (1979) concept of “managed emotions.” Musicians are self employed, but the rules, traditions and expectations of the public sphere demand that they keep a lid on their feelings and publicly convey what audiences and sponsors want to see – devotion to their art and congeniality, with professional differences best kept behind the scenes.

Participants were asked if they experience problematic relationships in their music work and how they manage them. Types of unpleasant interactions have to do with specific instances, such as negotiating with venue owners (usually having to do with pay and stage set-up), firing managers, disputes with one or more funding agencies, and disagreements with fellow musicians. Difficulties can manifest in many ways including quitting ensembles, letting ensemble members go, not being paid reasonably or on time by music leaders, or disagreement about how music should be created and presented.

More than 77% of participants said that they have experienced difficult music work relationships, and the response rate was consistent across genres. Ways of responding to negative interactions are quite varied but fall into two types: avoidance or confrontation. One main reason why difficult relationships are so challenging to resolve is that musicians, even when they do not get along, empathize with one another's difficulties in starting and maintaining a career. As Eamon stated in reference to the competition question, "We're all in this together." In this research, this is a sentiment shared across age, gender and genre. Conflict in professional music can be compared to a disruption in a family, as referenced previously by Todd's description of the St. John's music scene. Musicians spend so much time working together that they often see more of each other than their actual families. Artistic creation is so intensely personal and emotional, and the connection to fellow musicians who share it is indescribably powerful, often resulting in very strong relationships.

*"Gary"*

**For the same reason that you have to get along with all your ex-boyfriends or ex-girlfriends, exactly the same principle applies. St. John's is still not a very big place and was even smaller a few years ago. And we're not even talking about St. John's at large. We're talking about three or four streets in downtown St. John's when you're talking about rock or Celtic music. So you're talking about a very, very small population. So you do have to be careful.**

Most participants who experienced challenging relationships described the need to separate music from business. Classical and non-classical ensembles usually start with an idea among personal friends. Out of necessity, the group becomes a business enterprise and the personal relationships evolve accordingly. The business of keeping a band going sometimes interferes with creativity, as concerns with income and costs take priority. If a band is not making any money, if a classical ensemble has lost its sponsorships and fundraising



capabilities, if a musician is not paid enough to afford basic costs of living, if a manager has a different vision for artists than the artists have for themselves, then change normally happens.

Further to the idea of managed emotions, individual personalities in the business of music complicate matters. Some participants outwardly brim with confidence and others are far more humble. With popular recognition and success, musicians are usually required to appear outgoing and exuding confidence. This can be uncomfortable for someone in a leadership role who is humble yet publicly central to the group, responsible for its success or non-success.

*“Elaine”*

**It’s hard with music because it’s so personal. Especially when you’re in a leadership role, you put so much of yourself out there: Your musical interpretation and your leadership skills. And then when something doesn’t work out, it’s so, so personal. “What did I do? What did I say?”**

When a group of highly trained musicians defer to one as their ensemble leader, its members ultimately have to set aside some measure of their artistic predilections in favour of the leader’s choices (Faulkner, 1973b). Some ensembles claim to have a wholly open, diplomatic, everyone-is-equal approach to artistic direction. But tensions emerge and have to be dealt with, and the leader may have the most at stake in terms of personal reputation. The ability to deal quietly yet resolutely with problems is key to protecting opportunities for future work. No one likes to work with someone who is difficult to get along with, so in a community like St. John’s it is in the best interests of all to reach some sort of compromise, given the likelihood of paths crossing again.

*“Shane”*

**It’s small enough that you know who’s an arsehole and who’s not. And you know how to talk to them or how to avoid them. And it’s small enough that you can have a falling out**

**with somebody, but it can't go on for very long because you're going to be seeing them in a week or two. So you either agree not to talk to each other, or you get over it very fast.**

Some responses in this study appear to reveal a generational divide between musicians. But curiously, this only seems to be the case among participants who work in traditional music. Some traditional musicians who have been working professionally for more than ten years said that they appreciate that there is a large emerging generation of younger musicians realizing reputations beyond the local scene thanks to social media and access to international audiences by making their music available online. No one among traditional musicians begrudged another's success in their interviews for this research. But what appears to be lacking is interaction between older and younger traditional musicians – a lack not apparent among classical and other non-classical participants of this study.

The issue of generational separation occurring in this genre is somewhat ironic. Traditional artists of all ages and experience take pride in preserving a treasured style of music mostly associated with Newfoundland and Labrador culture and history (Breslin, 2011), yet both younger and older traditional musicians speak in my research of a troubling lack of association with one another. Younger traditional musicians speak of some of their older counterparts as being set in their ways to a fault, unwilling to impart their own experiences with, or lend instruments to, younger artists. More experienced traditional artists meanwhile simply wonder why the younger generation seems to be unwilling to affiliate with some older traditional musicians.

*“Betty”*

**There's a younger crowd coming up and they all interact with each other, but they don't interact with the older crowd. So there seems to be, like, a bit of a generation gap and I'm just wondering, like... You don't see these guys gigging with people like myself or**

**whatever. Like, we'll be at the same events, but they don't kind of cross back and forth in terms of working with each other as much.**

Betty's observation could be partially founded in evidence of an effort by new, young traditional musicians to discover and attract audiences by fusing traditional music with other genres and instrumentations, including rock and classical (Browne & Hayward, 2010).

Whatever the causes, there seems to be a communication issue between veteran and newer traditional artists on the local circuit, with some expressing concern about how this will affect the future of traditional music. In his attempt to understand generational differences, Sam references highly complex cliques in music in Newfoundland, which can be difficult to break into.

*"Sam"*

**There's been personality conflicts. Especially where there's often age gaps and stuff. I know probably some of the older musicians have experienced it more than my case. A lot of discrepancy over the idea of levels of professionalism. (...) And then Newfoundland's interesting mini-clique dynamic. All that thrown into that whole environment of everyone's friendly, and then they're not, and then they are.**

Sam's and Betty's observations indicate that while maintaining good relationships are important for getting work in music, musicians also veer towards creating groups that protect the interests of like-minded groups of musicians that may not be easily accessible by outsiders. Other narratives further show that while musicians are willing (albeit reluctantly) to admit to differences of personalities, artistry and professionalism within their own genres, most deal with it by not dealing with it at all. Some feel avoidance is the least contentious way to deal with conflict for the sake of their careers and reputations. As musicians jostle for position to remain visible and viable, interaction between them is inevitable, but the appearance of friendliness essential. Some believe that reputation is placed at risk by confronting issues head

on and prefer instead to avoid contention, hoping it will go away. Meanwhile, most participants accept that not every working relationship in a close community will be of mutual benefit.

*“Joshua”*

**There are several musicians, and particularly the ones who are in the same musical world as me, who I think are not going about it the right way. And that’s often the point of contention there, that you have two different ways of looking at your own genre. I’ve butted heads to a certain degree, but I realize there are just people I should stay away from.**

Joshua’s comment speaks to the quiet ways in which local musicians manage conflict. In addition to the narratives above, one dispute was revealed between two participants in this research who were interviewed separately. Even though their disagreement became heated, they came to work fruitfully together on later projects. A disagreement between two other participants also came to light and was not resolved at the time of writing. In a third instance, two participants who privately do not get along continue to work together and are mutually friendly in public. Public expressions of solidarity masking privately contained undercurrents of conflict are common in the St. John’s music scene. The music profession of St. John’s is largely defined by self-employment that can be solidified or damaged by reputation, yet demands cooperation and collaboration and at least the impression of mutual support and friendship in a field where its workers also take pride in independence.

## **7.e The Intersection of Work and Leisure**

Music work represents an overlap of pleasure and work, and is partially characterized by desire or expectation to socialize together frequently, in addition to working together.

Performance often happens in a place of leisure for their audiences<sup>29</sup>. If the scene of work and leisure is a bar, then the performing artists' work involves late nights, the pronounced presence of alcohol, and socializing with audiences. It may involve consciously working to sell drinks to further the business of the venue and to secure a positive and continuing relationship between musician and venue owner. In the dense music scenes of St. John's, where venues are located close together and in a city with a core population of just over 100,000, frequency of interaction among musicians, between musicians and mutually-dependent commercial interests, and between musicians and their audiences present an interesting network reflecting the overlap of social bonds and material exchange that advances musicians' work, an overlap that has been shown to contribute to social movements (Simpson, 2015) and to a well-functioning civil society (Baldassarri & Diani, 2007).

Socializing is seen by participants to be an integral and carefully managed component of their work. Participants were asked to explain from their perspectives the importance of meeting with their colleagues in social settings, particularly bars, coffee shops and restaurants, following performances or rehearsals. The narratives reveal an occupational imperative to socialize. Most participants said that they do not want to socialize after a long day and evening of work but feel it is necessary in order to develop, maintain or improve working relationships with fellow musicians.

Most performances and rehearsals take place in the evenings in order to avoid scheduling conflicts with other jobs or family commitments, and it seems natural to wrap up

---

<sup>29</sup> Feature. (2012, November 22). *The Muse*. pp. 11-12. "A lot of bands in the local scene are pretty friendly. Even though you're a fan of their music, they treat you more as a friend than as a fan." - Tara Thompson.

evening work with some socializing. There is evidence also that the amount of socializing, or at least the ways in which musicians socialize, diminishes or changes as they grow older. But the necessity of socializing with fellow musicians and audiences remains for a combination of personal and professional reasons, no matter the genre or age of musician.

*“Betty”*

**I think that was actually a huge attraction for me back in the day. The fact that I could do that work and have that kind of fun and party, and it was all considered part of the same thing. I still do the partying. So it is my social life. I can’t extricate it from the work. (...) If people actually went to work and had that situation at work, they would probably be more productive and happier at work. I feel bad for people who don’t have that kind of social interaction at work.**

While Betty wishes all occupations could enjoy the camaraderie that forms part of musicians’ work, Keith goes further, noting how the social and work worlds of musicians intertwine so that alcohol consumption on the job is expected and accepted by workers and clientele.

*“Keith”*

**There’s not many occupations where no one bats an eye if you have a drink while you’re actually doing the job you’re hired to do. That’s sort of a unique thing to music. It’s an interesting thing about music. I’ve been in situations where someone really goes too far and they drank too much and they can’t perform, or can’t play really well or playing really horribly. I think that’s always sort of a faux pas, but I’ve never seen anyone fired over it. You hear stories, but I’ve never seen anyone fired over it, let go, or even reprimanded. That’s the other thing... There’s no real consequence to behaviour in your music business life, aside from people stopping to come to shows, I suppose. You hear people, “So-and-so showed up at the gig and they were loaded and couldn’t play anything”, and they’re still at the next gig and people still come.**

Participants said they socialize to relax after high-pressure rehearsals and performances, to nurture existing relationships and to forge future collaborations. Participants who describe feeling less comfortable partaking in the after-concert social scene either put in a brief obligatory appearance or do not attend at all. They give reasons including: they do not

drink much if at all; they are too tired; they have an early-morning obligation; they feel too old to be partying after an exhausting performance; or their romantic partner is not a musician and not comfortable mingling with musicians. Other participants are not comfortable with socializing because they are shy, yet they are in an occupation that demands engagement with patrons, fellow musicians and media. Once their reputations are established, it is important to some participants that they remain social in order to keep their profile in the marketplace, whether they enjoy it or not.

*“Mitchell”*

**I still find it’s a struggle for me to include the social aspect into my life with my music, you know. But I’m realizing more and more, the older I get, that that’s more important than practising.**

Musicians’ work is as private and intimate as it is public. What audiences are not able to see is the time spent in rehearsals and planning. Rehearsals are in a private space, sheltered from the audience, and – in cases of ensemble rehearsals - involve becoming intimately familiar with one another’s gestures, breathing and glances. Rehearsals take place against the backdrop of external pressures, at home, in other jobs, or looming deadlines. Tensions build, emotions run high, there is little time for conversation, and it can be difficult to keep things positive and constructive when working on music together. Socializing afterward offers the opportunity to release all of that tension into much-needed conversation. Making each other laugh, playing pool, asking personal questions, and buying each other drinks factor into building professional and personal relationships. Whether socializing is favoured or not, it is inextricable from the work of musicians.

*“Charlene”*

**When you’re in rehearsal, you’re working, so there’s no social chatter unless you’re standing on the sidelines. There’s no time for getting to know each other. But then you go out and get to know each other, then you come back to rehearsal and you play better together or you sing better together because you know each other and you trust each other.**

Mingling with fellow musicians and audience members after a performance is the very act some participants feel they need in order to be motivated to move on to the next project, and is another manifestation of the importance of establishing and maintaining social and professional networks. Interaction with audiences and fellow musicians are important for achieving career success in music not just commercially but emotionally, and for reassurance and motivation. Sometimes a performance might not feel as gratifying to musicians as it might have seemed to the audience or fellow musicians, so they need some adulation afterward to validate their work.

*“Karen”*

**The people in performing and teaching, they’re very animated people. And because of our work and the amount of energy and animation it usually demands, it takes us a while to simmer down. We’re still riding this exciting, adrenalized place, and generally we all just really enjoy each other’s company, so it just gets extended beyond. But it’s also stressful. It’s nice to have those conversations with people. I also like to give this but also receive it – affirm people that they’re doing great work, and receive that affirmation and approval. I can’t imagine working in a world where it wasn’t affirmed.**

*“Katherine”*

**A lot of singers at these receptions would be talking up the conductor or director, saying, “Well, what are you doing next?” I never did that. I just mingled among the patrons. I just... I don’t have the super aggressive personality. And if you really want to make it, that’s what you need. But still a balance of personality that people still want to hire.**

While several interviewees who participate in the social scene do not drink alcohol, for most the consumption of alcohol is understood to be an important part of socializing. The vast majority of participants said they normally go out for at least one drink after a rehearsal or



performance, and there is a wide range of alcohol use. Only one participant confessed to experiencing dependency on alcohol and drugs. Most others say they drink only modestly, infrequently and usually for professional reasons.

Most non-classical performances take place where alcohol sales are the main business interest of the venue and where music is secondary. A musician performing in a bar only has to take a step from the stage to mingle with the audience. At least one musician describes post-performance socializing as part of the work of musicians in the form of networking with venue owners and audiences. Their popularity at a particular venue impacts attendance and, by extension, beer sales. This is a clear instance of art, commerce, and leisure intertwining and the distinctions between work and leisure becoming barely distinguishable (Lazzarato, 1996).

*“Winston”*

**If you’re talking about the bar scene in general, your social scene is your gig. Even if I’m not gonna have a night of drinking, if I’m just gonna go and play my gig, I’ll go and have a beer and I’ll have that on stage with me and I’ll be seen taking sips of it because that sells more booze. People see somebody drinking on stage, they’ll go, “This guy’s really good. He’s drinking beer. I need a beer.” Your job is to sell not just yourself and your music, but it’s to sell beer at the venue.**

Other participants agree with Winston but with some additional perspective, particularly having to do with the importance of being seen and of remaining “relevant” to venue owners and audiences. The interviews generally suggest that not interacting with the audience runs the risk of being perceived as unsociable, even if the performance was great. With a plethora of musicians on the local scene, it is easy to be forgotten by audiences and venue owners without maintaining a pleasant, sociable presence in the field. The work scene of non-classical musicians in particular is highly fluid, their work often shifting from one band

to another in addition to solo performances, and all trying to keep busy by being noticed, available, and easy to get along with.

Performances on the downtown scene take place much later into the night than classical performances. There is barely a distinction between the party scene and performance scene, and if musicians choose not to be a part of the blended scene, even when exhausted, they risk being overlooked for future work in favour of others who do participate.

*“Shane”*

**Do you have to drink? No. But you do have to go out. If you’re not out and you’re not seen around, the people don’t know you’re in town. And if people don’t see you, you’re not getting booked for gigs, right? I would say half if not more of the gigs that you book are through seeing people when you go out. They’re like “I got a gig coming up in three weeks. Are you free that night?” And that’s how it’ll happen. You’ll work up work by going out.**

Shane succinctly illustrates the significance to musicians of maintaining a visible presence on the music scene even in non-performance. All interaction for musicians is viewed by many participants as a form of work and, in the dense music scene of St. John’s, is demonstrative of the importance of cultivating multiplex ties – or the blending of work, friendship and leisure (Stoddart & Tindall, 2010) – to maintain and build on career success. While the place of performance and sociability is also often the place of hiring and employment for musicians, drinking or celebrating together can also result in a boost to their self-esteem and commitment in a career that is filled with waves of successes and setbacks (Peace, 2002).

Alcohol has been found to be a valid component of musicians’ work in cultivating social relationships on which the work depends. But its use may also be governed by personal as well as professional motivations (MacLeod, 2013). Classical participants view socializing

differently from non-classical participants. This may have to do with the location of classical music rehearsals and performances, as well as their timing. Many of them state that they have early-morning work commitments incompatible with late night socializing. Most rehearsals, especially for large ensembles take place at night, often after musicians' day work and normally last for at least two to three hours. Rehearsals usually happen on campus in the centre of the city, removed from the downtown scene and not in a place where alcohol is served. To socialize afterwards takes extra effort, including packing up instruments and driving to a separate venue. Non-classical musicians, by contrast, are accustomed to very late nights, sometimes not taking to the stage until well past 10:00 at night, the time when most classical performances and rehearsals end. Furthermore, there is less emphasis among classical participants on the importance of networking in securing future work opportunities. There is no lack of socializing among classical musicians, but their responses to questions on the matter range from reporting brief appearances for a drink or two with colleagues to defending their choice not to socialize. When they do speak of socializing, they tend to emphasize the simple social pleasure of hanging out – with or without alcohol - after a lengthy, intensive performance or rehearsal.

*“Rebecca”*

**I’m really not a night person. I also don’t drink a lot. I don’t hold my alcohol well, so there’s probably an element of the social life that I’m just not involved in. I’ve actually forced myself to go to the Duke after concerts, even when I was tired and wanted to go to bed. I just felt like I need to be there when casual conversations are happening. I know that I don’t come naturally to networking and things like that.**

Even with the wide variety of responses, it can be concluded that socializing is an essential component of music work in St. John’s. Performance locations and ensemble culture

are contributing factors, but there is a broader rationale noted by several participants. Music is at first social in childhood. Musicians who professionalize their music try to make money while hoping to keep the work fun. But the moment the goal of earning wages is attached to their musicianship, commercial goals and accompanying pressure often overtake the pure enjoyment of music-making.

*“Rodney”*

**People are doing it for the love of it. They’re coming because they want to do that for themselves and it’s their out. And a part of that out, especially with singing... but I’m sure that an instrumentalist would say the same thing.... is the interaction with the other individual. So if you’re not keen on socialization, then you had better take up something else and stay home.**

For some, socializing is more about validation, as Karen suggested. Retaining a sense of the joy of music by socializing with peers represents the co-existence of social and emotional capital as functions of the work (Lindgren, Packendorff & Sergi, 2014). Almost everyone spoke of loving the work they do and wanting to celebrate that work with as many people as possible. Many drew useful contrasts to other occupations.

*“Paul”*

**You don’t start accounting for fun and then make it into a profession. Everyone who starts music does it for fun first. Why would you ever go into music as a business if you didn’t love it first? It would be silly. It’s too hard to make a living at it, to do it because you thought it would be a viable living. So I think that everybody does this because they have it in their hearts first. It’s a passion, and the business aspect can sometimes feel a little like it’s killing the vibe. When you spend a whole day on a grant application, you often feel like that was important to keep doing it, but it would also be nice to play some guitar today, because that’s what you started doing. So I think there’s a social element that comes down to “we’re doing this because we’re having fun, and we want to keep having fun, and we want to do this with our friends.” That’s what we did growing up. It’s just a natural extension to have this business as a far more socially based one that has a business element, as opposed to a business that sometimes has a social element.**

The music “profession” as articulated here by Paul and many other participants highlights the constant blurring of the line between social and professional activity and music’s distinction from other occupations by way of its continuously active interplay of work and leisure. Leisure settings for audiences are enhanced by the appearance of musicians on stage and engagement with patrons during and after performances. This “socially-based” business relies on the co-existence of social and economic exchanges that take place according to conventions and resources in the moment (Crossley, 2011) that alter traditional meanings of professional, professionalism, and work.

#### **7.f Musician Health**

Two common performance hindrances experienced by musicians are performance anxiety and physical injury. Two-thirds (36 out of 54) of participants have experienced performance anxiety: racing heartbeat, perspiring, nervousness, and higher than normal energy, usually felt in the final moments before a performance. Most participants describe those feelings, usually connected with anticipation of getting on stage, as normal and they eventually go away once the performance begins. All participants said that a certain degree of performance anxiety is good for a performance because it forces the musicians into a heightened state of mental and physical concentration. Negative performance anxiety was described most commonly as feeling insecure for not having rehearsed enough. Otherwise, nervousness is believed to be normal and can help musicians become aware of possible pitfalls in performance and prepared with ways to recover from them.

Several participants spoke of “feeding off” the audience to settle their nerves and channel their energies into the music. The amount of anxiety is sometimes related to the make up and size of the audience. Even the most accomplished veteran performers describe feeling most nervous in small venues, performing for small audiences regardless of who is attending. “Nicolas,” a seasoned professional, describes feeling nervous while playing for a child in a local amateur competition. The critical element of performance can impact everyone with a stake in the performance, even indirectly.

*“Nicolas”*

**Playing for the daughter of a friend of mine at the Kiwanis Music Festival. It wasn’t even something that was strange for me to play. She was probably 12 or 13. Just sitting in that little basement of the Arts and Culture Centre being adjudicated. I was terrified! I find it tenser in very small one-on-one situations like house concerts which I tend to do a lot, where people are right there next to you. I’d rather be on stage with a million people,**

*“Jamie”*

**Usually leading up. I’ve gotten a lot better. Three years ago, I would be into palpitations and can’t breathe. The night before I’d be running to the bathroom and stuff. Lack of confidence. I probably put on this exterior of the most confident person in the world. I think as musicians we’re always our worst enemy and we’re always trying to perfect, and we always want to do the best or more. And we’re only human. It’s just get up there and do your best. And usually your best is more than enough. (...) It’s still there, the butterflies. I think you’re always gonna have the butterflies. If you don’t, you don’t have that energy, that drive. You’ve got to have that.**

Performance anxiety is nearly equally experienced across genres of this study, which does not agree with findings of Vuust et al. (2010) who suggest that performance anxiety is more prevalent in classical musicians. Participants describe managing anxiety by practising hard and being as prepared as possible. Participants specializing in non-classical genres do not experience less performance anxiety than when they were studying classically or than their classical counterparts.

Nevertheless, two classically-trained participants whose principal performing genre is non-classical describe genre contrasts in their performance anxiety, stating that their anxiety leading up to classical performances was greater than for their present non-classical performances. The reasons they give have to do with the strictness of training of classical music as distinguished from non-classical music: in that sense, they are required to hold a specific posture on stage, and perform music that is well-known and may have been previously performed by fellow musicians, in front of a critical audience. The experiences of current and former university classical music students reveal that their performances in school were unique in that they were under academic scrutiny by an audience of professors judging the complete performance presence, including physical, artistic and emotional presentation and preparation. Musicians who transitioned away from classical music describe a much more relaxed environment in non-classical music allowing them more authority and freedom to express and posture themselves. However, those same musicians describe respect and appreciation for the regimen of preparation for classical performance, at least one wishing it could somehow be applied to his non-classical career.

*“Eamon”*

**Not so bad anymore. There’s something about it that feels more casual. It feels a bit more relaxed than the classical setting which seems very formal. Not in a bad way. The pressure and stress can work to your advantage sometimes. If you’re really stressed out for a (*classical*) performance or a master class, sometimes it’s good. Sometimes it makes you perform better, but, I think it was just the formal nature of everything was not maybe as desirable as writing a song and getting up and playing it for a bar of people. I don’t really have any regimen. I should be practicing a lot more, actually. That’s something I kind of miss about school.**

Eamon speaks to distinctions on the St. John’s music scene between the classical and non-classical worlds and their respective performance expectations and regulations on

behaviour. For Eamon, playing in a bar lends to a more relaxed feeling. But as much attention is given by the performer in that setting of musical preparedness, technical readiness, on-stage professionalism, physical appearance, and conveying the music to a discerning audience. Given similar ratios of performance anxiety experienced across genres, it is a condition that can happen in any type of setting and is managed in different ways.

Two performers spoke of drinking alcohol or doing drugs before performances to alleviate anxiety in their past but claim to no longer do so. No other participants described those activities as part of their pre-performance routine. However, many participants discussed the importance of consuming alcohol as part of their work following and sometimes during, performances, as a way to enhance the creative process. The narratives suggest that there is a very fine line between drinking to meet social or business protocols, and drinking to the point of excess in an effort to deal with stress. When a musician who drinks is struggling to make ends meet, drinking can represent a complicated mix of celebration and escape from stress. One participant can no longer financially afford to drink, but is working in settings where alcohol is always available, and with people of other occupations who can easily afford to drink.

*“Eddie”*

**When I was in high school, you’re playing music, having some fun, playing some parties. And now it’s becoming a job and that really stressed me out to the point where I would just sit at the bar. And then I just wouldn’t go to rehearsals. And then I’d be late for shows or sound checks and I could barely perform. I’m surrounded by drugs and alcohol everywhere I go, whether I’m rehearsing or performing or at the studio. So it’s hard to escape from it. But I know lots of engineers and lawyers and teachers who go out and party all the time just as hard, you know? And they can afford to do it.**



Contrast this experience with that of another participant who also admits to being a heavy drinker, but does not seem concerned with how little money is made or how s/he is judged because of drinking. For this participant, drinking before, during and after work is expected, necessary, enjoyable, normal, and not seen as a problem for musicians or their audiences.

*“Finley”*

**Before, during, after. It just becomes a part of it. You go in, you get probably a free beer right away, or you drink before you go down. Usually it’s on a Friday or Saturday night, so you’re gonna have a few drinks before you go down, and people get excited for the show. Then you get there and people will buy you beer on stage or something, or buy you shots. Then there’s people in the band who smoke marijuana, or there’s other drugs on the go. There’s lots of drugs on the go in St. John’s. Then after you’re done playing, it’s the same thing. You’re talking to people who are like, “Great show.” You’re sticking around to see the other bands. I don’t think we ever played a show when we didn’t drink anything. Not once. It’s just part of the life. (...) Alcohol is not affecting any of our performances. There’s one or two where I was really drunk. They’re like, “You’re loaded.” They didn’t really care. But I knew myself I shouldn’t be getting that drunk, but...**

It appears from the narratives that specific band or ensemble culture has a great deal to do with establishing a line between acceptable and excessive amounts of alcohol consumption. Eddie was working with ensembles where drinking interfered with preparation for shows, whereas Finley’s ensemble members seem all to be imbibing to the same extent and have accepted alcohol as a significant part of their work and a defining feature of membership in their group. Throughout this discussion, socializing after a rehearsal or performance has been described as a means of celebrating, releasing pent-up tensions, and forging stronger relationships. One participant noted perceived positive effects of alcohol consumption as part of work.

*“Glenn”*

**There’s nothing we love more than altering the norm, altering the reality as the rest of the world sees it. That helps us create good art that the rest of the world doesn’t readily see. They find the normal day to day living mundane or grey or bleak. They find it boring. And those conditions do not create good art whether you’re writing a novel or whether you’re writing an opus. An artist needs to be challenged. Sometimes that justification of alcohol and drugs does tip and you just end up being an alcoholic. But for many of us, the motivators of alcohol and even drugs are the muses, the inspirations. It comes down to not being placed in boxes, not being restricted. And these types of vices, alcohol and drugs, they help liberate the mind.**

None of these instances are intended to suggest that drinking is more or less of a problem among musicians than in any other occupation, nor is it the objective of this discussion to define alcoholism and its effects. But in contrast to other occupations, the difference for musicians in terms of acceptability of the presence of alcohol lies in where their work takes place (especially for non-classical musicians) and the fact that drinking is in many cases invited and encouraged during work.

One-third of participants have also experienced physical challenges that have hindered their careers. Though the differences are not statistically significant across genres, more than half of classical participants have experienced performance-related physical problems. The most common injury is related to repetitive strain associated with vigorous, movement over time and in an unnatural posture. In extreme cases, those injuries can halt a career and result in surgeries (Dawson, 2007). Other participants have suffered physical hardships incurred outside of their music work that have severely compromised their work in music. An added benefit to most musicians of portfolio employment is that it ensures some financial support from alternate sources when they are temporarily unable to perform.

One participant suffers from a form of performance anxiety that appears to be closely tied to a history of physical challenges. The participant calls it “imposter syndrome” or the constant feeling of unworthiness to be working at a high degree of musicianship with colleagues. The combination of anxiety and physical ailments can be debilitating, yet this participant remains determined to forge ahead in the career.

*“Howard”*

**I think this whole history of injury just undermines your confidence in a big way, and the imposter syndrome thing just plays into it. I think also, like with concerts that are very physically demanding, in the past I have just been worried more than anything that I was going to be in pain and play badly because of it. You really can’t play well in pain.**

When physical and emotional setbacks happen over a long period of time and work is delayed or stopped because of them, some participants begin considering career alternatives. Physical injury does not necessarily hinder their creative output, but it does hamper their ability to remain visible among peers and audiences. Injuries force them into withdrawal from the performance scene and they end up needing to seek out alternative ways to remind the industry that they are still present and viable. Consistent with other literature that has examined performance-related injury (Park, Guptill & Sumsion, 2007; Guptill, Zaza & Stanley, 2000), some participants described playing through pain simply because they do not want to stop making music under any circumstances, with or without treatment, aware of the risk of further injury.

The growth of portfolio and precarious employment worldwide has raised the increasing challenge of ensuring the inclusion of health preservation and injury treatment and prevention for precarious workers in all fields (Benach et al, 2014). Treatments for injuries and illnesses are available for musicians, and there is some assistance available through the

Canadian Federation of Musicians for health and other emergencies that befall members (www.cfm820.ca). If income is infrequent and uncertain at the best of times, and if musicians have no other reliable sources of income, then ailing self-employed musicians without a health plan are unable to afford the costs of medical treatment. One participant points out the specificity of musician injuries as a general problem. Not only is it costly to treat, some health care providers seem to be ill-informed about, for example, repetitive strain injury.

*“Isaiah”*

**I found with physiotherapists, there was nothing – no knowledge of how musicians’ bodies and muscles fired in this career. I was going to physiotherapists who were working on large muscle groups. So I found it really hard to get treated. I went to the hospitals and stuff here, and they wanted to do cortisone and things like that. That was so scary to me, to think that I was going to inject myself with something so I could keep playing music. (...) There are insurances you can get through the union and there’s a lot of things that you can get as a musician to compensate for situations like this. But the problem is as a young musician you’re making so little money, that all of these programs just seem so expensive at the time.**

Isaiah at the time of our discussion was considering a career change because of the effect these circumstances have had on music income. Another participant in a similar situation is drastically slowing a previously active performance career. In this case, the music career is being reimagined so that this participant’s creative output can be presented in different ways. This particular response to unforeseen circumstances is also a reflection of the effect of parental support. This musician’s parents continue their moral and practical support well into the music career.

*“Jackson”*

**I’m lucky to say that being busy keeps me from not allowing depression to sink in too much. I do have moments when I think dark thoughts and negative things, but I think I was raised right to realize that those things happen. I’m able to say “just give it a minute” and eventually something will present itself. One thing I’ve always learned is**

**that there will always be an opportunity. There is always another avenue. There's always multiple platforms, multiple choices.**

Often when a musician's career is halted for reasons beyond his/her control, it is common in St. John's for fellow musicians to take up the cause of their peer by staging benefit concerts with all proceeds going to the person in need. Struggling musicians, or others on their behalf, have also taken to online and other media to describe their plight and to ask for help. In those circumstances, any thoughts of competition and negative interactions are cast aside to donate time and talents to assist a colleague with paying some bills and to motivate them to continue their creative work<sup>30</sup>.

## **7.g Conclusion and Summary**

Participants' descriptions of their typical days as musicians revealed a great deal more than daily activities. The ensuing discussion showed the necessity of balancing various jobs, personal and professional relationships, and physical and emotional well being in order to maintain and advance their music careers. Family circumstances and music work were also seen to directly impact one another. Performing constantly to make ends meet and to gain attention can wear both physically and emotionally, resulting - in the worst cases - in slowing or halting music work altogether and opening the door to alternative career options.

The daily condition of musicians managing relationships with each other, their families, their peers, and their audiences illuminates the overlap of emotion and practical labour and how musicians' versions of the qualities that constitute a profession and

---

<sup>30</sup> Dooley, D. (2008, February 8). Groups gather to bolster Broderick. *The Telegram*. Retrieved from <http://www.thetelegram.com/Living/2008-02-08/article-1443924/Groups-gather-to-bolster-Broderick/1>

professional behaviour are distinct from more common understandings. Finnegan (2007) acknowledged this in her ethnography of income-earning and amateur musicians working together in a city with a population size similar to St. John's, noting in particular that a local music scene is comprised of a wide variety of employment circumstances. Finnegan also noted, in agreement with the findings of my research, that there are generally more women than men participating in classical music, while the inverse is true in non-classical genres. It may be that in a smaller city where musical traditions are upheld by blending amateur and occupational musicians, matters that may be seen as larger issues in larger cities are balanced by greater flexibility in cooperation in smaller cities.

We have seen here that the work of musicians extends far beyond what the public sees, and includes to a large extent the management of the emotions of everybody in their lives. Most musicians on a local scene are freelancers whose employment depends in part on their relationship with everyone they meet, and their reliance on social networking requires them to be 'always on' (Morgan & Wood, 2006), for the next job. Musicians express cultural ideals of emotional life and reaffirm emotional values of the community in which they labour. Collaboration with fellow musicians can involve managing feelings of frustration or conflict so that the work can move forward ultimately to a satisfying performance (Pettinger, 2015). In addition to their music, they are also "performing" friendship and loyalty.

Musician work has been described as a form of interactive service work that takes place across a wide range of spaces and contacts (Hracs & Leslie, 2013) that may be all the more pronounced in a dense music scene in a city of modest size as St. John's. It is a small enough city that reputation can be built or hampered on how well musicians maintain their

network. This reinforces the value in understanding the importance to the music career of cultivating cultural, social and economic capital, but to go further to understand how different permutations of music careers are founded on specific interactions. It is in understanding how and with whom musicians relate that will enable a more meaningful appreciation of the co-existence of social and economic networks in which they live and work (Crossley, 2015).

The next chapter will examine important questions musicians face when they are at their career crossroads and experience conditions that either re-affirm or alter their commitment to music as paid work.

## **Chapter Eight: Taking Stock and Taking the Next Step**

Some of the more attractive qualities of being a musician in St. John's can also cause doubt and reassessment of the career. Self-employment carries a sense of freedom and control, and dynamic work and changing audiences can foster a sense of excitement and fresh energy. After a certain number of years, however, most participants in this study show signs of wishing for more stability in income and work than they have been able to realize from music. Participants who have been on the scene for fewer than ten years tend to be more motivated and excited about new possibilities, but most seasoned participants find that they continue to need to promote themselves in order to remain relevant on the local scene as much as they did when they were starting out. And their income, usually not substantially higher than when they started out, remains considerably lower than it would be in most other occupations.

Reevaluation happens across all genres, ages and experiences. Musicians respond in their own ways to signals that give them cause to reaffirm their commitment to professional music, brace for departure from their careers, or seek some new adaptation in order to keep music as part of their wage earning life. This chapter reveals participants' assessments of their work in music to date, including reflection on their career highlights and whether they feel they can surpass those key moments. In addition, it will examine their reasons for anchoring their careers in St. John's and whether they feel they are successful in music. This chapter will show that careers are frequently reevaluated and alternative work is considered after reaching the ceiling of economic capital. This does not mean an end to their creative potential, but often



a rebalancing of their present work and personal networks to meet their future creative objectives.

### **8.a Career Highlights**

Career reflection can result from standout events or processes that serve either as an impetus to further commit to the work or lead to career reevaluation. As a starting point for evaluating their work in music to date, participants were asked to recount their career highlights, which could include any aspect of their work as musicians (performing, recording, teaching, meeting people, and so on). Not one response highlighted earning money; all described experiences that heightened their sense of non-monetary self-worth. Thirty-nine musicians recalled specific performances among their most memorable moments as musicians. Many of these moments were ranked as highlights because of other people involved, in particular other musicians who these participants looked up to. In the case of classical musicians, career highlights involved performance experiences generally of two types: either performances as a member of large ensembles participating in a major work, or performances from their pre-professional lives, including as university music students. They recalled a strong sense of accomplishment, and expressed relief that such an experience would happen to them in the first place – as if their career choice had been validated by their participation in a type of event they idealized.

A highlight for one participant was performing a major work with a local ensemble in which she was featured. Since that performance, she has not had a similar experience and has been balancing whatever performance work she can get in classical and non-classical music

with working in private teaching and non-music retail. Another classical participant says that her performance highlight was a performance that had the effect of lowering her severe performance anxiety. For yet another classical participant, the career highlight has to do with the pleasures of ensemble playing. Classical musicians revel in working together for the opportunity to perform great classical works as members of an equally-skilled team, and often prefer ensemble participation to solo performances.

*“Rebecca”*

**I really enjoy playing with the NSO because I get to play with really good musicians, professional quality section leaders, and colleagues. And they bring in these amazing soloists. If I were living in Toronto, I would never be playing with an orchestra that got James Ennis to come, you know what I mean? Or these amazing opera stars. That opportunity wouldn't be available to me. So I really enjoy the professionalism.**

Rebecca's response gives additional perspective on professionalism in music discussed in the previous chapter. The NSO is a successful ensemble made up of professional and amateur musicians, including MUN School of Music students, and with more women than men in its membership. Though not specifically recounted in the narratives, it is worth noting that the gender balance of the NSO is somewhat atypical when compared to orchestras and classical ensembles of larger cities. Women make up the majority of NSO musicians<sup>31</sup>, which runs counter to the composition of other major orchestras in larger cities<sup>32</sup>. Her career highlight is in an ensemble that is less-than-wholly professional in terms of remuneration but is of professional calibre in terms of artistry and training of its members. This career highlight

---

<sup>31</sup> Membership of the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra is listed on its website at [http://nsomusic.ca/?page\\_id=21](http://nsomusic.ca/?page_id=21)

<sup>32</sup> Rice, C. (2013, October 14). How blind auditions help orchestras to eliminate gender bias. *The Guardian*. “As late as 1970, the top five orchestras in the U.S. had fewer than 5% women. It wasn't until 1980 that any of these top orchestras had 10% female musicians. But by 1997 they were up to 25% and today some of them are well into the 30s.” Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/women-in-leadership/2013/oct/14/blind-auditions-orchestras-gender-bias>

is thus framed in an environment characterized by the soft boundary between professionals, students and amateurs, collectively sharing expectations of the highest possible performance standard, and which appears to favour women's participation and cooperation with men (Finnegan, 2007).

Many participants recounted career highlights that happened recently, some only a few days prior to our meeting. All participants, even those who have exited the scene, see their musical careers as including "high" points. Career rewards for musicians are described as having near-spiritual significance by way of how they make them feel. Participants described their work less in terms of money and more in terms of how it makes them or someone close to them feel. Classical musician "Tracey" was participating in a community performance and was profoundly moved by the impact her work seemed to have upon emerging young musicians.

*"Tracey"*

**Career highlight probably happened to me last weekend (...) Some people would expect me to say the awards and this and that. Those things are important, but I guess it depends on what you're in it for. What are you in this career for? When you know that you've had an impact on a kid like that, that's it.**

Because they are typically not as involved in large ensemble performances as classical musicians, many non-classical musicians single out career highlights in which the spotlight was on them. Their musicianship and overall effort is no less intensive than what classical musicians experience, but their output as soloists or members of smaller groups tends to be more visible and audible simply because their voice and individual instrumentation are more exposed. Their career highlights resemble those of other musicians in other literature, found to have little or nothing to do with income, but rather were about how the occasion made them

feel, who was present, and how the emotion of a performance is affectively conveyed to audiences (Van Zijl & Sloboda, 2010; Woody, 2002).

*“Joshua”*

**Me standing on a massive stage and singing to however many hundreds or a few thousand people, and all of them going ape-shit when I was done. I didn’t think that was possible. (...) The whole time thinking “How is this going to go over? What is the reaction going to be? I’m not changing what I’m doing. I’m just gonna do this, and if it flops it flops.” They went crazy, and I just kind of... That stands out in my mind because it just made me realize “Okay, there’s more to that.” Where you just have everybody going crazy. Those stand out in my mind because they’re just moments where you walk off being very proud of what you did.**

Many participants’ career highlights had to do with the fun of making music and meeting other people, musicians and non-musicians, who influenced their careers. Some of the greatest influences appeared in the community. Gene, who had performed with numerous prominent musicians over their careers, recalled interactions with fellow musicians who were *not* career musicians.

*“Gene”*

**They were local singers... fishermen... but they sang. They sang unaccompanied. (Name) was a great, great tradition-bearer. One of the stalwarts of the community. Just a fabulous man. A real hard worker. But a great singer. Had great stories. All those people who were such great, great people and such generous people with their music. What I’ve learned more in this business than anything else is that what you have, you have to give back.**

The most common recollections were of performances. Even when money is hinted at in terms of selling merchandise or having a large audience, those recollections were more about feeling validated in the career choice. Participants describe the motivation they receive from a full house and how appreciative they are that people give up their time to come see them perform. Most responses indicate that regardless of size of attendance or venue, it is the reaction of the audience that matters more than income.

*“Harry”*

**You’re in a room that’s filled with people and it’s a pretty big bar. And to feel that... the anticipation and the knowledge from a huge room of people. They’re just like... They’re... all eyes are on you. To feel that and when you’re getting ready to play, it’s just... It’s this real, I don’t know, connective energy between you and the audience, it’s this huge... ah... it’s an incredible feeling.**

*“Cecil”*

**There’s so many. This past weekend when we played Folk Fest. It got rained out on Friday and everyone kind of crammed in The Ship (*pub*). We hit capacity in the Ship. So we were just playing inside this really incredibly stuffed bar and everyone’s yelling at us telling us to get on stage and stuff like that. We finally got on stage and people were feeling really.... Just realizing that I was working hard to impress people and to express myself to people. A pretty good feeling. And then playing the Folk Fest on Sunday. That was a really good show. Sound was incredible and a lot of people showed up despite the weather. (...) So whether we’re performing or writing music, generally music has just been really, really excellent to do.**

Applause, and the feeling that their music is important to people, are the most affirming and motivating factors that many participants say keep them moving forward in their work. But local audience attendance can be unpredictable and unreliable. In St. John’s, performing too frequently can result in inconsistent audience turnout, but performing too infrequently can have the same effect for non-famous musicians. Some participants say they needed to leave St. John’s at least temporarily.

*“Betty”*

**Sometimes when you’re here and you’re a local musician, you feel a bit like you’re beating your head against a brick wall, trying to get gigs. You know that what you’re doing might be good, but nobody here comes to the gigs. You’re kind of chopped liver (*laugh*). Then you go away and people say, “Oh my God, this is great stuff, and we really appreciate what you’re doing, and we’ve never heard this kind of thing before.”**

For 29 participants (53.7%), however, their most gratifying career performance highlights happened in St. John’s, either on their own or because of interaction with other musicians. Most musicians who described their career highlight as happening in St. John’s had

toured extensively, yet still felt that their most satisfying experiences happened locally. Most participants say they feel greater value in the local scene than abroad because of a greater degree of control over their work at home where they do not need to hire a manager or staff, or deal with high touring costs.

*“Albert”*

**Every time I’m singing well and playing well and there’s a group of people that are enjoying it, I’m good. I never had that big CD release moment. I didn’t have that big “I’m opening for that guy I always listened to” moment. I haven’t had those. I haven’t won any awards. I had a great moment last month. Every song I played, everybody loved. Everybody was singing along. Three people came up and said, “I think you’re great.” Maybe sometimes that’s what rock stars don’t have going for them. It’s so structured and “here’s the backstage passes” and this and that, and they’re just not there with the audience anymore.**

Albert seems to reject the trappings of fame in favour of praise from smaller audiences. It may be that smaller scenes like St. John’s can promise an overall more cohesive support network than larger places and bigger goals. Modest objectives for Albert seem to pair well with his lifestyle of portfolio employment (all in arts) and his wife’s similar lifestyle.

Every interview revealed a slow career journey demanding patience and planning. Beverley, refers to the additional non-music work she has gradually taken on to enable her to continue making music.

*“Beverley”*

**Every time you sing, or every time you perform, that’s the ultimate of what you’re doing, isn’t it? If it’s not, you really should reconsider what you’re doing. Slogging through is not always fun. I’m lucky because I built up something behind me that supports it.**

Beverley regards every opportunity to perform as a career highlight, but adds that her enjoyment of performing may be enhanced by non-arts backup employment. Whether Beverley felt compelled to engage in non-arts work to support or move away from reliance on

her art work is not entirely clear from her narrative. What is clear, though, is that her version of success, career highlights, and future plans in performance appear to be enhanced by economic capital she has derived from alternate sources.

### **8.b St. John's**

Out of a desire to seek out new audiences, performance opportunities, industry contacts and collaborators, musicians frequently tour and often explore the possibility of living somewhere other than their hometown at least temporarily. Thirty-five (64.8%) participants say they have considered moving to cities other than St. John's, larger cities in particular. Many of those who had considered such a move followed through and returned. This is not surprising, given Newfoundlanders' and Labradorians' strong sense of belonging to their home province and communities, supported by a 2013 Statistics Canada Survey (published 2015) confirming that a provincial and community sense of belonging is far stronger for this province than anywhere else in Canada.<sup>33</sup> A stronger sense of artistic culture is believed to be one of the reasons for this loyalty.<sup>34</sup>

Family circumstances are shown to play a role in whether it is practical to leave St. John's to pursue music elsewhere. Of the 35 who said they had considered a move to another city, 23 are single and have never been married. Single musicians presumably have more freedom and fewer family commitments than their married colleagues. More than one-third of those 35 are married, and it is their closeness to their family – commitment to parents as well

---

<sup>33</sup> Sense of belonging to Canada, the province of residence and the local community. *Statistics Canada*. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2015004-eng.htm>

<sup>34</sup> Howells, L. (2015, July 6). NL residents feel strongest sense of belonging, survey finds. *CBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/n-l-residents-feel-strongest-sense-of-belonging-survey-finds-1.3137979>

as to spouses/partners – that heavily influenced their choice to remain in St. John's. But performing usually requires touring from town to town within the province, or across the country, or in several cases around the world, while keeping St. John's as home base.

*“Paul”*

**The thing with this job is that it's never over. It never turns off. You send an email at midnight because you forgot one you needed to send. You're working into the wee hours either gigging or because you're on a roll creatively and want to keep going. So you really need to surround yourself with people who get that. And people who get that are shockingly rare. There's the people who get that at first, like girlfriends. But then you're doing it a few years and you get it a little bit less. (...)**

**I have seen all of those cities, and have been there enough times and spent enough time at once to realize that they're really fun places but I don't want to live there. St. John's is still home, and home is where your infrastructure is – your family, your friends - Your personal infrastructure aside from any kind of business. It's allowed me to thrive. It's allowed me to be happy to be here. And because I get to tour out of here, I feel like I still manage to have all of the growth that travel and living elsewhere affords you. I think if you live small, you become small, and I think it's important to not do that. It's important to not say “I've only ever been to this town and I've never left it.” I think that I've become a better person because I've travelled as much as I have. There's no doubt about that.**

Paul is a longtime touring musician who has kept St. John's as his home base, finding personal and professional security in the close presence of his family. His work is sustained both by audiences abroad and the presence of his peer and family networks at home.

Married/common law participants' families seem to understand musicians' freelance lifestyle that usually demands frequent travel to secure music employment and other career-related opportunities. Even though there were no hints in these interviews of family disapproval of musicians' lifestyles, the biggest challenge for some freelance, self-employed musicians is in seeking balance between taking work whenever and wherever they can, and committing to their family.



*“Denise”*

**I certainly think about moving somewhere else for a shorter period like a year or two years or something. I don’t think the rest of my family would want to come. I wouldn’t mind going on my own. But because I’m a freelancer, it’s very hard to set yourself somewhere else.**

Older single participants who lived and worked as musicians in larger cities eventually moved back to St. John’s because of their relationships with parents and siblings. While younger single participants expressed a greater willingness to leave if better work opportunities came along, older single participants had already lived elsewhere, longed to return, and are happy to remain in St. John’s. Participants want to hold on to their St. John’s home for several key reasons, including remaining close to people who care about them. Other participants discussed the experience of living and working as musicians in places where they have no family, their experiences ranging from struggling with costs to thriving on numerous performance opportunities.

*“Kim”*

**I think the disadvantage to being from Newfoundland is that everyone loves it here and it’s hard to leave. I have a close family. Most people I know do. You realize what’s important in life and what isn’t. Yes, I loved being on stage, I loved the applause. I didn’t need the validation of that. I loved music, and I loved the process, and I loved working with people and I loved being creative. And I love being good at something. But I didn’t love being away from my family. And I didn’t love the bullshit that goes along with being a professional musician. (...) And I think living in a bigger city makes you realize you’re this big (*placing index finger and thumb close together*). No one cares.**

It seems that musicians who have toured extensively or lived elsewhere return to St. John’s and commit more strongly to this place as their professional base because it has also been their personal base. The narrative of the St. John’s musician, even the most renowned, stresses the desirability of staying close to home because of emotional ties and the recognition

that the constant precarity of musicians' work would only be compounded living away from their families. St. John's offers some qualities not available abroad.

*“Joshua”*

**My whole goal with this has been to be able to tour and travel quite regularly and play in a lot of cool, different places, but have this be where I call home. I love St. John's. I love being close to my folks. I'm really close to my folks. (...) My life is best when there's a good balance between being somewhere where I know everybody and being somewhere where I'm completely anonymous. I love anonymity. I'm so comfortable going to a big city and not knowing anybody. But I love coming home and having a routine. I don't want to live away. If my job forces me to live away, then I'll re-think the job, not the place.**

Preferences for St. John's were based primarily on the relative ease of being noticed by a smaller population and on the regional music industry. These responses are tinged with the presence of competition on the local scene. Competition is unavoidable, but more manageable among friends or close acquaintances in a smaller music world. Stan moved from his smaller Newfoundland hometown to St. John's with no aspiration to move to a larger place than St. John's. He feels competition is more likely to happen in St. John's than in a larger city, but also that it can be more easily managed.

*“Stan”*

**The longer I've been in St. John's, the more I've met more people and worked more places. This is where we're staying. This is where we're gonna buy a home, we're gonna raise children. There's so much music happening. There's so much music happening in Halifax and Toronto, but bigger centres... I dunno if they're for me. I feel like you know the work here. You can capitalize on it more because there are less people. As bad as it is to say, word gets around – Reputations, and a lot of people butting heads in smaller spaces, whereas in Toronto that's probably not so much an issue. But here, just be nice to everybody, work with everybody, and then everybody will hire you.**

All participants appear to have a keen sense of the challenges and benefits of working as musicians in St. John's, where relatively lower pay is outweighed by lower costs of living, less aggressive competition, and closer relationships with fellow musicians. A number of

musicians are satisfied with giving up potentially more performance time and income in a larger city for a more settled work environment and more comfortable interpersonal exchanges. Gary has lived and worked as a musician in Toronto and St. John's.

*“Gary”*

**The advantage to being in St. John's was that the support system was so much greater. People who stayed here didn't have the sense that there was a brass ring to go for. So people were fairly cooperative with each other. Whereas I had a couple of experiences in Toronto where the competition for rock bands was so stiff that we had microphones stolen off the stage so we couldn't play, I had the tubes stolen out of my amps so they wouldn't turn on, people sabotaging my stuff. All that kind of junk because people felt, wrongly, that there was this brass ring that they were always reaching for. As it turns out, nobody got rich at all. But I found here that there was a support system. And also, it's so fluid here. The reason I was able to do so many different things in so many different styles, the reason I could do happy hour at Erin's and run up to Junctions and crank up three guitar amps and have this loud screaming set and still be taken seriously was that people here didn't care about that.**

Participants who have experienced large and small city settings say that while larger population centres might appeal at first with the potential of bigger audiences and more frequent performance opportunities, they contain far more overt competition – even “sabotaging” peer relationships as Gary experienced. For some participants, smaller audiences are more attentive and appreciative.

*“Alexis”*

**I think maybe there's an advantage of playing here because there's probably a bigger appreciation for music from the audiences here because most of the people here are musicians. Really! I played at many different venues in (*large city*). A lot of people will not be very attentive. They'll be zoned out. Again, it depends on where you play. This is such a smaller place, you've got better opportunities to get your name out there constantly so people know who you are, because it's so small.**

St. John's is small enough that many musicians know everyone in their genre. There is, as one participant put it, a great deal of “cross-pollination” in the music scene of St. John's because many musicians work in more than one genre. Participants who have lived in larger

cities and returned to St. John's say that competition is much more tame in St. John's. St.

John's musicians, while protective of whatever work they can get, also feel obligated to help their colleagues.

*"Sophie"*

**If you got a gig or if you got in with a certain orchestra you were lucky because people held on to their gigs very tightly. The competition and the dog-eat-dog spirit of the music community, what I saw in Toronto, I've never experienced here. So there's tremendous support and encouragement from everybody (*in St. John's*). When I went to Toronto, no respect for trad musicians, or trad musicians who didn't have any respect for classical music. The worlds were just so distinct. It was quite disheartening really. It seemed like work all the time.**

(...)

**(*In St. John's*) I get invited to play different things you didn't have in Toronto. I don't think you could balance the two different worlds and be as engaged in the music world if I didn't already have a base of people.**

While most participants feel drawn to remain in St. John's because of their sense of solidarity with the music community, career advantages in St. John's seem to depend on genre and instrument for some. For example, there are only so many gigs to go around for certain classical instruments. Instrument specialists who have worked in St. John's the longest seem to have the first right of refusal to any performance opportunity that comes along, so it is in the best interests of their same-instrument peers to maintain a close, mutually-beneficial network.

*"Percy"*

**It's a very closely-knit community. They all know who you are because they remember your face. And it's kind of nice and it's a supportive community in that regard. And if you get on their good side, they'll do anything they can to get you some kind of gig or some kind of concert opportunity (...). They'll pass your name around.**

Percy refers to networking with fellow musicians who are established and gatekeepers of potential future employment. Camaraderie is common in the St. John's music scene, but

this kind of distribution of work is based on careful cultivation of relationships, and is an example of the interplay between social and economic exchange. One musician is glad to help another while at the same time guarding his/her own dominance over certain contacts integral to additional employment and success. This helping behaviour serves to share the wealth, so to speak, but is also managed to retain the sharer's status as gatekeeper (Brown, 2011).

Even though arts and culture seem to be strongly supported by St. John's audiences, the smaller population restricts audience size for certain musicians whose specialties are in styles outside the mainstream. Musicians in this survey who specialize in punk or loud music enjoy the St. John's scene for its loyal legion of followers, but say they are limited to only a few small venues receptive to their music. If their music is not supported by funding institutions, larger audiences, or media, they lose validation of their career choice, directing some musicians to the ultimate career crossroad – deciding whether to remain in music professionally or to steer in an entirely different career direction. “Simon” found his career stifled by lack of local support.

*“Simon”*

**From what I understand, if we made it out to Alberta, there would have been a market for what I do there. That's where heavier music certainly would have done a lot better. But in this neck of the woods, traditional is big, and indie music is big, and in terms of support from the industry as well, there's a little less... there's not as much of a focus and a validity on louder stuff on this end of the island... of the country. I never really trusted that it was going to work, myself. And there was always an element of the “I can go from being a medium sized fish in a small pond, to being a tiny fish in an enormous pond.” And, y'know, the “go West, my son” thing only works to an extent. But if you're in Toronto and you don't know how to play the game, you're no further ahead.**

Many musicians settle on a compromise between leaving St. John's and leaving the career. If they can afford the money and time, some have realized career longevity by

choosing to base their careers in St. John's while touring frequently. The only participants in this study who have so far been able to manage this balance effectively are those who had been in the career for many years and felt they had maximized their local audience. Fifteen participants have been able to do so, though three are no longer in the profession. Of the remaining twelve, six have careers in other part-time non-music jobs and/or are self-employed in other fields of music, mostly private teaching. Those kinds of jobs enable enough flexibility in time and income to afford touring outside the province. Thirteen out of these fifteen touring musicians do not have children and most are single. These musicians, regardless of genre, felt their performance careers had reached a point where their St. John's audience by itself was not big enough to make their work financially viable.

*“Ernest”*

**To make a living, I mean to really make a living as a performing musician, it doesn't matter if you're living in St. John's, or Toronto. If you want to make a real career as a performing musician, you gotta travel. You gotta tour. You need to leave wherever it is you live and you need to get on the road and you need to take your music to as far reaching as you can, to as many audiences as will listen to you. It's not an easy living. A lot of your time you're living out of a suitcase. And if you're looking at having a family at all... I'm in some ways very much trying to settle down and plant roots. But the reality in what I do for a living is I need to spend a lot of time on the road. But the beauty of that is that if you're spending half the year or more on the road, you can live wherever you want. So why not call St. John's home? Why not stay right here? Why live anywhere else if I'm going to be travelling all the time anyway? It's the way I look at it.**

Ernest's perspective on the one hand suggests that music careers can be restricted by becoming too embedded in St. John's, at the expense of their willingness and ability to tour. But on the other hand, there are other risks associated with touring that St. John's-embedded musicians do not experience as much, including high costs of touring, and enduring considerable time away from family and local professional networks. The music community

has been described previously in this study as including fellow musicians, audiences, funding institutions and other industry professionals – relationships in the music profession that are key to career success but which some musicians feel can end very quickly once they leave.

*“Roger”*

**You lose your artistic community you have fostered when you move to a bigger place, and I think that’s the most damaging thing. It’s the community. It’s the creating stuff with other people. That’s the thing you can’t do without. It’s not about a particular city. That community is gone, that little anchor. (...) From a business perspective, being from Newfoundland lends legitimacy to this kind of thing that you’ve built. Ultimately, it’s that community. Spend so many years fostering and feeling a part of it and then maybe getting to the point where you can sit on the boards of the organizations that you’ve been complaining about for years and try and make that whole thing better. Jesus, why would you cut and run before that’s a legitimate possibility? (...) It’s so hard to get a community that you can stay in, you haven’t burned any bridges and you really like everyone. It keeps coming back... Giving up on that, it’s not worth... There’s no amount of money that’s worth not having that support.**

Several participants have said that the St. John’s music community is characterized by cliques that are at times difficult to access. Participants from St. John’s who have tried to establish their careers in larger cities, however, described how much more difficult it was to access valuable networks abroad. These experiences are similar to those of some participants who moved from small towns in Newfoundland to St. John’s. Breaking into pre-established cliques can be especially difficult for musicians who are humble or shy. As supportive as the music community is for most musicians, it takes considerable effort for some to feel a sense of belonging.

*“Mitchell”*

**What I didn’t realize at the time was that St. John’s is also very, very cliquey, and I found that my biggest challenge here. So I quickly realized that if I didn’t put more emphasis on socializing, then my career would actually suffer. So when I realized that, I said okay and “when I go to St. John’s now, I’m gonna try to get out to see shows as much as I can and talk to people at shows.” But I still found it really hard to break into these circles. So then my approach was to write music. And I came to realize that if I**

**write music and I have a product that I need people to play, that people would kind of come to play it.**

Cultivating professional relationships crucial to later career stages take a tremendous amount of time, patience and strategizing. Many participants talked of the importance of staying close to fellow musicians, establishing friendships in order to get their names on a call list for work opportunities. Almost no participants spoke of friendships other than in an occupational context. The music community is tightly knit indeed, but there are many signs that it is often experienced as a collection of protective clique groups.

*“Winston”*

**St. John’s is weird. Musicians in St. John’s love to throw around the word “scene.” They love talking about how we have such a good “scene.” “We’re all best friends and everybody plays with everybody else.” It’s a big crock of shit. It really is. (...)While they think they live in this great scene, they are the reason it’s not a great scene because they’re being very insular and very incestuous with who they play with. And I happen to see lots of them.**

Winston’s blunt assessment of the St. John’s music scene does not apply uniquely to St. John’s. Cliques and competition are common traits of the music profession generally (Dobson, 2010; Creech et al, 2008b). Musicians were described by Todd as “like a family” (page 164), but Winston’s view is decidedly in contrast. Relationships among musicians can be so cohesive that they insulate themselves as a collective group of peers from potential threats to their networks and sources of employment, and can bar entry to those like Winston who seek mutual career benefit. It has been shown that collaboration is not a given, even when musicians are active in similar genres (Park, Kelmer, Koppenberger, Cano & Buldú, 2006). This finding and Winston’s views suggest that networks are not necessarily built on similarity, and that similarity may cause greater efforts of musicians to protect their domains, possibly



excluding artists outside of the clique who are viewed as having fewer connections and less benefit for the group (Nilsson, 2014).

Nevertheless, several musicians who lived in larger cities chose to return to St. John's in order to escape tightly-controlled niches of professional contacts abroad which are seen to be even more difficult to crack than in St. John's.

*“Keith”*

**There always have been a lot of places where you can perform and have a really receptive audience. So you can really kind of come up with the ideas here that might be more challenging in a bigger city. I don't know that connecting the music with the audience that's available for a given sound is as easy to do in a big city because it's so much harder to find those people. (...) It's (*St. John's*) a pretty easy musical community to connect with in that way. A lot more challenging in a big city. A lot more noise too. I found it was hard to crack into gigs because they already had connections in a lot of them.**

Among disadvantages of living as musicians in St. John's are unreliable weather and high costs of travel. But matters of competition and income also re-emerged. Touring a lot or living in a larger city can generate more income, but also exposes one to greater competition. Artistically, the choice is between remaining in St. John's with a unique sound and appearance, or working in a larger city where a musician may be less distinguishable but can reach bigger audiences. Administratively, the choice is between managing lower revenue, but also lower costs in St. John's or, living elsewhere, hustling constantly for gigs one may or may not get, leaving little time to work in other jobs necessary to make ends meet in a more costly city.

*“Nicolas”*

**I saw how competitive it was in Toronto, and how if you get out of work in Toronto, you've got nothing to fall back on. No friends, no family, you got nowhere you can go, you can't get out of the city unless you got good transportation and all that stuff. I had a number of offers that I always said no to because I couldn't see the real advantage of it,**

**you know? I also liked the fact that it's (*St. John's*) a small pond and I was a fairly big fish. If I'm in Toronto, I'm a really small fish in a really big pond. Why re-invent the wheel, if you know what I mean? (...) The money is better in Toronto and Halifax. But the expenses are higher, and the competition is fiercer, and you're always worried about the next guy coming up the ladder who's gonna knock you off the post.**

Several participants noted the prevalence in *St. John's* of coexistence of career and non-career musicians, and the difficulty distinguishing between them. *St. John's* professional musicians are aware of the overlap and are occasionally frustrated by it, but out of respect for their amateur counterparts take great care not to alienate them.

*“Simon”*

**I don't think the fact that there is so much music in Newfoundland is necessarily a plus for professional musicians because the five-dollar cover is discouraged, and the fact that it can get really, really hard to differentiate between professional and amateur. And the fact that your buddy's willing to play down the street for five bucks, three sets of covers, is not the same thing as the hours I put in and the money I've invested and the creativity I've put in.**

Simon encapsulates many of the themes running throughout the life-career journeys of the participants of this research. The abundance of music in Newfoundland and Labrador implies competition as well as collaboration with fellow professionals and amateurs all vying for attention from the same or similar audiences. In order to convert talents and efforts into economic capital, musicians are required to cultivate strong social networks which, as we have seen, can be difficult to build and even more difficult to enter for newcomers. Professional and peer networking, are necessary for, and can be a hindrance to, the attainment of economic viability and career longevity.

### 8.c Career Goals

As a means of gaining a sense of musicians' expectations for their future in music, participants were asked if they have a career goal they have yet to attain. Most goals were very modest. Some examples include furthering their university education, becoming financially stable, touring across Canada, performing outside of Canada, and working with musicians from outside Newfoundland, while continuing to have careers based in St. John's. A few were loftier, including "being the best" or landing a prized university or orchestra job. Many were non-specific, but most said they would gladly settle for being able to continue doing what they are already doing, which seems to indicate that they have achieved either as much as they want to achieve or have resigned themselves to believing that what they have accomplished is the best they can hope for.

*"Elaine"*

**My ultimate goal is to be financially stable. And I haven't decided yet if I want to make the focus of my career working in the school system. I'm at that divide of going into the school system or seeing if I could freelance more.**

*"Sheila"*

**I hope I continue to be as integrated in the music scene here as I continue on my career, no matter where I live.**

*"Karen"*

**I really want people to know that I'm sticking around.**

It is difficult for artists to be more definitive on career goals because most are self-employed and their careers depend on the availability of new work. Choosing to remain on the local music scene involves even greater job insecurity and increases the need to establish an even stronger network of support (Hracs & Leslie, 2013). For participants, this means establishing and securing their audience base, often by seeking continuous artistic growth and

innovative projects, in turn demanding high degrees of patience, resiliency and flexibility (Morgan & Wood, 2014). For many participants, audience response is what determines the direction of a music career. Generating and maintaining audience interest spurs on new creative output and new goals.

*“Rodney”*

**For all of us, I think we’re always going up that ladder. In music it’s one of the unique things in this profession, in that the ladder is always endless. There’s so much repertoire, there’s so many ways, there’s so many interpretations, there’s so many nuances of sound that’s always changing in the moment, in the concert, in the acoustic, in the venue. In terms of the peak, I don’t know that I’ve ever really thought of one, because you’re just always climbing and you’re enjoying the climb. But I’ve never thought of it as one sort of pivotal “just reach this goal.” I guess I’m afraid to think of it that way. Because you feel if you only aim for that, then you stop. There’s gotta be more. There always is in the arts.**

*“Ernest”*

**The minute you create a plateau for yourself is the minute you stop achieving.**

For some musicians, reaching a plateau *is* the ultimate goal. Large audiences are exciting but not always attainable or even necessary for musicians to consider themselves successful in their work. Reaching and maintaining a plateau can be as challenging for some musicians as reaching for more lofty goals for others. The plateau may be well beyond their own and others’ expectations when they started out, and represented by an audience that is loyal and consistent enough for the musician to pay the bills and to keep creating.

*“Joshua”*

**My goal is very moderate with this. I love small venues and I think there are markets in the States, U.K. and Canada and Europe or Australia where I can visit regularly and play the small shows that I like to play and make plenty of money. I don’t have this world domination idea at all. I’m totally looking at sustenance (*laugh*). (...) I want to be able to just do a few good tours like that and I want to be able to have it be lucrative enough. So I want it to be able to pay for me so I can live comfortably and just make a living at it. That involves plateauing, quite happily. It’s going to take a lot of work because it’s not a 9 to 5 job. But I think the kinds of audiences I want are there. It’s smaller but it pays. So hopefully that’ll work.**

Four classical musicians stated that their ultimate career goal is to complete a PhD in music or a DMA (Doctor of Musical Arts) in order to qualify to apply for a university teaching position in music. This is not a high number, but it is in contrast to the fact that none of the non-classical musicians stated higher education as a career-oriented goal. Classroom teaching offers a much higher salary than most musicians can achieve from performance alone (Bennett, 2007). Musicians who land careers as classroom music teachers have far less to worry about with respect to self-employment. As teachers, they might still accept pay for performing, but performance will be relegated to less than a primary source of income.

*“Joan”*

**Hopefully a DMA. I would do it here, except there is none here. (...) Getting tenure. That’s been the goal since I hit second (*university undergraduate*) year and realized that I wanted to be a professor. It would be ideal if I was able to play in an orchestra even part time. But I’m aware that orchestra doesn’t pay the bills. So once I’ve got my tenure I’ve made it.**

Others, however, are well aware of daunting challenges in reaching doctorate level for the sake of a university teaching career, not the least of which include high tuition and travel costs, time, and the decreasing likelihood of getting a job when and where they would like<sup>35</sup>. While prestigious, a doctorate does not guarantee job security or even a job at all. The trade-off is difficult: acceptance into a costly doctoral program lasting several more years for the ideal career that might not be available, while possibly compromising their performance goals; or continue to hold down some semblance of self-employment and part-time work that at least assures regular work, income and performance opportunities. In this scenario, intentional portfolio employment, seen to offer some security and a good alternative to being an

---

<sup>35</sup> Fullick, M. (2013, April 12). Who will hire all the PhDs? Not Canada’s universities. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/who-will-hire-all-the-phds-not-canadas-universities/article10976412/>

unemployed PhD or DMA, possibly opens doors to other alternatives, including other unrelated career paths.

*“Cindy”*

**The DMA for me has always been the end goal. I don’t know if that’s worth the money and the four to five years just to have the degree. My priorities are... well... I don’t know what my priorities should be (*laugh*). So now I’m looking at other things.**

Many participants said that their ultimate goals for music are not as lofty as their goals could be in other careers. As noted previously, and confirmed by several older participants, most local musicians’ performance work as a reliable source of income seems to come to an end in their 30s or 40s because it cannot sustain a livelihood on its own. Musicians’ modest goals hint at their many years of study and hard work incommensurate with pay. Two younger participants stated as their career goals to be able to minimally get by, as long as they continue to have a place to perform and an audience. Settling for the bare essentials may be fine for someone young and not long independent of their parents, but minimally getting by can wear after years of trying to emerge from that level of sustainability.

*“Cecil”*

**It’s such a “what if,” playing music. But if the possibility was there and I was able to support a family to go through life ... It doesn’t even have to be extravagant... Just being able to afford a family, and have enough money to do that from music. Being able to make music and actually sustain myself a bit... That would be incredible. I would just be fine with that.**

Securing a place in the local music community also keeps career goals modest. Most of this study’s participants wish to tour more of the country and the world but keep their career base in St. John’s, with no expectation of becoming wealthy or famous. As discussed earlier, most musicians are unaware of what other local musicians earn, and there is little outward speculation about fellow musicians’ rates of pay. Earning a living *on their own terms* for

however long they can is the ultimate goal for many. Those terms vary considerably according to personal circumstance. Career goals are unique and personal, and the process of creativity a private matter.

*“Tracey”*

**The ones that I know are striving to be the best, I say to them “you can be the best in St. John’s. And then you’re gonna move to Toronto and then you’re gonna find you’re not the best. You can be the best in Toronto, and then you’re gonna move to some big place in the States, and then you’re gonna find that you’re not the best. You can be the best in New York, and then you’re gonna go to Japan and there’s gonna be a 4-year-old that’s better than you. So if you’re striving to be the best, you need to take a look at what you’re doing. You want the awards and this and that, because it’s good for morale building and it’s good to challenge yourself. It’s good to strive. If we don’t strive as human beings, if we don’t strive as artists, then the art itself does not evolve. We have to strive. But if your goal in getting somewhere is getting to be the best... man, that’s a hard goal to have.**

Implicit in Tracey’s assessment of her career, and her opinion of the value in striving to be the best, is the cost to artistic integrity of concentrating only on economic capital or competitive reputation to advance a career. To Tracey, career value is founded on intrinsic motivation to be the best she can be at any given time in the context of the event at hand. My own career highlights have happened in front of the smallest audiences. I have performed in large venues for huge audiences that were not as artistically challenging or as rewarding to me or my audience. Perhaps the message here is that there is a limit on the importance of economic capital to artists, depending on one’s career objectives.

#### **8.d Success**

Musicians are shown in this study to have their own distinctive marks of success, occasionally defined by income, but usually in terms of how their work makes them and others feel. However, the narratives also reveal that musicians whose careers last the longest have

managed to successfully appeal for sources of funding, enabling them to better manage their risk, lower their costs and place themselves in a more competitively marketable position. Musicians tend to evaluate their successes in a number of different ways, including control over their careers, enjoyment of their work, status among their peers, and income (Bridgstock, 2011). Participants were asked if they think of themselves as successful and to explain how they define success. All but two musicians said they feel successful, but with many measures of success unique to their own experiences.

Words like “pride,” “joy,” “content,” and “happy” were commonly used to describe how they feel about their work. Eleven participants partially equated success with income, but income did not factor as a main determinant of success for 43 (80%) other musicians. Income was referenced by those participants secondarily and generally as a source of concern with being able to live debt-free, the income needed to do so varying widely depending on each participant’s costs of living. Some participants who do not consider income as a primary factor in success say that they knew going into music that it would not pay well. This is characteristic of self-directed protean careers that demand a strong sense of identity in willing acceptance of risks that are inherent to this kind of work, and adaptability to changing employment and economic circumstances (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). Participants who are older and more experienced tend to associate income with success more than at earlier stages of their careers, Increasing priority on income has a great deal of bearing on reassessment of their commitment to music as an occupation.

*“Mitchell”*

**I’m always trying to reinvent myself. I almost tear myself down to nothing and start from scratch every few months it seems. And I feel like if I didn’t do that, I probably**



wouldn't be as financially successful a musician... I don't know. And I think that's the one thing that's interesting about this career – it's the fact that we have to do that. We have to be our own worst critics. We have to reinvent ourselves every so often, or things get stale not only for us but for our audience and our fans. It's all about who you know (*laugh*), you know? No matter what you do and no matter how many grants you get, if you don't have the connections to book the gigs, you're not gonna get the gigs, you know? So I guess success is a hard thing to define in this industry. Success for me I think is having people hear my music.

Artists' reputations are believed to be integral to their economic viability (Becker, 1982), which is suggestive of the importance of musicians building effective social and professional networks. But participants of my study who enjoy the greatest popularity and career longevity say that they are working at least as hard as earlier in their careers. Longtime musicians face competition not only from their contemporaries but also from younger emerging musicians. Seasoned veterans of the local scene find they are doing much of the same work and facing many of the same anxieties now as when they were starting out, in spite of their success.

*“Gene”*

**That's up and down, you know? That's the downside of being a musician because you're always concerned. You're always worried. You look at your calendar six months down the road and you start to think, “I don't have any gigs. Am I losing it? Am I losing my touch?” So you're always second-guessing yourself. But on the other hand, when I see kids come back after ten years and remember that I've been in their presence and have given them some positive attitude towards themselves and the music they listen to ... I've garnered awards. You think about it then. But then you go back, “I gotta find work next week!” (*laugh*)**

Two veteran professional musicians, Mitchell and Gene, sum up success to include adaptation, flexibility, feelings, status, finding jobs, income, self-criticism, and recognition by peers. The interplay between emotion labour and various forms of capital is clear in their narratives and is a normal characteristic of many other participants' music careers. “Second-

guessing,” tearing oneself down, and fear of losing connections represent a disruption to the trajectory of their life-career journeys, resulting from worries over gigs, income, status and the like. As self-managers, they have no one but their independent selves to cope with change and decide on the next career steps (Oakland, MacDonald & Flowers, 2013).

Younger musicians, particularly those in the profession for fewer than ten years, were proud of their ability to regularly find opportunities to perform. They seem content, at least for now, to be working other jobs to supplement their music efforts, though they are also beginning to realize the challenge of transitioning their childhood passion into self-employment. Their understandings of success are somewhat muted by inexperience, but they also seem aware of some basic financial realities ahead.

*“Alexis”*

**Success to me is being able to accomplish the goals I set out for myself to accomplish. Success to me is being able to achieve those goals, and success doesn’t really have much to do with money for me. I’m not really motivated by money. If I was I would never be in music (*laugh*). You just don’t go into music for the money.**

For some participants, the most assured way to make a living as a performer is to eventually decide to only perform and forego all other work. But this is a risk that most are unwilling or unable to take. Several who did take that risk believe that not doing so would have been to the detriment of their performance careers. Success for some participants is defined by the ability make music performance their full time occupation, and the only way for that to happen is through abundant time, patience, and some financial support along the way.

*“Fred”*

**If you have something to fall back on, you will. Don’t give yourself any choice. If you start thinking, “Maybe this won’t work as a music career”, then it won’t. It is such a**

**hard thing and you need that determination. So then it becomes a philosophical state of being, where “This is what I’m doing.” And it does change the way that you develop.**

At the heart of the success question is the extent to which musicians consider music as work or play. Music is a rare occupation, where the pursuit of expert knowledge and training to establish an occupation happens almost subconsciously. All musicians in this study, no matter how much they emphasize professionalism, success and income, also speak of the pure pleasure of being able to play music as adults and the intrinsic gratification they receive from appreciative audiences. What they seem to want as their careers proceed is to retain the sense of how making music made them feel before it became part of their economic sustenance.

*“Rodney”*

**The number one success is never feeling like you’ve ever worked. That’s your number one success. To have that feeling that your job is so unique in that it’s stress-free and you never feel like, when you’re probably working more hours than anybody else you know - the combination of self-employed and music - it’s probably just as many hours as the busiest person you know. So, I think the biggest benchmark of success is that feeling.**

Many other participants measure success by such mileposts as selling out tour venues or CDs, being able to make a living without debt, and having some bare necessities including a home and food. Measures of success for most participants are nearly indistinguishable from their ultimate career goals. The two questions were posed in such a way as to determine how closely past career mileposts are related to eventual career goals. It turns out that the distance between the two for some musicians is very small, perhaps a sign that some careers have plateaued. For many participants, though, the definition of success is constantly changing because they continually adapt their work balance and artistic output to each successive life and career stage - getting married, having children – or to each successive gig. This kind of ongoing adaptability is a chief characteristic of protean careers, referred to by Briscoe and

Hall (2006) as taking into account “the whole life space.” Gene was quoted previously as always worrying about where and when the next gig will happen, and he has been working professionally for longer than nearly all other participants. He believes he is successful but qualifies this by saying that he is not able to rest in his work. What might appear on the surface to be non-success – that is, constantly having to rely on the next gig – *is* success for some participants. Success in music can be the ability to get work in music on one’s own terms.

Success is apparently never based on a singular event, but on the endless journey of becoming a musician, even for those who eventually leave the profession. Several participants state there should always be room for more success and that resting on achievements risks stifling creativity and careers. Success is evidenced in this research less by how much money one makes or where a career is located, and more by how satisfied musicians are with how they balance their work and personal lives.

*“Mary”*

**My Dad taught me this. If you can realize you’re blessed in any way, shape or form, you’re gonna be okay... anytime you can start feeling that your life gets better no matter what you do. But especially music for some reason. The benefits of music... what are they really? It’s all for you and to share with your audience. So you gotta be happy with what you’re doing wherever you are.**

Musician identity is derived from a lifelong series of events (Oakland, MacDonald & Flowers, 2013). Mary, an established career musician, traces her success and her destiny as a musician back to her parents and her childhood. Tension between emotional satisfaction and economic viability pervades all participant narratives to some extent. Emotion is central to music work in a number of ways. Through movement and emotional expression, musicians set

out to convey to their audiences the meaning contained in the music. Musicians try to retain or recapture some of the worry-free feelings associated with earliest experiences with music. Musicians also experience a sense of accomplishment in having launched and established self-employment in music making. The line between feelings and work are often obscured, and it may be that a potent outcome is musicians' persistence in a field characterized by a lifetime of informal labour and inconsistent income (Zendel, 2014).

### **8.e Conclusion**

In evaluating their own careers to date, participants' recollections were noteworthy for highlighting the complicated local music scene. St. John's stands out from larger cities, with greater opportunities for collaboration and for its soft distinctions between amateur and income-dependent performers. Those characteristics are said by some to enhance the sense of community and sharing of performance without necessarily a diminution of artistic caliber. St. John's has also been seen by some as favourable for balancing portfolio employment and family life.

But the city's size and location represent at least a two-fold dimension of peer relationships. Friendships are highly valued for moral support but are also seen by some as a strategic form of networking in order to achieve career advantage. This seems to be an example of Becker's (1982) assertion that art is produced by networks of cooperation – implying a dual and sometimes conflicting role of economic and social reasons for forging relationships among musicians. Musicians' work sometimes necessitates strategizing social

capital (friendships) as a means of gaining status, symbolic capital, through association with other artists and opportunities to play in recognizable events and venues.

The “reinventing”, “up and down”, “second-guessing”, as well as fairly vague descriptions of success among my study’s participants appear to reflect Menger’s (1999) assessment of artists as highly educated, highly specialized, and conflicted between finding ways to gain and hold an economically viable place on an oversupplied market of self-employed like-minded artists, while striving for the intrinsic rewards of creativity, self-discovery and self-actualization. Participants of this study routinely take stock of their own careers and, therefore, appear to be in a perpetual state of intrinsic enjoyment on the one hand and economic uncertainty on the other.

The next chapter will illuminate musicians’ career turning points – events or processes that cause them to more deeply commit to, or consider departure from, their careers in music. It will also reveal the experiences of several participants who have left music as an occupation and how they have adapted their music-making in the context of their new careers.

## Chapter Nine: Turning Points and Transitions

All participants seem to have entered the music occupation alert to the likelihood of low pay, inconsistent employment, and the need to undertake other work. This may go a long way towards explaining why so many participants have sought university education in music and non-music disciplines – perhaps as a means of enabling additional sources of employment and income. Turning points are those moments when musicians arrive at a significant career crossroad.<sup>36</sup> Lee (2009) found that emerging musicians may find the local scene exciting and motivating at first, but over time may tire of managing some of the economic realities of working in music and start to ponder alternative careers. Manturzevska's (1990) study of musicians' career and life stages notes that peak performance activity for professional musicians happens between the ages of 30 and 45 and that they tend to develop physical and emotional fatigue after that age without sufficient network support and economic sustainability. But even when musicians experience doubts about continuing their music career, their interest in continuing to develop their artistic skills remains intact (Gembris & Heye, 2014). This chapter will examine musicians' major career turning points and how these affect their commitment music as a profession.

---

<sup>36</sup> Turning points in work and their intersection with various life stages have been examined since as far back as seminal works by sociologist E.C. Hughes, including his essay, "Cycles, Turning Points, and Careers" in *The Sociological Eye*, (pp. 124-131) wherein he first points our attention to the rhythm of life and occupations.

### 9.a Turning Points

Forty-two (77.8%) participants said they had experienced a major career turning point, an outcome that is consistent across genres. Some choose to transition away from music while others re-commit. Turning points in my interviews are not described as definitive moments but rather as a series of experiences or thoughts that can happen at anytime. Some happened many years ago, while others happened just a short time before these discussions.

Classical participants mention turning points related to job prospects much more than musicians in other genres. Classical musicians in St. John's are best assured of consistent income if they are able to land a teaching job in a public school, university, or paying orchestra. The Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra (NSO) alone, for example, is not able to provide enough pay or frequency of work to afford a living for its members, and it is extremely difficult if not impossible to realize a sustainable career as a solo classical performer in St. John's.

Therefore, one turning point particularly for those wanting to remain in St. John's has to do with contending with the probability of being hired by Memorial University of Newfoundland, or the public school system which has a long waiting period for new teachers, or teaching privately – the most immediately-accessible form of music-related, non-performance self-employment. Without immediate prospects for work in those areas, alternatives include leaving the province altogether, staying in St. John's and settling for various other types of music or non-music work, or changing careers and heading towards fields other than music. Some classical musicians are quite satisfied with freedoms that come with self-employment, job diversity and the size of St. John's. For others, however, financial



and employment security through university tenure or in paying orchestras are by far the most desirable options.

*“Katherine”*

**Well, I was on my own, and I thought, “Okay, I can continue being a freelance musician and living out of a suitcase.” By that time, I got really kind of grossed out by the personalities. There’s lots of messing around going on. I can’t deal with people who have no loyalty. And I thought, “Well, if I go get my doctorate, at least I won’t have to be living out of a suitcase.” For me that was just too terrifying. So the turning point was, “Well, I can have both.”**

The lack of loyalty Katherine mentions speaks further to an apparent preponderance of clique relationships, this time in classical music, and referenced previously by Sam (p. 265), Mitchell (p. 301), and Winston (p. 302) in rock and traditional music. Katherine rejected the idea of musicians befriending people primarily to advance their careers. She instead preferred a more settled, less fleeting lifestyle enabled at least in part by a doctorate that would assure greater employment, income and lifestyle stability.

Personal relationships and family life also significantly compound and complicate career plans. Cindy’s turning point was taking place at the time of her interview for this study. She has long been working towards a career of performing around the world. She has been honing her skills on her instrument for more than twenty years since a very young age. She is in a committed personal relationship, growing weary of unsuccessful auditions for work elsewhere, is realizing the slim prospect of being hired locally in a full time music-related role, and is working a mix of irregular gigs, private music teaching, and non-music jobs. Though she is working many hours in music and non-music, she is considering a dramatic shift in her life and work. Key factors in her narrative include the continuing supportive presence of her

parents, a personal relationship, and the struggle of choosing family over leaving St. John's for work.

*"Cindy"*

**I think I'm sitting on a fence right now. There's not that many jobs in orchestras. There's even less jobs as a university professor. The DMA (*Doctor of Musical Arts*) doesn't guarantee you anything, so it's an extra four or five years of work to only perhaps do what I'm doing right now. I live at home, I drive my parents' car. They pay the bills (*laugh*). So that makes a huge difference. I couldn't afford to live on my own. I've been lucky in that respect, that my parents are able to help me with a lot of it, and they're very supportive. It's a musician or artist thing. You just get all of the work that you can get. (...) I'm back and forth all the time. I have a boyfriend. We're ready to get married. Get hitched. Get 'er done. But he's here and has a career and has a house and is established here.**

Cindy, like many of the other classical participants of this study, is at a critical juncture of life and career, facing the decision to compromise what she sees as her fullest artistic and professional potential for the sake of her family and personal relationships or vice versa (Faulkner, 1973a). Musicians with sufficient social and economic capital are more easily able to realize their professional potential without as much compromise as someone who has to choose between one or the other (Morgan & Wood, 2014). The choice Cindy and other classical participants face appears to have much to do with career restrictions due to the size, location, and community structure of classical ensembles in St. John's.

Classical musicians who have realized lengthy careers in St. John's either work as classroom teachers or emerged onto the scene many years ago and have established longstanding reputations in other areas, including private teaching, performance, and niche performance-related organizations they created (for example: choirs, or other arts organizations). Those examples among participants are few, however, because the population of St. John's is able to financially support only one company in certain fields. The addition,

for instance, of just one more dinner theatre company, opera company, or choir, risks saturation of those particular markets in terms of attracting membership, audiences and the financial support of sponsors. Younger emerging classical musicians are therefore forced into making difficult decisions to stay, leave, or compromise their performance focus for more diverse work.

In spite of such challenges, all participants express satisfaction in being able to do work that they love. This is especially true when they talk about their performances highlights, which are often also their turning points – moments when they decide to commit to this work as much as they can. Musicians are as expertly skilled as workers in many other occupations but for some reason are willing to accept or overlook the blatant imbalance between their skills and income.

*“Rebecca”*

**I really admire people in the NSO (*Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra*) who’ve been playing for 20 or 30 years, and most of them are working all day teaching in a school or teaching privately and juggling schedules. I know that we could all make a more rational economic choice and say “I could be making more money teaching right now.” I’ve thought about that and it makes me realize how much the people who play with the NSO are really committed to being musicians. And whether they show it or not, they get something personal from it and are really dedicated to that. So I’ve thought about that. Oh my God. How do people do this for so many years? But I don’t want to stop.**

Many musicians spend their lives striving to find an audience and a place to perform, thriving on applause as the primary form of work gratification. Earning a living is often secondary to the act of performing and the intrinsic rewards that go along with it (Canadian Conference of the Arts, 2010; Fletcher & Lobato, 2013). Many participants described music as “who I am.” Turning points in music careers can involve an event that enhances life and career (a standing ovation, or performing a difficult piece well), but they can also be negative

experiences (realizing after twenty years of training that a career of performance is not going to happen). The careers of most participants seem characterized by emotional lurching from highs to lows and back again.

*“Joan”*

**So you suffer through the rehearsals and you try to avoid the conductor’s death stare when you screw up. But when you finally get yourself together and you’re up there and you’re doing a concert... At the end of all those concerts, I’m like “Oh yeah. This is for me.” But then every other day when I’m fighting over stupid music in the practice room, I’m like “I hate this. Why am I doing this?”**

Joan’s determination to succeed is interesting given the way she describes her work as suffering, avoidance, and even hating her work at times. But her turning point, the thrill of performance, seems to counter her self-doubt and negative feelings about preparing for performance.

Non-classical musicians also experience dramatic career turning points, usually related to earning income. They can become more deeply committed by a sold-out show or album of new music, or lose commitment after lack of attention by audiences, funders or media. Similar to classical musicians, there is not one specific crucial turning point for non-classical artists. Their choice of whether to continue to pursue music professionally is based on a lifelong process of moment-by-moment events and reassessment. “Alexis” is not classically trained and makes her living as a folk-rock musician. Her narrative, like many others, demonstrates her determination to eventually leave her day job and only perform, in spite of the difficulties of which she seems aware.

*“Alexis”*

**I say I am a musician. I will always be a singer-songwriter. I will always devote as much time as possible humanly to this. My dream obviously is to quit my day job, go straight to full time music. I haven’t done that yet. I haven’t thrown all my eggs in one basket yet,**

for the same fear of “Oh my gosh! How am I gonna do this?” But I don’t think there was ever a turning point, *per sé*. Since I was a kid, I’ve always said, “This is it. It will always be music.”

*“Gary”*

**I have a pathological need to do it. And supposing it ends up costing me ten times what I get paid, I’ll still do it. And I think that’s something that unscrupulous venue owners count on, frankly... is that people are like that.**

So much time is spent creating and getting the music and name out there, that some participants liken their work to an addiction. Several said that they never felt they had ever had any occupational alternative. They became attracted to music at such an early age and over such a long period that it became part of their daily life. But even for the participants who are most committed to their work, there often comes a point when they reevaluate the balance between their love for their work in music and financial remuneration. They also take into account their age and wonder whether it is too late to leave the music profession and start afresh in other employment. For many participants, such turning points were happening at the time of the interviews. Mitchell was dealing with an unforeseen health problem that had temporarily halted his work in music.

*“Mitchell”*

**I was thinking to myself, “Wow, if I had done an education degree, I could probably substitute teach right now.” But because I don’t have that done, I have kind of put all my eggs in the musician basket right now. Because there’s not a lot of funding in those support systems for musicians to get through something like this, I’m realizing how vulnerable we actually are to all this. And I feel like if I had that background or something else that I could fall back on as a safety net, then I wouldn’t be as vulnerable right now. And that’s why I think it’s interesting that you’re choosing to sit down and chat with me about being a musician at this stage of my life. Because although I’ve doubted it many, many times, this is the biggest doubt I’ve ever had.**

Musicians require strong artistic identity to withstand career adversity (Lingo & Tepper, 2013). But Mitchell is experiencing a sudden loss of income and is realizing the

precarity of self-employment in music. In many employment situations, occupational security can be strengthened by work specificity (Geel, Mure, & Backes-Gellner, 2011). Mitchell's experience shows that independence and flexibility in self-employment can be harshly offset by prolonged or sudden downturns in income and lack of transferability of specific skills to other occupations. He repeatedly uses the word "doubt" implying that his artistic identity is at risk along with his work.

He referred to and appreciated the moral support of his network of musician peers.

Sam, on the other hand, appears to doubt the sincerity of his social network as he re-assesses his career.

*"Sam"*

**I'd say I'm pretty well right in the middle. It's the sort of thing where I'm kind of entrenched in it now. But I don't really want to completely commit because I'm not sure if it's definitely what I want to do, you know, try and make a go of it full time. Because when you grow up around it from a very young age, you certainly see the price. And depending on what parts of industry you're in, there's a lot of different costs, and not just in terms of your time and your availability. When you're dealing with people, you have a very wide social network, but it's a pretty hollow social network a lot of the time. In a lot of cases, everyone's congratulatory, patting each other on the back in one breath, and then cursing on so-and-so. They're usually fairly emotional human beings because it's required for the art. So if you're in that situation where you having to be faux-real, faux-emotional so often, that's gotta be very taxing on a lot of people.**

Economic capital bears obvious references to costs, but Sam expands costs and "price" beyond financial terms and into temporal and social dynamics of musicians' work. This hearkens back to Winston's critique of the local music scene as superficially mutually supportive. It may be that some musicians are troubled by the idea of strategically forming friendships in order to achieve career gains, yet this does appear to be a necessary element in such highly competitive and heavily populated field (Weller, 2013) – a heavy, non-economic

cost for Sam that has implications for whether he chooses to remain committed to his music career.

Yet there are others who at least for the time being are quite satisfied with their current career status. Not famous, earning little income, happy to be able to afford basic necessities, able to create, perform and tour, they have no intention of considering career alternatives. For some, the intensive demands to achieve proficiency in music from a young age will have foreclosed opportunities for other occupational preparation.

*“Shane”*

**It’s a feeling of “what else am I gonna do?” (*laugh*). Not to say it’s the only thing I’m good at, but it’s the only thing I’m trained in. The worst day of playing music is still better than the best day of welding metal.**

Turning points for some participants happen very early into their careers, resulting in greater commitment to their work, as they aspire to improve artistically and to perform in better venues, for bigger audiences, and in other communities. Joshua offers numerous insights into his evaluation of his income in relation to costs, and his motivation to grow his audience and explore other music scenes.

*“Joshua”*

**For the first little while I loved it. It was easy money, regular money. Not much money, but it was a lot of money considering I was at a point of my life when I didn’t have any expenses. It becomes nothing later in your life when you have a lot of expenses. But at this point still living at home, it was pocket money. When it’s pocket money, it’s quite a bit of money and I always had a couple of hundred dollars in my pocket. That’s why downtown lures people in (*laugh*). When can you ever say that? I just went into it thinking I need to hone the skill, hone the understanding of the relationship with the audience. I was doing it for the money, but you come out of it realizing there’s so much more. It made me realize how hard it is to win over an audience no matter how good you think your music might be. (...) It was kind of a looking inward. Here’s what downtown musicians do, here’s what pubs do, here’s what these rooms are like. This is not for me.**

Joshua began his career partly with a goal of earning income, but this was superseded by his desire to establish an emotional connection with his audiences. Neither Mitchell, Sam, Shane nor Joshua are married or have children. Participants who are married and/or are parents experience career turning points that have to do primarily with supporting their families financially. Outcomes of their crossroads include committing more strongly to music, concentrating less on music and more on other fields promising more reliable income streams, or transitioning away from professional music-making entirely. Thirteen participants who are married experienced turning points resulting in stronger commitment to their work in music, as their families and spouses/partners factored prominently in their decisions. Some spouse/partner relationships happened while the music career was in progress, others after the career got underway, and one before a career change into music from another occupation. In all cases, it is clear that the moral and financial support of spouses was essential to the continuation of their careers.

*“Fred”*

**With the responsibilities of parenthood, that’s when my perspective changed, and I realized that if I wanted to maintain or just find that balance between the type of musician that I wanted to be but also be a father. That’s when my perspective on music as a profession ... I just needed to have a more solid income in order to sustain my life as it was developing. (...) The thought of a career wasn’t really conscious up until my moment entering into parenthood. Prior to that I didn’t consider myself a career musician. I just didn’t consider myself anything. I was just living and still just following music. (...) But it was through the support of my partner. She knew that if I did give it up, then I’d probably be miserable. She knew, I guess, how much of a part of my life music was at that point. So she’s the one.**

Fred’s turning point happened when his spouse affirmed his continuation in the work. Family considerations remain important in late-career decisions to continue music work. How musicians’ professional work and personal lives are balanced depends at least in part on their



family's willingness to tolerate income instability and other traits of portfolio employment (Umney, 2014).

Ten participants are married to other musicians. One of these participants has left the music profession, another is gradually transitioning into another non-music career, but the other eight are firmly committed to their music careers, saying that their common commitment to music enhances their personal relationship as well as their professional work.

## 9.b New Directions

Thirty-six (66.7%) participants stated that they have thought frequently of leaving music as a career. Removing the nine who ultimately departed the career leaves twenty-seven (50%) who are actively pursuing paid work as musicians but who also seriously consider changing to non-music careers. Eighteen (33.3%) participants say they have not had thoughts of exiting the music profession. There are not statistically significant differences in this regard across genres. The high percentage of those considering career change seems to support the high career attrition rate evidenced previously by the average age and low numbers of older participants in this study. There are nine musicians who chose to work in non-music careers by day in order to pursue paid music work at night and on weekends. Even in those relatively stable work conditions, six of those nine have given serious thought to exiting from paid music work.

*“Keith”*

**It's tough financially for the time put into it. It takes an immense amount of time to maintain your craft. And then the other sides of music, the business that has nothing to do with playing at all – the emailing, everything, like any job, all the stuff that's not related to getting to perform music. Every night there's something I committed myself to do, on top of whatever work I had to do during the day and practice I had to do during**

**the day. And it doesn't really get reflected in the pay for the vast majority of the time in my experience, and I'm pretty sure for most people's experiences. So that happens a lot. A lot of times when the work is slow, that's just as stressful. It doesn't feel like you're any less busy. There's just no work. Usually in the mid winter is when I feel the "what should I be doing? Should I be doing this?" Then when spring comes around I think "Maybe I should go back to school and do my masters in this!" (*laugh*).**

Keith, a veteran non-classical musician, is showing signs of emotional fatigue with his work. Although maintaining strong social networks has been seen as a career-long consistent factor in determining career success and longevity (Zwaan, ter Bogt & Raaijmakers, 2009), there are signals to Keith that the effort in maintaining this support and the economic rewards are not always reliable and, after a period of time, perhaps not worth the effort. Hughes (1951) described an occupation as consisting of "bundle of several tasks" (p. 294) with different degrees of desirability and prestige. In Keith's case, with a spouse and children, the intrinsic and material value to him of his numerous music tasks has shifted given new demands placed on his time by his family.

There are nine participants whose careers are based exclusively on performance (musicians who rely on no other income sources). Six of those nine also have recurring thoughts of exiting the music profession, even though they have achieved the kinds of career goals that most musicians long for. Participants who have been working in the music profession for fewer than ten years seem less worried about whether they can make a living in music. This is because they do not have the same family obligations as their older peers, have only recently finished their studies at MUN, and their careers are just beginning. However, even their responses give some faint hints of their alertness to the challenges to come.

*“Stan”*

**I honestly have to say that I’ve never been at the point where I thought money-wise how is this gonna work. I’ve always been very fortunate. I don’t have children or anything like that, so my expenses are fairly low. But I have tuition, rent and car payments. But I’ve never been at a point where I thought I can’t make a living through music.**

*“Eamon”*

**There hasn’t been a point where I thought about throwing in the towel really. Financially it’s stressful. Paying off the visa is a slow and daunting process, but whatever. I think you just gotta roll with it.**

Experienced participants who say they have never thought of giving up their work as musicians say that they appreciate the reasons many others do. Ten of the eighteen participants who say they have not thought of quitting rely substantially on private or classroom music teaching for part of their income, and four others work in non-music fields. So, a total of fourteen out of the eighteen who claim to have not thought of quitting music have a significant, reliable source of music-related income to financially carry them through periods of performance inactivity.

*“Victor”*

**Eventually we all got our jobs and that (*music*) kind of disintegrated and went to the back burner. But looking back on it now, it is so deadly, just hanging out with your friends and making music, right? When it comes to us, it’s such a passion that I just love doing. It’s not even a chore.**

Music is likely not a chore for Victor because his primary non-music career and its regularity and predictability of income and work schedule dictate his availability for his secondary employment in music. The careers of three others in this group are based solely on performance and they have managed to enjoy fruitful careers. The remaining participant of this group also only performs but is able to rely on a build-up of income derived from a past non-music career.

Of the numerous other participants who considered leaving the music profession, most related their feelings to audience expectations. With self-employment often comes some loss of control over creativity. Audiences ultimately influence artistic output, and this takes away from the original pleasures of music making for some participants. But for many, music is the only work they have ever known, making it all the more difficult to stop. Contrast “Albert’s” reevaluation of his work in music with Victor’s. Albert has several part time jobs in addition to performance, while Victor has a single full time day job.

*“Albert”*

**I don’t think I’ll ever quit. But the only thing that’s ever made me want to quit is that façade of celebrity. And that’s what drives a lot of youth when it comes to the music and things like that. Even when I was getting exposure or doing what I said I wanted to do. I did it. I put on a list “Form a band. Play in a bar.” I did it. “Form a band. Record some tunes.” I did it. It was like I was still waiting for the next step, the next step, the next step. And I’m even like it now with the album I’m recording. “Get it done!” rather than enjoying the process of actually recording it. So sometimes I think that if I quit, maybe I’d enjoy it more, because it became a job at such a young age. Now it’s like a chore.**

Second-guessing of career choice is common among participants across all life and career stages, and genre. The longer musicians work in their field, the more expert they become. But participants become increasingly self-effacing and self-doubting the longer they remain in a field where income does not increase in proportion with education, training and experience.

*“Michelle”*

**Who pays so much money for training that it psyches them out? Funny thing about musicians. I’m not getting better. I’m just getting in my head more, and more self-critical and negative. (...) But if I was a smart business woman, maybe I’d just throw in the towel (*laugh*).**

*“Elaine”*

**When I turned thirty, I was like “Oh my God, I don’t have my life figured out. I don’t have a job. I’m living in an apartment. I don’t have a house.” When I was in my**

**twenties, I didn't think about, "When I'm thirty, I want this and this and this." So many of my friends did that. Now that I'm thirty, I'm like, God, that's a grown-up age. Shouldn't I be more financially stable? ... So that's hard.**

Quitting professional music after nearly a lifetime of learning and career development is tantamount to failure for some participants. To do something else, even if it is financially more lucrative, means admitting defeat at the hands of audiences and the industry.

*"Winston"*

**I don't want to spend the next twenty years trying to get a job which is supposed to be my backup. If you're gonna be spending all your time focused on your backup and not your real career goals, you're never gonna do anything. (...) Am I going to stop doing music altogether? I don't think I can do that. That's part of the reason I started doing music in the first place. Even though I said I wasn't going to, I just couldn't stop. It's like an addiction. You're not in control of it. You just gotta do it, so if you're gonna do it you might as well do it right.**

Career success and longevity is more likely for musicians who have management that can assist with bookings and further enhance their reputations by broadening their social networks (Zwaan, ter Bogt, Raaijmakers, 2009). But most participants in this study do not have managers and are instead left on their own to prove their marketability. They therefore have little control over how much they are paid, the size of their audiences, how much they can afford to underwrite the next album, tour, or venue rental, and this begs the question of why they continue working in this field. The career phases of the 54 musicians in this research reveal a tremendous gulf between years of work experience and income. Self-employment in music in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century on the local scene is complicated even more by worldwide competition for attention online, where countless local artists from around the world make their music freely available in the hope of growing their audience and revenue. In order to survive such changes in the music industry, freelance local musicians have to work even

harder to control the distribution of their output while somehow retaining the passion for their art that drew them into the occupation in the first place (Vaag, Giæver & Bjerkeset, 2014).

And many of the narratives in this research show that passion to be waning.

Furthermore, audiences are constantly changing and can play a series of roles along the career path, from confirming to disconfirming musicians' work. More income and renown often means musicians must work as hard to stay relevant on a crowded music platform. With age and experience, therefore, come new risks and not necessarily greater career security. In spite of all their years of experience and expertise, the constantly shifting ground of music careers renders even the most seasoned musicians uncertain about their future. Paul has been working professionally as a musician for about twenty years. When asked whether he has had thoughts of quitting music:

*“Paul”*

**All the time... All the time. In some ways it's heartening to have someone sound so incredulous when you tell them that. I think people are surprised. I don't look at it as a ladder in terms of talent or even necessarily like achievement based on self worth. But if you were to look at the ladder as all the way up, of people who have achieved a certain degree of notoriety, I think it happens at every single level. I think it's easy to perceive yourself as a failure at any level. And I think it's easy to perceive yourself as a success at any level. Therefore it can be very difficult.**

There is some irony in musicians seeking income stability by taking on temporary, part-time work in addition to their primary work in music. Some musicians who are not part of this study work in St. John's as full time private music teachers, never or rarely performing, and they too are subject to the challenges of self-promotion, economic fluctuations, clients moving away, and other types of schedule- and income-related irregularities. Even participants with the most fruitful and stable careers depend on unpredictable audience support and

compete for funding. The final quote for this section is from a participant whose career is comprised of performance, private teaching and one part time non-music job. She has been working as a professional musician for slightly fewer than ten years.

*“Olivia”*

**I don’t encourage anybody to pursue music as a career. In fact I discourage it. There’s no work. I mean, when it comes down to it, what the hell are you gonna do? And people in Newfoundland, like at MUN, doing their degrees... I ask everybody I meet, “What are you doing with this degree?” Because, fine, if you’re a good player at MUN, that’s great. I was the best player at MUN over the course of four or five years. And when I went out into the real world, I’m the crappy one. I can barely hold my own. (...) If someone says to me “I really want to do music”, we need to have a serious chat about this, ‘cause let me tell you about how I’m (*age*) and barely make enough money to keep myself in food, water, roof over my head kind of thing. ‘Cause it’s scary Do it for fun. Please don’t quit playing. You play in this community band or that group. I’m happy to keep teaching you for as long as you want to learn. Please do not pursue this, or seriously consider what your life is gonna look like as a musician, because it’s frightening. And my parents are all the time, “What are you doing? How are you gonna make money? You eventually have to move out and live as a human being. We can’t support you forever.” And I.... I dunno. I have a lot of musician friends, professionals, performers, that are thirty or thirty-two, whatever, and their parents are still supplementing the bills. And I’m the kind of person that wants to put down roots, have a job, be able to do real adult things. (...) I don’t know how long I’m gonna be able to pursue this unsteady, hurry-up-and-wait, take-a-chance kind of career. It’s really difficult. Especially living here, ‘cause I’m already maxing out on the opportunities.**

The responses that emerged from the questions relevant to career crossroads paint a bleak picture of the music profession in St. John’s. It is an inescapable reality agreed even by the best-known musicians that making a living in music is exceptionally difficult. However, even though a career in music is a struggle for most, participants spoke fondly of that struggle. For the most part, they get along well with one another, give their musician friends help when needed, donate their time, lend their instruments, and join each other’s groups. It is in many ways a beautiful profession – creating new music, performing and celebrating together. Those

are the traits of music making they came to enjoy long before they attempted to make a living with it, and those are the traits they continually strive to retain.

But income is the underlying factor in decisions to commit fully, partly, or not at all to a career in music. Job precarity in other professions has been seen to be negatively correlated with job commitment (Tubre & Collins, 1985), and the same can be said of music wherein little control and no traditional career benchmarks often result in a lifetime of uncertainty and gradual abandonment of music as a wage-earning occupation.

A well-attended MusicNL “town hall” meeting (“The New Funding Programs” - held June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at the Ship Pub in St. John’s) was held to inform musicians of new rules for applying for funding and of the steps to be taken to take advantage of other monetary opportunities. Phrases were uttered by the moderators that seemed to usher in a much stronger sense of music as business: “This will weed out a lot of musicians who aren’t serious,” and “This is for musicians who are serious about their business.” Certainly MusicNL and all funding institutions are obliged to award money to the most polished applications and to musicians with the highest potential of career viability. These agencies have to answer to government for how and to whom their funding is dispersed. But it will be recalled that most participants in this research are not members of MusicNL, and only one research participant was present at this group meeting (though there was an additional audience viewing online). Such absence seems to indicate a reluctance of many musicians to bureaucratize their creative process too much, preferring to set their own standards of success rather than have it measured by a panel of industry experts. This is not to negate the significant impact MusicNL has had on launching the careers of numerous musicians. But there is obviously a large population of



musicians who resist involvement in the occupational culture represented by such organizations, preferring to holding fast to the tradition of prioritizing passion over profit and to retain control over their career direction.

### 9.c. Age and Career Commitment

More than three-quarters of participants are younger than 45 years. Only nine are 45 years old and older. Is there a dramatic turn of career path starting in the 40s and 50s? Does this participant age representation suggest an expiry date of career commitment? At first, there was a concern in this research that not enough attention had been given to older musicians. But in fact it is difficult to name many other actively performing professional musicians in the same age range as the oldest in this study, strongly suggesting that most eventually exit the music scene at an early age, at least professionally. Some older informants were asked a follow-up question as to whether it was by chance that so few older musicians participated in the study, or if it was because so few remain in the profession.

*“Nicolas”*

**When I think about successful bands from the 80's and 90's, most are making their living at something other than music. There are a few exceptions, but for the most part your analysis is correct.**

*“Gene”*

**When many musicians at a certain age come to the realization that what they're at is not going to realize the typical expectations that “normal” people have, they choose to look at more “regular” type jobs. I know of many people who were full time musicians in their early days who have regular jobs but do play music on the side, but it's not what they depend on for their pay check at the end of the week.**

The principal reason among participants for exiting the music career has to do with enduring long periods of low income, general weariness with striving to make ends meet, and

work burnout. Consider that musicians only in their 40s will have already been working professionally for over twenty years, in addition to their years of preliminary training and education as children and adolescents.

*“Jeffrey”*

**The industry is for young people. If you’re 18 and you make a really strong record, you can have a real crack at it. If you’re 35 and making the same record, no one really gives a rat’s ass.**

Audience and industry support for music can be motivating, but it can also be fickle, at times merciless, and sometimes more favourable towards younger musicians. The announcement of the breakup of “Sherman Downey and the Ambiguous Case,” a well-established band from Newfoundland, was received by unkind comments directed at the band from online respondents, including “if they were any good, money for travel would not be an obstacle” and “never heard of these clowns”<sup>37</sup>. To Jeffrey’s point, it would be interesting to follow up the careers of other current bands and solo musicians over the next decade to see if they are still working in music and if there is validity in his assertion that the profession favours younger musicians.

Considering the investment of money and time into early childhood training of musicians, we are reminded that a musician who leaves the music profession at the age of 40 could also have started training in music 35 years prior. It was noted previously that the label “musician” is commonly applied to very young children as well as to seasoned professionals (McPherson, 1997; Sloboda & Howe, 1992). This is not true of lawyers, nurses, pipe-fitters, secretaries, or mail carriers. Few other occupational fields seem to be labeled so early in life as

---

<sup>37</sup> Sherman Downey and The Ambiguous Case calling it quits. (2015, March 9). *CBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/sherman-downey-and-the-ambiguous-case-calling-it-quits-1.2986748>

the arts. Granted, not all participants started training in music at an early age, and training happens in various ways (private lessons, classroom experiences, self-teaching). But all participants did start their training and identification with music years before becoming adults. Once they were adults, many had no other extra-curricular engagement. The youngest participant in this survey stated that by age 19, he had already been committed to honing his musical skills for a decade.

*“Cecil”*

**I think probably would have been when I started playing guitar. Nine or ten I think. I was like, “wow this is so cool to use an instrument to how I want it to...” It’s so unique to be able to have the ability to make whatever I want to through another piece of equipment, basically. Nine or ten, I think I was really set on definitely playing music for the rest of my life.**

Though “Cecil” is a relatively recent entrant into professional music, he is as active in the work as any of the other participants. He writes, collaborates, performs frequently, applies for funding, and tours. Yet he too is considering a departure from working in music. He holds down at least two other jobs in non-music fields that provide more reliable and higher income than his music, but which also divert attention and time from his songwriting and other music work.

The following sections will examine the experiences of the nine participants who decided to change careers from music to non-music occupations. Eight participants changed careers in their 20s and 30s. One participant changed careers shortly before reaching age 50.

#### **9.d Professional Amateurs: Musicians Who Quit The Music Career**

The interplay between social, cultural, symbolic and economic capital has been referenced throughout this thesis as a recurring theme implicit in many of the narratives. Participants seem to understand that it is necessary to attain and cultivate social and cultural capital in order to convert them into economic capital. But self-doubt and tendencies to think about career change away from music, or at least a rebalancing of their careers so that music is combined with something else, seem to have a great deal to do with how these different types of capital are attained and prioritized. By the time many of these participants entered the career, which some described as an “emergent” or “organic” process without much forethought, they were equipped with tremendous knowledge about their creative work and a natural inclination to associate with fellow musicians, but not with know-how or even willingness to turn this work into their economic livelihood. This struggle is never quite stated outright in the narratives, but is implied in the interviews with those who left the career. Economic potential could be restricted by their reluctance to form social networks for financial gain (Abbing, 2002).

In examining the narratives of the nine participants who left their careers in music for non-music work, several themes from earlier phases of their life and career trajectories re-emerged. These include the evolution of peer relationships through the career, choosing an economically more rewarding career that enables their participation in the music scene, and ensuring that they are in a more economically sound career so that they can raise their own families.

### 9.d.i Career Change and Friendships

Friendships have a major impact on attitude and behaviour, and play a much more significant role in the development of musical motivation and personality than the current literature offers (Urberg, 1999; Moore, Burland & Davidson, 2003; Pitts, 2009). Even though young musicians generally do not enter music entirely for social reasons, socialization with like-minded peers emerges from early artistic engagement and comes to enhance their enjoyment and continuation in music (Patrick et al, 1999). Many of the narratives of my research reveal evidence of close relationships with fellow musicians, but none are as poignantly discussed as in the experiences of the participants who exited music careers for non-music employment.

Sophie has been playing her instrument since age three and has no memory of when or even why music was first introduced into her life. But now, into her non-music career, it is her present involvement in music where she values the camaraderie of her musician friends especially. What they all have in common are their high-calibre musical skills as well as careers in fields other than music.

*“Sophie”*

**Everybody has other lives. Jobs Monday to Friday, or students. While I’m usually the one saying “no I can’t do it”, it’s comforting to know that within the group we’re kind of all on the same page. And whenever we go, it’s just full-on enjoyment. We have fun, we laugh, we’re good friends. It’s like a holiday. (...) Weekends and evenings, they’re untouchable. And holidays. So that has made the music possible.**

**It’s a sharing of knowledge and experience. So I think you can always learn more. It’s not about being virtuosic. It’s a pursuit of the story and history behind the tune and who plays that, and what can we put that with. So it’s not like “I’m a musician.” *Everybody is a musician!* (Sophie’s emphasis italicized)**

No longer needing to depend on music for income, she places greater value on interacting musically with the community, on freedom to schedule music-making around hers and her colleagues' non-music work without economic or employment worries, and on mutual respect for one another's expertise in the absence of competition.

*“Sophie”*

**I don't depend on money and I don't expect to be paid. But because I have friends who do, it should just be the same. It (*being paid*) shouldn't be depending on whether you do it for fun, or you do it for your career. It's not about that. It's about “I respect your skills, your time, your training, your whole experience.”**

Her continuing participation on the music scene with her friends blurs distinctions between amateurs and professionals, which is how she and her friends seem to want to engage in music making. She says she is simply happy to play in the community, with little concern over earning money. Throughout our interview, Sophie was obvious in her preference for building and preserving relationships among all musicians and her past difficulty with translating those relationships into meeting financial goals.

When musicians make music with friends for economic gain, relationships can be strained by competition and unwritten conventions on what can and cannot be expressed openly about musician peers. This is evident in Bruce's experience, where he felt his career was compromised in part by such restrictions. Musicians are routinely subject to audience critique and comparisons to other artists as a normal part of the work. But when critique comes from fellow musicians, it can be devastating to peer relationships, particularly given the close professional and social confines of the St. John's music scene.

*“Bruce”*

**I quit music a year ago. I quit all the bands I was in because it was just getting to be so stressful (...) and I wasn't putting in anything anymore. So that was falling down on me,**

**and I was getting into arguments with a lot of musicians. I voiced my opinion openly a lot. I find in this city people hold back what they're saying because it's' like, "Oh, if it's local, it has to be great." And I just don't believe that. I don't care. If it sucks, it sucks. I don't care where you're from. If it's shit, it's shit. And I'm not afraid to... I won't tell a musician obviously to their face and be like "Hey, you suck!" But I'll definitely not shy away from saying it to somebody else, if you ask me my opinion on that particular group. There's lots of artists around here I don't particularly... I like them as people. I like people in the band. I just don't like their music.**

Inasmuch as social networks in music are central to career development, Bruce's experience suggests that these networks are fragile and so, therefore, are the careers of musicians who feel restricted by, and break from, their network. He makes it clear that his views were about the music, not about the musicians, and were intended to be constructive. But by critiquing their work, he may have offended their identity as musicians and as professionals.

But when Bruce embarked on non-music work and played music casually, he was able to re-evaluate his musician friendships outside of the context of the music career. He confessed to feeling too materialistic about music when it was his work, wanting recognition in the form of awards, CD sales, and the like. In his post-music work, he has come to admire musicians who, professionally or not, prioritize the fun of playing music over earning income from it.

*"Bruce"*

**I was just spending my days getting high and playing guitar and writing songs. I didn't have a band to play in, so it was just very lonely. I was really lonely. And I missed all my friends. I missed playing music (...) I'm separated from a lot the people around here who play music. I wish I was more like them in the way that a lot of my friends who are musicians and people I play with. They don't look at success as having awards. They don't look at it as making a lot of money from it. They just do it because, like myself, it's what they know how to do. Or it's all they know how to do. And they love to do it.**

Abbing (2002) reasoned that artists are “poor” because of their prioritization of the love of the craft over commercial interests. Part of this passion is derived from working with peers, and those collaborations are often more important to income-dependent musicians than the income itself (Umney, 2016). Simon experienced this early in his career when his regular performances were attended mostly by friends. He quickly recognized that as much as this kind of support was welcome and comfortable for him, it would not be sufficient to financially support his work. He also came to realize that at some point he would have to distinguish himself from – and compete against – some of those friends to establish economic sustainability from music. For Simon, tension between creating an image and risking friendships for his career clouded his initial passion for the art.

*“Simon”*

**“In that little bar, there was a group of about fifty or sixty people, who would show up every Monday, and it was a group of friends. And I think that certainly did and would have had an expiration date on it. But it was a unique thing in that it was just a bunch of friends who knew each other’s songs, showin’ up every Monday night singin’ each other’s songs. And that was nice, but that’s not something you can do for a career I think. And that overexposure once you are a known entity can really kill ya. Y’know? (...)I’ve always been in bands with my friends, and I’ve always been in bands with people that I’ve chosen to play.”**

Simon includes bands from before, during and after his career when he speaks of making music with his friends. His insistence on working only with friends is normal among participants in this study, most likely because of the size of the city and the emergence of friendships over the course of music training and career launch. He would come to develop distaste for music as a career because of low pay, competition for attention with peers, and difficulties with promoting his band as a business. But in his post-music career, he has



discovered newfound interest in scheduling rehearsals and performances, mostly to spend time making music with his friends again.

*“Simon*

**As my performance career was really winding down and trailing off, performances were an excuse to see the guys I played with. If we had just said, “let’s hang out this weekend,” it’d be “oh, but I’ve gotta do this, and I’ve gotta perform, and I’ve got this, and I’ve got this comin’ up.” But if we said “a gig,” then it’s work, and then we have to schedule in rehearsals, and then we have an excuse to play for forty-five minutes and shoot the shit for an hour. That was probably the one thing that I enjoyed the most.**

Similar to Sophie’s experience, Simon’s non-music work and studies help foster a greater desire to make music, scheduled around his new work and for social rather than economic reasons. It is interesting that none of the former career musicians in this study speak of friendships with colleagues in their new careers, but only of retaining and strengthening their musician friendships. Darrell is in the process of transitioning into a non-music career and seems to have made a concerted effort to distinguish between professional relationships in his newfound work and friendships formed from his past music work.

*“Darrell”*

**I’ve made a decision that my colleagues now don’t have to be my best friends like they were in music. That’s more for professional considerations, but it’s also because my friends are musicians, and that’s still who I’m hanging out with are my friends from that world. So it’s actually been a conscious decision to do that less now than before. I’ve crossed the line where the majority of my time is not spent on music. I’ve started my new work and that would be my main focus. Music is more or less trying to keep in touch with myself and my friends and that part of me, so I don’t go crazy.**

Staying in touch with himself as well as his friends speaks strongly to Darrell’s self-identity as a musician, likely cultivated from his early childhood exposure to music in a family setting, followed by many years of intensive training and work (Pitts, 2009). But in terms of his maintenance and application of his musical skills, it is his friends on whom he relies for

both artistic and social support– not only as a means of returning to music, but as an escape from non-music work that does not foster or encourage the same kind of closeness.

Jeffrey’s long career as a musician not only soured some of his peer relationships but also his taste for music. Now several years removed from his music career and economically successful in his new work, he has re-engaged with music, apparently liking it again because of his reconnection with friends.

*“Jeffrey”*

**I’m starting to like music. I met with some friends with the idea of joining the band just to see what it feels like to be on stage again playing music with my friends. It’s kind of like going back, where now money is not an objective anymore. So it’s back to playing music because you want to play music. I’m starting to like music, starting to listen to it again.**

For Jeffrey and all other participants in this category, it is interesting to note how they have returned to music with refreshed energy and determination to participate on the local music scene for two concurrent reasons – friendships in music and the music itself. Both are reminiscent of many years of effort and sometimes internal and external conflict that arose particularly in the context of trying to earn a living from music. Friendships and love of music are restored for these participants after the end of their respective music careers.

#### **9.d.ii Career Change and Family**

Many musicians whose concentration is on performance are forced to delay or abandon personal relationships and family formation (Linderman, 2000). Musicians who start a family can expect to need additional financial support from social services and/or portfolio employment (Morgan & Wood, 2014). When asked about the ways their work and family have had an effect on each other, participants responded in terms of the effect of their parents

on career decisions, and their own personal relationships. Joel's and Bruce's career change from music were influenced by their parents' employment in non-arts fields.

*“Joel”*

**They (*parents*) always wanted, “Well you do the education degree after.” They always thought, like, “What do you with that?” kind of thing. And my parents are both first-generation professionals.**

*“Bruce”*

**I came from family who have money. So to be at this point in my life and still not have money, um...I always wanted to work in music and make a living by playing music, but I don't really find that possible right now.**

There is a tendency for parents to emphasize intrinsic rewards of general life skills that accompany their child's music learning without anticipating an emergence of music career interests (Dai & Schader, 2002). It has also been found that musicians who are raised by non-musician parents are more likely to succeed in their careers than musicians born to musician parents (Davidson, Howe, Moore & Sloboda, 1996). However, even though Joel and Bruce did not elaborate on their parents' influence on their career changes, their narratives point towards their parents' non-arts careers and backgrounds as having some bearing on departure from their music careers.

Other participants cited having the ability to financially afford entering into a committed personal relationship and having children as their reasons for pursuing more lucrative careers. Many musicians have quit music careers so that they can stabilize their professional and personal lives (Vaag, Giæver & Bjerkeset, 2014). How musicians define stability in their work varies (Umney, 2016). Several musicians in my research have spouses and children who support music career lifestyles. But for these participants who changed careers, work/life stability means leaving music altogether to search of greater income

reliability. Darrell, Russell, and Jeffrey feel that their work in music precluded their wishes to have a family. They believe that the best likelihood of enjoying a stable family life would be to embark on non-music careers.

*“Darrell”*

**If you want to develop relationships and have a personal life and a love life, you need to have nights free to be able to take someone out on a date which, as a working musician, you don’t have, and you need to be able to feel like you have the money to be able to do that. That’s a whole other layer I sacrificed for a lot of years being here (*in music*). That was part of the decision to switch the focus. I’m very aware that unless I’d stuck in the school system as a working school teacher with that kind of benefit package and stability, it would have been very hard to have children. And having children is something that’s very important to me moving on. That’s a sacrifice that a lot of musicians make, or braver people than me have children when they’re working as musicians. You take a lot of risk.**

After working several years in portfolio employment in mostly music-related work, Darrell is on a path to a career that will eliminate his multiple self-employment jobs and enable a return to music and towards his goal of achieving financial security for his future family. Russell has not yet completed the transition but has made the decision to move in a career direction that will provide him with temporal and financial stability that he has not been able to realize from music alone.

*“Russell”*

**I want a 9-to-5 now. I want to know how much I’ll be making a month, and whether I get paid, and when I get paid. I guess I was tired of working my ass off and not seeing a proportional amount of compensation for that. So I think stability is what I’m after, and with that I’ll make music work for me. And the option is there now for a family, which is great.**

Russell hints at his future involvement in music, which will be discussed in more length in the next section. His statement on making music work for him suggests strongly that freedom of control over one’s work that is sometimes attractive to some portfolio employment

has its limitations in music careers when planning to support a family. Jeffrey has fully made the transition into his new career, and attributes this to his being able to get married and have children. Interestingly, Jeffrey remains self-employed in his new career, but his work generates considerably more financial security and has eliminated the need for adding other jobs to make ends meet.

*“Jeffrey”*

**I don’t work weekends anymore, I don’t work nights anymore. I’ve had kids and I love weekends. And you realize this is “hump day.” (*laugh*). I get a kick out of hearing myself say “hump day.” I could work 7 days a week if I wanted to, but why would I? I want to see my kids, obviously, because you only get one chance when they’re growing up. It all ties in. The career and family and lifestyle. It’s a package deal, definitely. I know musicians who have young kids and they play George Street ‘til 3:00 in the morning, and I go “Man, I would not want to be at that.” I know how hard it is now. 11:00 at night used to be early for me, and now it’s late.**

Jeffrey no longer experiences the emotion labour of music in the same way he did when it was his career. After many years working in music, his passion for his work waned as did his wage relative to his years of work and expertise. This has been found to be fairly common in service work, and in cultural self-employment in particular (Zendel, 2014). Hochschild (2012) notes that prolonged inequality between emotion labour and rewards can result in the complete withdrawal of emotion labour and withdrawal from the work itself. This is Jeffrey’s experience, rejecting the late nights, long hours, infrequent and low pay, in favour of employment and rewards that would satisfy his wish to have a family and temporal regularity.

### 9.d.iii Value and Evaluation

Participants who changed careers showed signs of conflict between how they valued their music and how it was valued by others. Freelance artists require creating, maintaining and building networks for career success (Becker, 1982). In a close environment like the St. John's music scene, networks are inescapably created out of friendships that become tied to economic rewards. While economic transactions in intimate relationships (including among family members and friends) are common (Zelizer, 2011), how music is valued in the monetary sense is obscured and often lowered because few musicians are comfortable economizing friendships in the cause of advancing the work.

There is a complicated mix of relationships on local music scenes where musicians must support each other in order to succeed financially and emotionally. But the inherent competitive nature of music has also resulted in musicians guarding whatever career advantage they realize, sometimes insulating their network from further entry by others (Nilsson, 2014). On that basis, some musicians on the St. John's scene have found it difficult to get attention because of some perceived biases contained in closely-knit networks.

*“Simon”*

**In the rock scene, there was certainly an element of status, and there were, and probably still are, groups that seem to be more concerned with... not even necessarily with how much money they were making or with going anywhere with it. They just wanted to be the shit. It was more important to be cool. And that's when you got into competition, or people being dismissive and not feeling a sense of community. It's when you start comparing apples to oranges, or you start trying to turn art into a contest.**

As a result of competition, Simon began to feel a loss of control over the aesthetic value he placed on his work. Once he found it necessary to compete for project funding from MusicNL, for example, he sensed that success depended more on knowing the “right” people

and on the industry's judgment of what kinds of music and image are marketable. He felt that his particular image as a rock musician was not as acceptable by MusicNL, and he says the agency did little to encourage his chances for future success. We are reminded here of Winston's earlier assertion (p. 302) that in the occupational world of local music, at least on the St. John's scene, the notion of a music community is little more than a disguise of harsh realities for some musicians.

*"Simon"*

**There's definitely an image. You think one thing when you see somebody with an acoustic guitar with their scarf on, and you think a totally different thing when you see a guy with an electric guitar turned up loud. And I felt like if I could sit down and talk to people, I'd get them on my side. If it was just "Listen to this." If they weren't paying attention to the words and if they weren't gonna bother to read it, it was really easy to dismiss. (...) I certainly might have gone further with it if there'd been... if I felt like I had somebody in my corner. Particularly after that first meeting, I never really believed that it was gonna work. (...) Maybe I held on to a bit of a grudge against the organization (*MusicNL*) for a while because that was my exposure, my experience. And, you know, okay maybe he's trying to make sure you're serious and all that. But that was a horrible way to be. I'm coming for guidance. Point me in a direction. Give me something. (...) For the longest time, MusicNL was no better than any other label or any other organization who, if you got your own noise, they would then step in and say, "Look, this is one of ours." But if you needed help and you needed guidance, it wasn't always there at the time that you needed it.**

It was the image function in the career that turned Simon off from professional music. He believed that judgment by the industry on a band's viability should be based much more on artistic ability. He was proud of his skill and efforts, and became resentful of the local industry that he feels rejected his music because he believed he did not embody an image worthy of investment. He reminisced frequently in our interview about how friendships formed the basis for his initial involvement in the music scene.

Simon's experience reveals a debilitating tension between his cultural capital (skills and knowledge of his preferred music style), the social capital that he needed to advance his music, and the economic capital that he feels was withheld because of his image and inherent biases in the industry. While funders wield the power to place monetary value on music, some musicians are uncomfortable with having their music become part of an industry of culture (Throsby, 2001). Jeffrey feels that Newfoundland musicians generally have a low chance of gaining and sustaining international renown, and that local music scene can best be cultivated if funding can be directed towards keeping musicians in Newfoundland and drawing audience attention to local musicians.

*“Jeffrey”*

**Great music is everywhere. One of my issues with MusicNL... I think the mandate has always been skewed in terms of getting our artists to take over the world. Well, what about everyone who's not taking over the world? What about the scene that's here? What about developing our ... having a great scene here so people will want to come here and see our great music?**

Jeffrey feels that the value conflict between industry leaders and artists is otherwise not resolvable. He has therefore rejected what he feels is a misguided mandate of MusicNL. But while he shows relief with newfound opportunity to perform music on his own terms, there is also some regret over not having gained meaningful, lasting recognition from peers and the industry as a whole.

*“Jeffrey”*

**It's one of the joys of not being in music. I'll never have some asshole in Saskatchewan say that they don't like my music ever again. Or someone in downtown St. John's. I'll never apply for it (*funding*) again. I'll never be in a situation where someone will say “no” to me about music ever again. I won't apply for anything. It hurts more, the older you get. Applying for an award and not getting it, not getting nominated and that kind of stuff. I know it's all bullshit, but still... you know... it's not fair.**



Having moved on to non-music careers, participants become “amateur” (no longer wage-dependent) members of the local music scene. But they take care to distinguish their new performance objectives from those of colleagues who never intended to seek a career in music. These participants are formerly income-earning and income-dependent performing artists. No longer *dependent* on music income for a livelihood, they continue to accept pay for performance, as if their past labour still has monetary value. They also take pride in being in a position where they can accept or reject any performance opportunity on the basis of pay, and prioritize quality of opportunities over quantity.

“*Russell*”

**Best taking off of handcuffs ever. If I get a call from someone who says the money is not great, I’m “No thank you. Not interested.” I don’t really want to pursue that career anymore, so it doesn’t matter so much to me. I have no problem turning stuff away. (...) If you get paid for providing a musical service, no matter how much, you are a professional musician, even if that’s once a year. I asked (*name redacted*) about money. He said Newfoundland is the only place where money is a taboo subject for musicians. No one wants to bring it up, and when you do bring it up people get really awkward. I’ve always experienced that too. It’s so weird... so strange.**

The irony in Russell’s present work as a non-career musician is that he no longer depends on music for a living, and this has allowed him to prioritize income in his acceptance of gigs. Whether it is true that money discussions among musicians are avoided only in Newfoundland is unknown, but many artists do feel that creative output and intrinsic passion for their work are threatened by attempts to equate their art with income-earning potential (Throsby, 2010). They may, therefore, feel uncomfortable with income comparisons to other local artists doing similar work. In a place like St. John’s where musicians work and live so closely together, they likely take pride in having achieved a certain status as independent musicians.

Russell is transitioning away from music as a career but also choosing to remain active as a performer. Differentiating between amateur and professional musicians becomes even more complicated when formerly professional musicians remain in, or return to, music-making. These participants' refreshed identities as performers are accompanied by arbitrary selection of what gigs to accept, individual bases on which to accept them, and how much money to charge or accept. These "ex" professional musicians have placed themselves in a scene comprised of deliberate part-time musicians, part-time musicians aspiring to more music work, full-time musicians, and community musicians who have never aspired to the career and are glad to perform anytime regardless of pay.

*"Joel"*

**You can't tell somebody who wants to go down and play a set at Erin's Pub on the weekend for free that they can't do it. But at the same time, that person is competing with someone who it's their bread & butter gig. I never thought of it as competition. And now I'm one of those 'weekend warriors' where I'll go down every couple of weeks and it's just fun. It's a night out. I go, I have beers, we have fun, you know?**

Both Russell and Joel are self-proclaimed "former" career musicians. But while Russell continues to regard his present music activity as professional and insists on pay as a matter of respect, value and pride, Joel defends his privilege of playing just for fun regardless of whether he is paid, preferring the reward of camaraderie. Percy's experience is different again. His difficulty in placing a monetary value on his work had little to do with competition and trying to earn a living, and more to do with the intrinsic value of music instilled in him from his first exposure to music.

*"Percy"*

**I never had to pay for a piano lesson in my life. I was taught for free because somebody said that I had an ability. (...) So that kind of value has always been instilled in me. Why should somebody have to pay for me to enjoy music?**

Musicians are often told that they are “gifted” and “talented” with little distinction drawn between the two terms. MacPherson (1997) proposed that giftedness refers to innate potential to become a superior performer, and that talent is more systematically attained through methodical performance skills acquisition. To go further is beyond the scope of my research, but the common application of giftedness to musicians can imply that their output is without monetary value. Music is often subsidized by government and other sponsors whose support implies a high value on the arts. Such highly publicized support is implicitly an endorsement of artists’ high aesthetic value, without which artists would suffer the low value of market forces (Abbing, 2002). Percy received his music training for free because his early teacher told him he had a gift and that a price cannot, nor should not, be placed on his apparent superior abilities. Percy thus entered the market armed only with this knowledge and therefore ill-prepared to manage the economic realities of surviving a music career.

Darrell describes the way in which music fits neatly with his new career. He combines in an interesting way all of the values shown by other former career musicians in this research, including maintaining social relations with fellow musicians, freedom to choose performance opportunities based on quality of music, and earning income. He and other participants are realizing greater flexibility and arguably more enjoyment from participation in music as a sideline to their new careers, an experience shared by other former professional musicians (Krider, 2013).

*“Darrell”*

**What’s really nice right now is I play the gigs I more or less want to play. And I play the gigs that are either fun music or fun people. It does feel less like work now. I feel very fortunate that I can play what I want to play now. I kind of have a little trifecta of gig-**

**making decision. Is it good music? Is it good people? Is it good money? And it needs two of the three.**

**(...)**

**In music, you're kind of defending that you're a professional. When you say you're a professional, it's not assumed from a lay person that you're talking to. Even now when I meet people and they want to know what you've done before and say I was a professional musician and that's how I made my living... And they kind of look at you and are like "Wow, he's arrogant to say 'professional musician' in the same sentence." But it's how I would identify myself and the work that I've done. And there is something for standing up for it. (...) It's one type of work that people can relate to, but when you're working as a musician, it's hard for a lot of other people to understand that your work is never done, and that if you take a break it's almost at personal cost.**

Darrell noted in our discussion that he is as active in music performance now than when he depended on it for income. For the moment, he still relies on music for some revenue, but mainly as a means of easing into his new non-music career. It is interesting to note that for as long as he is generating some income from his new career and from music, he is working in portfolio employment and music remains a significant component. Ironically, music income is now supporting his career transition, whereas his past portfolio employment was undertaken to support his music work. He values music differently now, with more intrinsic meaning and less material significance.

#### **9.d.iv Transition: From Hobby to Career to Hobby**

It appears from these interviews that music career struggles are not always directly an outcome of not making enough money or gaining adequate attention. Nor is it always due to competition. Music learning, performance and collaboration are introduced to these participants at such a young age that the shift from hobby to career happens almost without thought about economic ramifications. Participants describe identification as "musician" not

as an outcome of career choice or educational achievement, but because it was central to their identity as children. They never had to think about being a musician because musicianship was and is a normal, daily activity and process.

*“Sophie”*

**I never chose to engage in it. It’s something I always did, but I never thought “This is what I’m gonna do.” I feel like, especially being in St. John’s, it just sort of happens. Then someone calls you up, “There’s this concert.” But you never think about, “I’m a musician”, because I’m not depending on it for money. So I guess in my mind it’s opportunities, it’s fun, and it’s something I enjoy doing.**

Again, Sophie refers to music-making as a community sharing event rather than an occupation. Even though she was paid for her work, her employment in music happened as an emergent process without thought about a career path in music. But then, as she gained greater renown, she faced inevitable questions from family, friends and fans about her next projects and career goals. Her decision to depart from music as an occupation was derived from observations of peers who were attempting careers in music.

*“Sophie”*

**It comes from a good place that people want you to succeed and know you’re doing well and want to know what you’re up to. But it’s so stressful because you can’t go anywhere without someone being like “What are you doing? What’s going to happen next?” And you feel a pressure or expectation to be a certain type of person. When you’re trying to find yourself and trying to figure out the next steps.**

**I’d see my (*musician*) friends. A couple of years would pass. They were having to do things they really didn’t want to do to sustain themselves. They’d hate the music they’re playing. They hated being asked to do something. They’d have to do other stuff on the side. It’s a lot of hard work.**

Enjoyment of music and satisfying personal interests are central to the identity of musicians. But these qualities become obscured and can lead to career frustration if their music careers lack structure, network cohesion and uncertainty (Vaag, Giæver & Bjerkeset, 2014). Not only do they not have as much time to dedicate to music as they would like, but

other career alternatives come into the frame. When day jobs provide relative economic stability, “hate” may come from accepting that they might eventually have to abandon a lifetime of music commitment. But the good news for participants of this research who changed careers away from music is that they soon came to realize new opportunities in music afforded by other careers and a fresh perspective on what music means to them.

*“Percy”*

**I think my career now is going to have an impact on how I perform. The things you see and experience, that’s what affects how you convey your music and play your music. So it’s a totally different approach now I have. It’s nice to have something after your name, “I won this”... But to go and play with all these other people who are doing it for the enjoyment of music is more important than any money or dollar sign you can find in the world. You can’t put a price on that (...) I loved playing and I loved the community. I loved hanging out with those guys. It was the most fun I ever had... It was fun. And it’s still fun because I’m still doing it.**

Now that he is settling into his new non-music career, Percy is exploring re-entry into performance, including competing in amateur competitions. Whether he wins may or may not have an impact on his sense of accomplishment in the moment, but he is free of such outcomes having an impact on his livelihood and career.

Joel said he left his music career because he felt “burned out” and wanted steady work, pensionable income, and freedom to make music on his own terms without income concerns. In so doing, he is establishing a greater degree of autonomy in making music than when he was trying to earn a living from it. His two degrees in non-music fields, earned while he was working in music, suggest he braced for early career change. He described his work in music as “always partly a job and partly not” and says he is glad to be back performing again free of his previous worries.

Similarly, Hannah's new career has eliminated her worries about getting paying gigs, but suggests that it may compromise the amount of time she has to dedicate to playing music even leisurely.

*"Hannah"*

**Today I probably will not play my instrument at all. And that's the one thing I've found taking this new job that I lose a little bit of. I don't play as much. I don't think my skill is suffering yet, but maybe give it a year and then we'll see. Often I have a full day of work, and then I'll go to a rehearsal for something. I'll get home, have dinner, and go to a rehearsal.**

She changed careers because she was concerned about the possibility of developing distaste for music. Hannah has decided to direct her music energy into community/recreational performing and part time private music teaching, alongside a full time day job. She experienced pay discrepancies in her previous work as a paid musician in St. John's and abroad, and soon realized that she did not want to spend the rest of her life negotiating fees and feeling unfairly treated.

*"Hannah"*

**Well, I really loved music, and I didn't want to start hating it or start disliking it. And knowing I wasn't going to perform, I just decided to go a different route. (...) When I wanted to just do performance, there was something I just wasn't comfortable with. I'm not good at late nights and there's certain things that just didn't line up well for me. So the teaching was a really nice thing.**

**(...)**

**There were some gigs (*in Toronto*) I didn't get paid for, or you'd be promised one thing and you didn't get what you were promised. I've never had that experience here. (...) They (*in St. John's*) tell me this is what I'm being paid and this is what it is, and I'm happy with that. I'm really happy with that. I don't think I'll ever reach the level where I'll say "Nope. This is actually my fee." I don't think I'd do that. So when I'm offered something, I'm thrilled that I'm being offered that. For me, it's an extra on top of teaching or on top of whatever I'm doing.**

Here she draws contrasts between her remuneration experiences in Toronto and St. John's. But since returning to St. John's, she decided to exit the music career, which is likely

why she is satisfied with earning any fee for her music. Her performance income now supplements her lifestyle and other income, instead of the other way around.

*“Hannah”*

**I think being successful as a musician to me is just being happy and comfortable with what I’m playing and how much I’m playing, and who I’m playing with. (...) Everything being by my own decision. I want to do this. I want to do that. And it was my choice also to stop doing it. So I think that makes a difference too. I don’t feel like I failed it. It’s more a personal decision.**

Hannah, Percy, Sophie and Jeffrey have each emphasized their desire to engage in music in their post-music careers for social reasons. It is as if their return to music is reminiscent of when they most enjoyed making music, as adolescents or music students, making friends, collaborating simply for intangible rewards of socializing and making an aesthetic contribution to the community (Finnegan, 2007). Only their reliance on music for income has changed, and this varies among former professional musicians depending on where they are in their transition.

Other participants, however, described feeling locked into their music careers, as if they are unable or unwilling to leave it in spite of some problems it has caused. Throughout our discussion, Bruce sometimes spoke disparagingly of the local music scene, some of his fellow musicians, and the industry as a whole. Yet he feels severely restricted in exploring other career options. In his late-20s, he was no longer playing professionally at the time of our interview but was considering a return to music. He expressed regret for not choosing an alternative, higher-paying career path when he was younger.

*“Bruce”*

**I always kind of looked at being a musician as a curse because I always thought I could have been an engineer. I look at all my friends who are my age. They’re engineers or whatever. They have their lives together. They have a house to live in. They’re probably**



**married. Even if they're not married, they still have a place to live. They have money all the time. They have a car. You know? They got their shit sorted out, you know? So I always looked at music as being this curse where it's like "This is all I know how to do. This is what I'm stuck with." Had I gone to school, I could have been an engineer, I could have had... I do have friends who are engineers who are also musicians. They just used their money as engineers to afford to be able to do that kind of thing. And I say that to people and then they look at me and they're like, "But did you have fun (*in music*)?" And I'd be like, "Well, yeah, I had a great time, but I'm no further ahead than I was eight years ago." Everyone's always like, "Oh, I'd give anything to have your talent." I'm like "No you wouldn't, man, 'cause it sucks sometimes. A lot of the times."**

He says he has not realized the economic livelihood he had hoped from music. And his regret at not being able to afford some material items his friends have – homes, cars, stable salaries – is especially clear. Yet his emotional tug-of-war with his music career is not uncommon. Musicians are inclined to pull away from music in favour of stable employment and income, yet remain drawn to music because it affords them intrinsic rewards many other occupations do not, including creative ownership and exploration (Mallon, 1998).

Like Bruce, Jeffrey also struggled for many years in deciding whether to change careers from music. Unlike Bruce, though, Jeffrey was able to apply certain skills acquired in music to his new and more lucrative occupation.

*"Jeffrey"*

**If you can survive as a musician, any other career is easy... easy!... by comparison. You got all these skills you didn't even know you had.**

His experience supports the conclusions of other research into the applicability of musicians' skills outside of the music profession (Creech, 2015; Rogers, 2002; Mietzner & Kamprath, 2013; Throsby & Zednik, 2011). Some of those skills include working independently, managing stress, developing effective professional relationships, and working within limited financial means. Having successfully found new use for those skills, Jeffrey

was able to eliminate aspects of his music career that had troubled him for many years, including rejection by audiences, fellow musicians and funding agencies.

There is one notable difference between Bruce and the other former career musicians. Bruce is one of only two participants overall, and the only one in this category, whose formal education does not extend past high school. He is also the only participant who evidently did not try to apply his music career skills to other careers. This may have been due to any number of reasons, but it is interesting to note that the music careers of the other eight participants emerged at least in part from their university educations in music and other disciplines, and that they all noted applicability of their artistic knowledge to other life and career skills.

However, a degree in music is not seen by some participants as a useful vehicle for preparing for the realities of a music career. Russell feels that the MUN School of Music is focused on attracting more students while disguising some of the realities of the music profession. His and other participants' experiences support the findings of additional literature that most arts graduates of university or conservatory arts programs are generally uninformed about post-school occupational realities (Bennett & Bridgstock, 2015; Thom, 2015).

*“Russell”*

**As much as I loved what the university offered, they're a business. The amount of people I see go through who have ideas of getting jobs afterwards and they're told this line, sold this idea, that when you graduate you will get work and will be professional. They did to me. What else will they say? The opposite, the reality? Which is: there is no work. (...) Out of my graduating class, all those people who finished up afterwards are gone on to do other things because they floundered in music and struggled for a couple of years. Whereas if they knew that before, they probably wouldn't have done the degree. So expectations... Just like other musicians go in and expect a free ride at the end of it and it's not there... When there was no work or no jobs, it changed my expectations.**

The boundaryless nature of work implies transferability of certain skills to other fields (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Cheramie, Sturman & Walsh, 2007; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). Even though universities and conservatories have been critiqued for their apparent mismatch between teaching skills and preparing artists for employability (Bridgstock, 2011), it is interesting to note in my research that the eight musicians who changed careers attributed this transition to their social and creative skills acquired in their music careers all have university education in music.

As a final point, Jeffrey's experience has led to advice for new emerging musicians, regardless of their education.

*“Jeffrey”*

**When you're first starting out, that's when you need the most money. You need money for gear, you need money for rehearsal space, vehicle. You need the money. That's the time you need a job. And I suggested a parallel career is a great idea. Something that's flexible. I got my weekends off now. And the other thing is that I've started to like music again. Now money is not an objective anymore. So it's back to playing music because you want to play music. (...) I'm just really happy that I feel like I have a way healthier relationship with music now. It just feels good to like it. And stuff I hear with the industry... I'm just not interested really.**

If return on investment in one's music work never reaches expectations or diminishes over time, it is usually the case that other career paths will need to be explored. Portfolio employment risks deflecting attention away from music and diminishing career opportunities in music, especially as musicians age (Menger, 1999). But Jeffrey, among the more enduring musicians in this study, worked exclusively in music throughout his career, and he feels this was almost at the expense of being able later to realize career alternatives. He therefore recommends that musicians undertake concurrent work in music and in an occupation that can

offset some of the costs of music, but which can also serve as a potential viable alternative in the event music does not work out according to plan.

### **9.e Conclusion**

It is worth noting that the ends of participants' music careers were not met with celebratory sendoffs. In fact, early departure from the music career is quite normal and expected (Bennett, 2008b; Menger, 1999), and former career musicians of my research faded quietly into their new lives. What is especially striking, however, are the high levels of education acquired by these participants. Eight out of nine have completed at least one university degree in music. But none of these participants credited their higher education for knowing how to fend for themselves in their music work. Most were not able or willing to self-manage their music-making as a business enterprise, nor were they comfortable with making music with friends other than for purely aesthetic reasons. Their retirement from professional music-making supports a growing body of literature that points to a significant missing link in musicians' transitions from student musician to professional music work (Dockwray & Moore, 2008; Pearce, 2000; Carey & Lebler, 2012; Carey, 2008b; Renshaw, 2004; Bolan, 2002; Bennett, 2009; Juuti & Littleton, 2012; Bennett, 2007; Bauer, Viola & Strauss, 2011; Bauer & Strauss, 2015; Brown, 2007). But implicit in the relative degrees of success of career transitions away from music is a possible correlation between higher education in music and successful realization of transferability of skills.

Most of the former career musicians in this research have reemerged onto the music scene essentially as professional amateurs, with new and more lucrative careers, and with

much more freedom to choose performance opportunities based less on pay and increasingly on social interaction. Music is a rare form of work where its practitioners can engage in it in any capacity they choose, and where retirement from the profession only means that there is less of a need to rely on music for financial need. Economic capital has not been entirely eliminated, though. Instead the focus on money has shifted from livelihood to a matter of pride and respect for their own and peers' expertise. Furthermore, their musical reputations remain intact, and they continue to enjoy unfettered access to perform whenever and wherever they would like, free to find new ways to make music work for them and to have fun again.

## **Chapter Ten: Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study emerged from my life and career in music, and my own ongoing swings between doubt and affirmation of my career choice. While working to become an established member of the St. John's music profession, I have taken considerable interest in life-career intersections of local musicians who strive for a music career. My research interest gathered momentum when I noticed an absence of the work of musicians from literature on work and occupations. Having conducted and analysed 54 interviews representing a wide range of ages, genres and experiences of St. John's musicians, I concluded that a likely reason for this omission is a general lack of understanding of how one of the most complex careers is organized.

The findings of my research indicate that musicians place a great deal of energy, thought, and patience in trying to organize and structure their careers, manifested in strategic cultivation of networks that are amenable to their particular career experiences and goals. The overall finding is that musicians may or may not ever achieve long-term income-earning security as musicians, but they all – including those who ultimately abandon making a living through performance - thrive in music in different ways from diverse tasks and responsibilities throughout their lives. That diversity and dynamism – and pride in their skills and in weathering the challenges of precarity - help define a music career.

The participants of this research have illuminated the work of musicians in St. John's. By asking career-related questions against the backdrop of their personal lives, this dissertation reveals a massive array of individual career trajectories and possibilities for aspiring career musicians to consider, as no two experiences are exactly alike. As complicated

and seemingly unsettled as the career is, there are common themes that have emerged to unify these narratives. This final chapter will discuss these themes in the context of the research questions posed in the introductory chapter, and will make some recommendations based on the findings. It will also suggest some applications that this research may have in our understanding of professional work and precarious careers in modernity.

#### **10.a Research Question:**

**What are the roles of parents, other family members, private and classroom music educators and peers in musical development and pursuit of a music career?**

The interviews revealed clearly that parents are the primary providers of moral and financial support for career interest, pursuit and longevity. This supports the findings of Vaag, Gjaever and Bjerkeset (2014), Davidson, Howe, Moore and Sloboda (1996, 1998), Howe and Sloboda (1991), Sosniak (1985, 1990), Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde and Whalen (1993), Bloom (1985), and Freeman (1985, 1991). Many interviews showed the continuing influence of parents throughout music careers. Some parents continue to morally as well as financially help with career costs, while others appear to implicitly reject the idea of their children working a lifetime in music, unless the career would involve the income assuredness of classroom teaching. Parents' material wealth and musical experience or knowledge appeared to have little bearing on music careers. Some of the outlier participants in terms of income, renown and career longevity were not raised in families with observable economic advantage or a tradition of music involvement.

Depending on the participant, private and public school music educators also featured prominently in the initial choice to become invested in the pursuit of music. It is interesting to

note how affection for music educators changes over the course of musicians' lives and arts training. Private teachers in particular were spoken of almost reverentially, and close friendships grew out of some of those relationships. Public school music teachers were more influential on musicians who developed a serious interest in music in adolescence or in high school. University music professors were rarely referred to as influential on music career decisions. There were some negative comments about music professors, as well as suggestions of disconnect between artistic skills acquired in university and the practical realities of managing a career.

The interviews reveal a complex support network of fellow musicians, where there seems to be a high degree of mutual respect and camaraderie, but also a quiet undertone of competition. Over the course of participants' lives, peer relationships change from initially getting together purely for social and aesthetic enjoyment, towards orienting around short- and long-term career goals. After careers were launched, most participants quickly realized the need to draw audience attention to their own work, which often changed the appearance and dynamic of their social networks. Relationships were compromised if someone in the network broke from the natural inclination to perform favours for fellow musicians in the interest of safeguarding their own professional network. The music "community" in St. John's is complex, some participants denying the very existence of a sincere music "community" or "scene" yet rallying behind their comrades when misfortune happens.

St. John's is itself split into two distinct scenes depending on genre. The classical setting is generally near the university campus and the city's largest concert halls. Non-classical settings are usually downtown. The two are only minutes apart geographically, but



institutionally are vastly different. Classical ensembles, for example, are often funded as charitable organizations by private and corporate sponsors in addition to audience revenue. Non-classical ensembles are not regarded as charities and rely heavily on audience attendance and project funding.

Several participants experimented with working as musicians in larger cities. While market access and ease of travel was found to be easier when working and living abroad, competition was more overt and there was less of a sense of community than in St. John's. Most St. John's-based musicians live and work close to their jobs, most know each other, and performance venues are located within a few city blocks. The downside of that closeness emerges when musicians disagree, change membership of ensembles, and compete for funding and audiences. Musicians have, however, learned not to speak disparagingly of one another publicly or even among themselves. In ways that illustrate Hochschild's (1979) attention to emotion work, musicians working in a condensed occupational setting face the imperative of muting hostility and competition and sustaining a reputation for being agreeable. Social and professional networking among musicians and music industry professionals, complete with a public face of mutual respect, are essential to getting work in music.

Evidence in this research of the overlap of social, symbolic, cultural and economic capital in the emergence and sustaining of work in music is clear and appears to support the notion that small-scale cultural production, such as that of a local music scene, values cultural, social and symbolic capital at least at the start more than economic capital (Hesmondhalgh, 2006). We have seen how economic success was viewed by all participants as a modest but not overarching goal at the start, but that economic capital or lack thereof became a chief

reason for career departure, not able to be realized or sustained over the long term by symbolic, cultural and social capital. But the underlying details revealed from the individual narratives do not appear to support Bourdieu's theory that cultural capital acquisition is derived from economic privilege, parents' educational attainment, or early access to fine arts. Music involvement from childhood through career is characterized instead by intrinsic richness and moral motivation contained in some combination of parental, teacher and peer involvement.

High costs of instruments and lessons were often significant financial sacrifices for parents on behalf of their children. No participants spoke of a sense of material luxury or privilege in music in their upbringing, music training and career. Rather, the narratives demonstrate that privilege is relative, economic association to achieving success is quite modest, and social, cultural and economic capital are adapted accordingly. Some actors in the music scene have acquired tremendous cultural capital but have low economic capital. Some patrons of music have economic capital but little cultural knowledge. This is why, therefore, these findings support relational sociology as the best means by which we can understand the music profession in the detail this work demands. In so doing, we gather knowledge of how acquisition and implementation of various forms of capital emerge from social relations, and not the other way around, and how particular career decisions are informed by these relationships (Crossley, 2011).

Zelizer (2011) believes that different forms of exchange or payment are normal processes in everyday social interaction. We have seen in this study considerable evidence of a wide spectrum of different types of exchange among musicians and how they have an effect

on formation of social networks. For example, it was shown that a seemingly benign act of sharing instruments can reinforce friendships or can be a protective barrier to one's own carefully cultivated network from outsiders. This research has demonstrated a huge array of exchanges taking place according to each musician's career goals, including exchanges of moral support, tools of the trade, money, work, emotion and favours. My research therefore supports Zelizer's claim that "we all use economic activity to create, maintain, and renegotiate important ties, especially intimate ties, to other people." (p. 178).

Furthermore, by deepening our attention to the work of musicians in this way, we gain valuable insight into emotion labour as a significant element of musicians' careers. There appears to be a strong correlation between emotion work and the cultivation of networks and capital, and this relationship is perhaps magnified in a competitive, perhaps overpopulated field of musicians in a small, geographically isolated city. Hochschild's (2012) "feeling rules" are easily observable in the way university school of music students are instructed to behave on stage for their graduation recitals, which little resemble their forthcoming professional on stage behaviour and settings. They are observable in the way musicians suppress negative feelings about each other or each other's work, and in the way competition exists but is disguised in outward expressions of mutual respect. They were observed in the way musicians of one generation accustomed to sharing instruments and ideas were offended by musicians of the older generation unwilling to share, even though they all participate in the same genre of music, and often the same stage. Emotion labour is thus a significant thread in the fabric of the music career, present in different ways through progressive stages and tied to each kind of capital.

Capturing data on the ways in which musicians, with relative importance, interact and cultivate their networks highlights the complexity of music careers but brings each strand of the web of possible relations into sharper focus. A portrait of how these social, symbolic, cultural and economic strands are layered and intersect reveals a more detailed and complete image of the localized music profession.

#### **10.b Research question:**

**What conditions lead musicians to think about career alternatives, and how are those conditions different from those of musicians who commit to their music careers over the long term?**

Though the answer to this question may seem obviously related to the interrelationship between professional and personal commitments, unstable employment and low income, it is through examination of each experience where unique circumstances and common themes arise. That a vast majority of participants have completed at least one university degree speaks to preparation for stable employment in music (usually in teaching) or for employment outside of music (Filer, 1990). University music schools provide high-level artistic training and the opportunity for adult-age students to interact, discuss career opportunities, and explore potential collaborations. On those levels, university music education was found to be useful and informative.

But there were also some signals in the narratives of student-professor relationships that were perceived as work-restrictive because of discord between the professor and student. There was also a perceived disconnect between the university's curriculum and real-world career practical demands. The university music school is confirmed in the narratives as a critical juncture between casual and career interest in music (Burt & Mills, 2006; Jørgensen,

2015). The narratives support the findings of preceding literature (Bennett, 2009; Carey & Lebler, 2012; Carey, 2008; Renshaw, 2004; Bolan 2002; Hoverman, Kuuskoski, Weingarten & Zeisler, 2010; Tolmie, 2014) in recommending that university music curricula be modified to account for career realities and maximum employment potential.

In describing their successes and goals, it became apparent that musicians may be entering the music profession with a destiny of low income for their music work and early departure from the career. Professionals and amateurs co-exist on the music scene, which is suggested in this study as a contributing factor to keeping income low for those trying to earn a livelihood from music. Furthermore, no participants said that they entered the work in hopes of reliable income or steady employment, and most do not equate success with economic rewards. This supports the findings of numerous other studies along these lines (Parkes & Jones, 2011; Abbing, 2002; Ball, Pollard & Stanley, 2010). Many who remain entirely in music employment rely on private or classroom music teaching while continuing their work in performance. Many participants also engage in non-music work in addition to their performance and teaching work, and the reasons include economic need, preferring not to perform all of the time, and preference for enjoyment of an assortment of part time work that collectively add up to full time employment.

How precarious this employment variety is depends on the degree to which participants embrace this type of employment. Much of the performance work experience of all participants can be described as inconsistent, short term, poorly paid, involuntarily or voluntarily accepted, and sometimes risking emotional and physical health. We have also seen implications for age, gender and location in participants' employment. These findings are

consistent with accepted definitions of precarious labour (Cranford, Vosko & Zukewich, 2003a, 2003b; Albo, 2010; Clement, Mathieu, Prus & Uckardesler, 2010).

Performance is a part time component of portfolio employment for 45 participants who hold down other salary/wage jobs. Their other work can detract from exclusive focus on performance and time to perform key administrative functions. This may explain why barely more than a third of participants hold membership in MusicNL. The agency favours music that is wholly regarded as professional and business-oriented and may tend towards the comparatively few musicians who are full-time performers. This points to the effects of competition and commitment on career duration and balance. Some participants whose collective work involves teaching and numerous other jobs are distracted from fully professionalizing their music creativity, or are simply uninterested in doing so. With limited financial resources available to hundreds of musicians, only a few will receive support, leaving the others to stall their projects, pay out of pocket, or steer their efforts to secure support from elsewhere.

One participant whose career is entirely in performance claimed that musicians who choose to focus on their work in St. John's are in a "pigeon hole" with respect to potential career advancement. But not all performers have the same performance career objectives. Many participants expressed satisfaction and valued their St. John's-centred work. Because some do not tour, or tour infrequently, they are able to hold down more than one job and secure wages that supplement their work in music. Their revenue may be less than that earned by the more famous touring musicians, but so are their costs. The more renowned musicians, while expressing satisfaction at the opportunity to travel and perform, must also work extra

hard to retain and grow their audiences without the benefit of supplementary employment and income.

Participants who changed careers from music exemplify a long spectrum of performance experiences, but their reasons for departure centre on two principal themes: there was not enough income to support a family, and/or they grew weary of prolonged periods of low income that did not represent their specialized training and education. The large number of participants who say they routinely think about changing careers is consistent with Throsby and Hollister's (2003) survey of Australian musicians. This relationship between my study and that of Throsby and Hollister as well as studies on European music careers (Zwaan, ter Bogt & Raaijmakers, 2010; Vaag, Giæver & Bjerkeset, 2014; Umney, 2016; Umney & Kretsos, 2014, 2015; Nilsson, 2014; Abbing, 2002) may point to the possibility that St. John's musicians' practical career experiences are not unique to this location.

Regardless of their particular reasons for changing careers, all participants in this category returned to, or remained in, music performance and preferred their newfound engagement as musicians not needing to rely on music for economic sustenance. These findings are consistent with Throsby's (1994) finding that musicians retain their identity as musicians when employed in non-music work.

#### **10.c Research question:**

##### **How do musicians navigate the uncertainty and precarity of their chosen occupation?**

This work that is characterized as precarious in terms of its long-term viability, income inconsistency and vulnerability to health challenges is yet strongly embraced by all

participants as a source of pride in their ownership of artistic skills, instruments and work spaces acquired over a lifetime. Several participants delighted in showing me their teaching or recording spaces, their instruments and gear, and telling me before the interviews began of how happily busy they are writing or arranging music, scheduling gigs and rehearsals, teaching, touring, and so on. In spite of some of the negative aspects of their occupations revealed throughout this dissertation, the interviews also revealed a range of career, expert musicians determined to continue making music for the rest of their lives.

The findings show that navigation of uncertainty and precarity begins at home, in partnership with and understanding of their families, the support of their educators, and collaboration with peers. We have seen implicit and explicit evidence of competition for share of economic capital in a city where, perhaps due to its size and location, their social networks were close at hand and relationships had to be carefully managed to preserve professional and personal reputations. Participants make career choices over the course of their lives based on relationships – whether their parents still morally support them, whether their romantic partners are in favour of the work and lifestyle, whether committed relationships and having children have been delayed or compromised in any way by the work, whether they are comfortable transforming friendships into work relationships and their passion into their economic livelihood.

If the social support is there, then they make employment adaptations depending on their success as members of the music industry and whether they fully or partly commit to performance as their primary kind of work and source of income. Most participants adapted to uncertainty in their careers by achieving university education as a vehicle that they hoped



would lead to greater employment opportunities in music or to employment in other fields so that they could continue working in music no matter the outcome of their music career aspirations. Navigation of precarity and uncertainty is further achieved by emotional and practical willingness and ability to commit more or less deeply to the work.

These findings support the importance of relational sociology in gaining the most inclusive understanding of such a complex kind of work as music and lend additional context to fundamental theories in the sociology of work and occupations. For example, detailed analysis of individual life-career trajectories revealed that emotion labour was a significant component of the development of social relations in a competitive, perhaps overpopulated field in a small, geographically isolated city.

The findings support, update and greatly expand on Bourdieu's fundamental concepts of the relationships between economic, social, symbolic and cultural capital. Individual attention to Bourdieu's theory alerts us to how musicians in particular navigate tensions throughout their careers between these forms of capital. Artists are experts in their work, with a lifetime of training and often high educational achievements. But cultural capital does not always translate into representative economic capital. This is not only because of some discrepancy between artists and patrons with respect to the value of art, but because artists themselves are in the field for a variety of reasons ranging from earning income to outright rejection of affixing a price to creativity.

We have learned that musicians' earliest recollections of music are recalled fondly and emotionally, perhaps because they long and strive for how music made them feel before it was tinged with earning an economic livelihood. We also know that the musicians who left their

music careers came back to making music when it was unencumbered by money and re-attached to its aesthetic and social appeal. Some musicians make a concerted effort to detach their craft from economic capital, while others are in the career for the long haul. It is on this basis that we need to accept Bourdieu's logic as a foundation and investigate it more broadly by way of relational sociology, in an attempt to grasp how social, cultural, symbolic and economic capital and value are variably interdependent according to particular circumstances along the career arc.

#### **10.d Coda – The Music Profession**

If professions are defined in part by high levels of detailed, precise training and expertise incurred over a long time, musicians are as professional as workers in any other professional field. Many — especially classical musicians — have honed uncommon skills over more years of apprenticeship than are required for even the most classic of other professions — medicine and law. Their work culture also emphasizes service and the value of autonomy of judgment. What sets work in music apart from other traditional professions, however, is the arbitrariness of the monetary value placed on it by agencies and audiences, and musicians' lack of ability to restrict entry into their labour market. St. John's celebrates its diverse, lively music culture, but music is so ubiquitous that fees are held down, resulting in consistently low pay over the course of most music careers. The composition of music careers can thus be generalized as follows. Music careers are framed by high levels of expertise, various forms of portfolio work, heavy reliance upon family support, and the necessity of quickly adapting to ever changing employment opportunities. It appears from the interviews

that success, happiness and career longevity are contingent on all of those factors existing together.

Music is also distinctive because of the freedom to work, unbounded by licensure, labour policy, formal education degree or any other metric required to undertake work in many other occupations. This unboundedness is both an attraction and a disadvantage for musicians and their families. They are free to perform and create wherever and whenever they want, but they must struggle to earn a viable income from performance by abiding by rules that are governed by agencies, sponsors, and intra-professional relationships in a field in which competition cannot be categorically limited.

There is tremendous appeal in the opportunity to turn a hobby into a career. Most participants delighted in sharing with me their pride in their work and recounting its intrinsic satisfactions. But many also lamented the business end of their music engagement as an apparently unexpected dimension of their efforts to forge a career in music. We recall Gene, a longtime professional musician, who referred to his passion for music, and for working with young musicians, while lamenting, “It’s awful what musicians have to go through.” It is exceedingly difficult for many musicians to come to terms with that transition from passion to business. This may explain the satisfaction expressed by formerly professional musicians who return to the music scene without concern for anything other than playing well while having fun. It certainly explains the reference made by others to their work in music as a costly “addiction” they are forced to find means of supporting – an addiction they can hardly “afford” but are unwilling to give up.

There is scarcely a distinction between the world of leisure and the world of musicians' work, as musicians in their work repeatedly seek out the highs of successful performance and creativity for their audiences who, in turn, seek out a release, through music, from their own everyday, routinized reality. In performance, there is a punctuated rush, a high, an ecstasy and intensity of experience that is as valued at least as much as material reward. A source of profound pride and satisfaction for most, music is also characterized by constant reassessment as a viable career choice.

#### **10.e Recommendations**

My recommendations have to do with an apparent disconnect between career interest and career realities. Parents of child musicians require more thorough knowledge of the music profession, especially when their children begin to show a strong desire to pursue music as a career. I recommend that parents encourage their children's private music teachers to incorporate career awareness in private teaching, especially for more advanced and older students who show an inclination towards a music career. School music programs - especially in high schools –could present a more complete picture of exactly what musicians do for a living other than performance. School music programs could partner with music industry professionals to provide students with some on-site observations of performers, sound engineers, and music educators at work.

Many academic disciplines require that students apprentice during their course of study. For example, new graduates of most engineering, commerce, medical and nursing programs will have already been working in the field before graduation as part of their degree.

Employment semesters deliver direct experience in applying for jobs, dealing with rejection, working in the industry, developing work relationships, and learning time management skills. Memorial University of Newfoundland's music program does not have a mandated employment program. Instead, its students have a non-academic summer when they seek any employment on their own, often in fields other than music. The occupational world of musicians is scarcely addressed in a curriculum that concentrates almost entirely on artistic, technical and academic training. Memorial University of Newfoundland's School of Music presently offers a career skills course required for performance majors. The course content stands alone, however. The course is a step in the right direction, but the School might assess its potential to take the lead in incorporating career skills more regularly in its curriculum for all of its music students. Students on the cusp of music careers would be well served by acquiring considerable knowledge of employment possibilities and strategies for surviving in the field.

For example, a student whose major is in composition could be hired as a songwriter or instrumental composer by a local ensemble, or a student who is interested in performance in a particular genre could work directly in some capacity for an ensemble, gaining first-hand knowledge of programming, budgeting, funding applications, touring and so on. On-the-job training as a more meaningful comprehensive career-preparatory component of university education supports the recommendations of Filer (1990), Mason, Williams and Cramner (2009), and Randles (2011) and might also satisfy the conviction among some established professionals, including some participants of this study, that musicians should approach their music-making as a business if their music careers are to endure.

My observations and some participant responses reveal confusion among musicians with respect to the separate mandates of musician-related agencies, and reluctance to participate in their offerings. MusicNL and the CFM require paid membership with a rather wide range of membership fees, while ArtsNL does not require membership. Meanwhile, each organization purports to support musicians' professional interests but with considerable disagreement and vagueness as to exactly what it means to be a music professional. It is recommended that the three organizations work together to provide a unified ongoing, consistent training and education program in fundamental self-employment career skills, including accounting/finance, promotion, marketing, and balancing music work among portfolio employment. MusicNL offers occasional seminars in core career skills but these are too infrequent to hold long-term significance. Continuing, more structured programs with member musicians offering mentorship would be more effective. Increased communication and cooperation among the three organizations is also recommended in order to present a more unified, collective front in representing the best interests of local professional musicians.

Finally, it is incumbent upon municipal, provincial and federal government departments relevant to the work of musicians to remain aware of the contributions of musicians to local, regional and national culture and economy, and to offer measures of support that recognize musicians as members of a work force that benefits many industries. Taking the findings of musician income from my study, Statistics Canada (2006) and Throsby and Hollister (2003) in combination, it can be seen clearly that musicians' income is commensurate neither with education, experience, nor inflation, yet there are spin-off industries that rely heavily on their work (retail, performance venues, education, sound

production, for example). The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's 2006 policy document *Creative Newfoundland and Labrador: The Blueprint for Development and Investment in Culture*, was designed to recognize and protect the interests of the province's artists, including musicians, over the long term. But government support for musicians can fluctuate widely in relation to economic and political changes. The previous provincial governing party had contributed more money to provincial arts organizations than preceding administrations. At the time of writing this dissertation, the public is being warned of substantial budgetary restrictions in response to economic downturn. It remains to be seen whether provincial funding of the arts to the extent that has been realized over the past ten years will be maintained. While it appears that provincial government attention to the many disciplines of the arts is being diminished as a result of the "Culture" portfolio placed within a huge Department of Business, Tourism, Culture, and Rural Development, field discussions reveal some relief that the Minister of this portfolio is sensitive to the work of artists. State support for the arts is vulnerable at all levels of government and depends on empathetic politicians for program creation and sustenance.<sup>38</sup>

#### **10.f Limitations of this Study**

This study has concentrated on the work of career musicians whose primary genre specialties are broadly categorized as rock, traditional and classical music and whose careers are based in St. John's, Newfoundland (downtown core population of just over 100,000;

---

<sup>38</sup> In December 2015, The City of St. John's Council announced significant reductions to its grants to arts programs. The decision was reversed in January 2016 in response to continuing online and public protests. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/arts-grants-cuts-council-st-john-s-galgay-1.3389675>

metropolitan population of 211,724<sup>39</sup>). Those genres were selected for anticipated ease of access to participants for this research, noting in particular considerable crossover (for instance, classical musicians who frequently perform in other genres, or musicians who perform rock, traditional and other styles). The findings are not necessarily representative of the experiences of professional musicians who live elsewhere in Newfoundland and Labrador or of musicians who live in St. John's but who identify more closely with genres not falling under the broad genre classifications outlined. Nevertheless, numerous musicians interviewed for this study do perform in genres including country, jazz, gospel, urban and others.

Another limitation may be in the overrepresentation of well-educated music professionals and underrepresentation of self-taught career musicians. While attempts were made to reach out to potential candidates of all backgrounds, the overwhelming response was from musicians with university or college degrees and diplomas. It would be useful to compare or contrast music careers across a wider range of educational experiences, by specifically seeking participants who embark on music careers without university or college education and determining if their career trajectories were in any way affected by that decision.

### **10.g Potential for Future Research**

The foundation has been laid here for several potential directions of future research. It would be of interest to follow up the participants of this study, another five years or so following release of this dissertation, to determine whether and in what ways their

---

<sup>39</sup> Based on Statistics Canada 2014 census data. Retrieved from [http://www.stats.gov.nl.ca/statistics/population/PDF/Population\\_Estimates\\_CDCMA.pdf](http://www.stats.gov.nl.ca/statistics/population/PDF/Population_Estimates_CDCMA.pdf)



commitment to careers in music, and their income, have changed. This study has shown most participants to be considering or acting on career change at the time of writing. Few other longitudinal studies cover an entire life cycle in the context of a career. Music is a precarious, ambiguous occupation, bearing experiences that can be usefully compared in many respects to other precarious occupations. We have seen participants as active wage-dependent practitioners of music who are considering or in process of transition away from the career. We have also seen participants who have exited the music scene but have not stopped performing. Tracing the whole arc of career and life gives a better sense of the in-and-out, ambiguous nature of commitment to music. A follow-up survey that shows who has remained or who has departed from the music profession would add some completeness to the narratives by examining outcomes of decisions as yet undecided at the time of writing, and would further confirm the open-endedness of this work.

Future research could also expand on knowledge of the St. John's setting in numerous ways, including: consideration of other genres in St. John's; comparing the experiences of St. John's-based musicians to musicians living in less urban areas of Newfoundland and Labrador; comparing St. John's musician careers to those in cities with populations of similar size; comparing St. John's musician experiences to those in larger cities in North America; comparing St. John's musician careers to those of other coastal, island or geographically isolated cities.

There is a dearth of research on the experiences of former career musicians. The participants of this study who were part of that category delivered compelling narratives that entail reasons why they left the career - reasons that further enrich the understanding of the

full gamut of music career experiences, reveal widely varied experiences within the population of former career musicians, and have significant implications for literature on work and occupations generally. Building on the foundation of this research would serve to more deeply inform our understanding of the work of musicians and give the music career a deserved place in the sociology of work and occupations.

### **10.h Contribution of the Research**

The musician's career exhibits an extreme form of what Hughes (1971) long ago called attention to as characteristic of traditional, institutional office careers – as “the moving perspective.”<sup>40</sup> Portfolio employment and reduced permanency of single-job career employment are becoming the new normal for many occupations, including traditional professions once thought to be safe, secure and for life. The musicians of my study understand and accept portfolio employment as fundamental to the definition of music careers. Even musicians who work only in music, and only in performance, spend their careers working from venue to venue, gig to gig, receiving various means and amounts of pay, but nevertheless thrive on the ever-changing nature of their work. Although they rely on audiences, media and agencies to sustain their livelihood, there is considerable evidence through all the interviews of a strong sense of freedom, satisfaction, pride and energy that goes along with self-employment in artistic creativity to which musicians have dedicated years of their lives. There is a lesson in portfolio employment from the musician experience that can inform the literature on other

---

<sup>40</sup> Hughes, early on, identified the career as “the moving perspective in which the person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions, and the things which happen to him. This perspective is not absolutely fixed either as to points of view, direction or destination. (...) The child's conception of the social order in which adults live and move is perhaps more naïve than are his conceptions of his own abilities and peculiar destiny. Both are revised in keeping with this experience.” (from “Institutional Office and the Person”, in *The Sociological Eye: Selected Papers*, p. 137). Music work, which can be traced from childhood, is an extreme form of work in modernity.

work and occupations. Opinions vary among the musicians interviewed, but many have realized a sense of security and pleasure – rather than precariousness – through portfolio employment.

Research that focuses on practicing musicians in a narrow sector of their lives misses the childhood and later stages of career commitment and underestimates the role of family in the career. It also underestimates the sense of musicians' desire to recapture something about music later in their careers and lives. In knowing their early career and life stages, we are able to relate, for example, retirement, childhood and all decisions along the way, and more deeply appreciate the relationship of the human being to their work as it relates to family.

Entry into this career is undertaken in early childhood by parents' investment in instruments and lessons. Early training in music-making necessitates continuing moral and financial support of parents. As musicians age and their careers begin, the support of their peer network, partners, or even children come to play a role in determining the fate of the music career. This knowledge, revealed in abundance in this study, expands our previous knowledge of art and music as creative processes and takes us deep inside a social and familial world beyond the immediately visible "art world" on which the careers have been understood to depend (Becker, 1982). The emphasis here on career changes, stages, and turning points brings a useful temporal dimension to family and the conception of an "art world." From the point of view of the working musician, the career moves him/her through required and diverse forms of participation in multiple art – and occupational – worlds.

The confirmation in this study of the significance of the family, and its role in various career phases in supporting or removing support for musician careers, can inform the

sociologies of art and culture. Research into the entire career and lives of musicians demonstrates that culture is being reproduced, experienced, practiced, and invested in for the six-year old as it is for the retirees who no longer expect to be paid. The focus on the whole arc in the production of culture can keep us from being overly focused on stage and life cycle when production of culture is infused with labour market and income earning.

Furthermore, the findings will hopefully inform musicians themselves about issues that collectively unite their experiences. I conclude that a music “community” does indeed exist in St. John’s, one defined by the scale of its demography, diverse career-life intersections, and a common cause to earn some part of a living and contribute to local culture with highly specialized skills.

### **10.i Postscript**

Over the course of preparing this dissertation, some shifts have taken place that will have implications for the future of the music industry in Newfoundland and Labrador and which also further demonstrate the fluidity of music careers.

- At the time of writing, MusicNL is undergoing change in its leadership with a vacancy in the Executive Director role. The CFM local is likewise under new leadership, and there is evidence in the community and online of its determination to formulate a more united common cause with MusicNL for their respective member musicians.
- The newly-elected Canadian federal government has pledged to “provide significant new support to Canadian arts and culture... that will transform the arts and cultural sector.”<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Press release from the Canadian Public Arts Funders (CPAF), an association of the leadership of major provincial arts funding agencies from across Canada, including ArtsNL. Released November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.cpafoptions.org/en/news/archives/20151117.htm>.

- At least one participant categorized in this study as a former professional musician transitioning from music to another career has returned to the music profession as their primary occupation since the time of our interview. Another participant categorized as a currently-active professional musician has changed careers from music since the time of our interview.

Any attempt to forge a unified front among the province's main musician-supportive agencies will be welcome and would hopefully enable a clearer understanding of their respective mandates for their member musicians. It is hoped that the common cause being sought means greater sensitivity to the wide range of musicians' career structures in the form of more consistent career planning programs appropriate to musicians' goals.

The Federal Government's promise for financial investment in the arts appears to be focused on each province's respective general arts sponsoring agency - ArtsNL in Newfoundland and Labrador. At a time when financial support from the provincial and municipal governments are uncertain, this federal measure should be a welcome offset. Nevertheless, MusicNL, as the only local funding agency exclusive to musicians, remains funded mostly by the provincial government and its membership, and it remains to be seen if it and its membership will benefit in any way from the federal government pledge.

The change in career commitment of some of this study's participants over the course of preparing this dissertation is evidence of the currency of many of the findings. Among the more appealing characteristics of music making are the freedoms to drift in and out, to choose the extent they wish to rely on it for a living, and to perform and create wherever and whenever they would like. Those same freedoms, though, lend music work its ambiguity with respect to pay, amateurism and professionalism, therefore often resulting in confusing and arbitrary valuation. Throsby (2001) notes that this problem is rooted in the fact that culture and

economics exist in “disparate worlds,” and that the way forward in bringing the two worlds closer together for the benefit of artists is in realizing all of the ways in which the two complement one another and are interdependent (p. 165). I believe that one way towards elucidating that relationship is by understanding artists’ work from a life-career perspective and the ways in which economics and art operate from individual and network perspectives. I hope my research will contribute to such an understanding and that additional research along these lines will be encouraged.

I wish to conclude with a personal anecdote, relevant to my work as an insider-researcher. Because of my involvement in this research, I significantly reduced the amount of performing and teaching for which I had become known locally. Prior to this time, I was routinely contacted for hire as a pianist for various private functions, as a private teacher, as accompanist for students of Memorial University’s School of Music, and as an adjudicator. When word got out that I was working towards my PhD in Sociology, there was an assumption that I had retired from music altogether in search of another career. I was very quickly becoming forgotten and found that I had to actively re-assert my presence as a performing and teaching musician. This took more effort than when my career began.

Some of my past patrons had moved on to other pianists. That was my doing, of course, but it has at times been exceedingly difficult as an older re-entrant onto the scene to recapture some of the social and consequent economic capital I had previously worked so hard to acquire. I find myself in kind of a role reversal with my audience and fellow musicians. When starting out, I was a fresh face with a set of skills to offer, and I could choose my work depending on how much I felt I would enjoy it and how much the work could advance my

career. Now, as I try to return to my former work, I find myself asking for work for the first time, no longer the one being sought. I own my musical skills, knowledge and instruments, and am committed to my work as a musician. But it turns out that I have little control over my audiences' commitment to me.

Over the course of my efforts to reconfirm my presence on the music scene, I recorded a classical CD in 2014 with a friend. For this project, I received more media attention than for any prior project, along with promises, through social media, by hundreds of people to attend our CD release concert. The concert was sparsely attended, mostly by family and close friends, and interest in the CD quickly evaporated. I became severely disillusioned with my place in the field of professional musicians, removed my Facebook account, resigned from most of my piano performance work with ensembles, focused exclusively on this research, and began to plan for a career away from teaching and performance. I felt my audiences had turned their backs on my work – an experience as painful for the assessments it encourages of friendship, as well as professional, networks, the two being inextricably intertwined. But even as I contemplated leaving music, I was also feeling as though I was turning my back on an effort that had been part of my life for more than forty years. Music for me is a career and a source of livelihood. But it is also so much more. I identified as a musician when I was a child; I continued to identify as a musician when I was an accountant, when I abandoned accounting to work in music, and later when I scaled back my music-making to carry out this research. My feelings about my own participation in music ebb and flow, but music as central to who I am cannot possibly be eliminated. So I am making a slow, steady return back to my

former level of musical activity, with a new perspective on my own music career, thanks to the 54 participants of this study.

This report holds a mirror up to a complex world that is beautiful and enjoyable, but also full of change, sacrifice, conflict and strain. Musicians *pay dearly to do this work*, as they are continually pulled away from and drawn back towards their initial career commitment. The fact that they are free to make those choices, though, is what sets music careers apart from nearly all other kinds of work. No musician can be fired from making music, which is a fundamental and valued non-precarious trait of this work. It does not pay well or consistently, but the ability to make it happen, and the tools of the trade – expertise and instruments - cannot be taken away. This sense of control and ownership is ultimately why currently active musicians remain committed to making music as much a part of their overall income-earning adaptation as possible and why even former career musicians return to play, continuing to hold themselves to “professional” standards while making a “gift” of their gift.



## Bibliography

- Abbing, H. (2002). *Why are Artists Poor? The Exceptional Economy of the Arts*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press.
- Abbott, A. (1988). *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Abeles, H., Hafeli, M. & Sears, C. (2014). Musicians crossing musical instrument gender stereotypes: a study of computer-mediated communication. *Music Education Research*, 16 (3), 346-366. doi: 10.1080/14613808.2014.906395
- Adler, J. E. (1979). *Artists in Offices: An Ethnography of an Academic Art Scene*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.
- Albo, G. (2010). The “New Economy” and Capitalism Today. In N. J. Pupo & M. P. Thomas (Eds.), *Interrogating the New Economy: Restructuring Work in the 21st Century* (pp. 3-20). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Alper, N. O. & Wassall, G. H. (2006). Artists’ Careers and their Labour Markets. In V. Gisburgh and D. Throsby (Eds.), *Handbook of the Economics of Art and Culture*. Volume 1 (pp. 813-864). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Elsevier.
- Anderson, K. & Smith, S. J. (2001). Editorial: Emotional Geographies. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 26 (1), 7-10. doi: 10.1111/1475-5661.00002
- Andrews, J. & Higson, H. (2008). Graduate Employability, ‘Soft Skills’ versus ‘Hard’ Business Knowledge: A European Study. *Higher Education in Europe*, 33 (4), 411-422. doi: 10.1080/03797720802522627
- Antcliff, V., Saundry, R. & Stuart, M. (2007). Networks and social capital in the UK television industry: The weakness of weak ties. *Human Relations*, 60 (2), 371-393. doi: 10.1177/0018726707075880
- Archibald, B. P. (2009). Teaching Canadian Labour and Employment Law in the Globalized New Economy: Ruminations of an Aging Neophyte. *Canadian Labour and Employment Law Journal*, 139. Retrieved from <http://eggstudios.ca/blog/2015/3/21/teaching-canadian-labour-and-employment-law-in-the-globalized-new-economy-ruminations-of-an-aging-neophyte>
- Arthur, M. B., Inkson, K., & Pringle, J. K. (1999). *The New Careers: Individual Action and Economic Change*. London, U.K.: Sage. Retrieved from <http://site.ebrary.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/lib/memorial/reader.action?docID=10392720&ppg=6>

- Arthur, M. B., & Rousseau, D. M. (1996). *The Boundaryless Career: A New Employment Principle for a New Organizational Era*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <http://lib.myilibrary.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/Open.aspx?id=91430>
- Aspiring musicians need to 'work hard,' says Bob Hallett. (2014, April 19). *CBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/aspiring-musicians-need-to-work-hard-says-bob-hallett-1.2613872>
- Auslander, P. (2004). Performance Analysis and Popular Music: A Manifesto. *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 14 (1), 1-3. Retrieved from: <http://homes.lmc.gatech.edu/~auslander/publications/performance%20analysis.pdf>
- Bain, A. (2005). Constructing an Artistic Identity. *Work, Employment and Society*, 19 (1), 25-46. doi: 10.1177/0950017005051280
- Baldassarri, D. & Diani, M. (2007). The Integrative Power of Civic Networks. *American Journal of Sociology*, 113 (3), 735-780. doi:10.1086/521839
- Ball, L., Pollard, E. & Stanley, N. (2010). Creative Graduates, Creative Futures. Report for Council for Higher Education in Art and Design, Council for Higher Education in Art and Design, London. Retrieved from <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/sites/default/files/471sum.pdf>
- Bartleet, B., Bennett, D., Bridgstock, R., Draper, P., Harrison, S. & Schippers, H. (2012). Preparing for portfolio careers in Australian music: setting a research agenda. *Australian Journal of Music Education*, 2012 (1), 32-41.
- Barton, R. & Feinberg, J. (2008). Effectiveness of an Educational Program in Health Promotion and Injury Prevention for Freshman Music Majors. *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, 23 (2), 47-53. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1404794?accountid=12378>
- Bauer, C. & Strauss, C. (2015). Educating artists in management: An analysis of art education programmes in the DACH region. *Cogent Education*, 2 (1), 1-23. doi:10.1080/2331186X.2015.1045217
- Bauer, C., Viola, K. & Strauss, C. (2011). Management skills for artists: 'learning by doing'? *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 17 (5), 626-644. doi: 10.1080/10286632.2010.531716
- Baym, N. K. (2011). The Swedish Model: Balancing Markets and Gifts in the Music Industry. *Popular Communication*, 9 (1), 22-38. doi: 10.1080/15405702.2011.536680
- Beauchamp, R. (2000). Some thoughts on music competitions. Retrieved from <http://www.musicandhealth.co.uk/musiccompetitions.htm>.

- Becker, H. S. (1951). The Professional Dance Musician and His Audience. *American Journal of Sociology*, 57 (2), 136-144. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2772074>
- Becker, H. S. (1982). *Art Worlds*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Becker, H. S. (1998). *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While You're Doing It*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Beckman, G. D. (2007). "Adventuring" arts entrepreneurship curricula in higher education: An examination of present efforts, obstacles, and best practices. *Journal of Arts Management, Law, & Society*, 37 (2), 87-112. doi: 10.3200/JAML.37.2.87-112
- Beckman, G. D. (2011). Disciplining Arts Entrepreneurship Education: A Call to Action. In G. D. Beckman (Ed.), *Disciplining the Arts: Teaching Entrepreneurship in Context* (pp. 25-33). Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield.
- Beeching, A. (2010, August 1–6). Defining success. Paper presented at the 29th ISME World Conference, Beijing. Cited in Carey, G. & Lebler, D. (2012). Reforming a Bachelor of Music Programme: A Case Study. *International Journal of Music Education*, 30 (4), 312-327. doi: 10.1177/0255761412459160
- Benach, J., Vives, A., Amable, M., Vanroelen, C., Tarafa, G., & Muntaner, C. (2014). Precarious Employment: Understanding an Emerging Social Determinant of Health. *Annual Review of Public Health*. 35, 229-253. doi: 10.1146/annurev-publhealth-032013-182500
- Benhamou, F. (2011). Artists' Labour Markets. In Towse, R. (Ed.), *A Handbook of Cultural Economics* (2nd ed.) (pp. 69-75). Cheltenham, U.K.: Edward Elgar Publishing. Retrieved from [http://scholar.google.ca/scholar\\_url?url=http://repub.eur.nl/pub/780/TOWSE%2520EBOOK\\_pages0081-0087.pdf&hl=en&sa=X&scisig=AAGBfm0iL9r4NgY4h9weuAgRDWP\\_a\\_cfBoA&nossl=1&oi=scholar&ved=0CBsQgAMoADAAahUKEwjJv5HA3IPJAhUJw2MKHfScD\\_8](http://scholar.google.ca/scholar_url?url=http://repub.eur.nl/pub/780/TOWSE%2520EBOOK_pages0081-0087.pdf&hl=en&sa=X&scisig=AAGBfm0iL9r4NgY4h9weuAgRDWP_a_cfBoA&nossl=1&oi=scholar&ved=0CBsQgAMoADAAahUKEwjJv5HA3IPJAhUJw2MKHfScD_8)
- Bennett, D. (2004). What's a Musician, Anyway? *Music Forum* 10 (3), 35-37. Retrieved from [http://espace.library.curtin.edu.au/cgi-bin/espace.pdf?file=/2008/11/13/file\\_20/20862](http://espace.library.curtin.edu.au/cgi-bin/espace.pdf?file=/2008/11/13/file_20/20862)
- Bennett, D. (2007). Utopia for music performance graduates: Is it achievable, and how should it be defined? *British Journal of Music Education*, 24 (2), 179-189. doi: 10.1017/S0265051701007383.
- Bennett, D. (2008a). A gendered study of the working patterns of classical musicians: implications for practice. *International Journal of Music Education*, 26 (1), 89-100. doi: 10.1177/0255761407085925

- Bennett, D. (2008b). *Understanding the Classical Music Profession: The Past, the Present and Strategies for the Future*. Surrey, U.K.: Ashgate.
- Bennett, D. (2009). Academy and the Real World: Developing realistic notions of career in the performing arts. *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education*, 8 (3), 309-327. doi: 10.1177/1474022209339953
- Bennett, D. & Bridgstock, R. (2015). The urgent need for career preview: Student expectations and graduate realities in music and dance. *International Journal of Music Education*, 33 (3), 263-277. doi: 10.1177/0255761414558653
- Blake, A. & Jeffery, G. (2000). Commentary: The implications of 'The Value of Music in London' for local and regional music policy. *Cultural Trends*, 10 (38), 35-40. doi: 10.1080/09548960009365117
- Bloom, B. S. (1985). Generalisations about talent development. In B. S. Bloom (Ed.), *Developing Talent in Young People* (pp. 507-549). New York, NY: Ballantine Books.
- Bolan, S. (2002). Artists need business know-how. *Computing Canada*, 28 (7), 19. Cited in Bauer, C., Viola, K. & Strauss, C. (2011). Management skills for artists: 'learning by doing'? *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 17 (5), 626-644. doi: 10.1080/10286632.2010.531716
- Boucher, H. & Ryan, C. (2011). Performance Stress and the Very Young Musician. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 58 (4), 329-345. doi: 10.1177/0022429410386965
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Richard Nice (trans.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. (pp. 241-258). New York, NY: Greenwood. Retrieved from <https://www.gbv.de/dms/hebis-mainz/toc/009302689.pdf>
- Bourdieu, P. (1989). Social Space and Symbolic Power. *Sociological Theory*, 7 (1), 4-25. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/202060>
- Bourdieu, P. (1996). *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.  
Retrieved from <https://bildfilosofi.files.wordpress.com/2009/12/therulesofart.pdf>
- Bourdieu, P. & Wacquant, L. (1992). *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

- Bradbury, T. (2010, November 26). Musicians meet to discuss broadcast rights: Concerns highlighted by Igor concert re-broadcasts. *The Telegram*. p. B5
- Bradbury, T. (2014, October 23). It's time to return a favour: Musicians to hold benefit for O'Brien's Music Store. *The Telegram*. Retrieved from <http://www.thetelegram.com/News/Local/2014-10-23/article-3912967/%26lsquo%3BIt%26rsquo%3Bs-time-to-return-a-favour%26rsquo%3B/1>
- Bradbury, T. (2015, September 8). Harbourage lineup galvanizes SPAAT. *The Telegram*. Retrieved from: <http://www.thetelegram.com/Living/Entertainment/2015-09-08/article-4270208/Harbourage-lineup-galvanizes-SPAAT/1>
- Brake, J. (2012, July 11). All-female songwriters' circle happening this weekend. *The Telegram*. p. B3.
- Braverman, H. (1998). *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Monthly Review Press.
- Breslin, S. (2011). *Living with Music: An Ethnography of Sessions in St. John's, Newfoundland*. MA Thesis, Department of Anthropology, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Retrieved from <http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/ref/collection/theses5/id/32770>
- Bridgstock, R. (2011). Skills for creative industries graduate success. *Education & Training*, 53 (1), 9-26. doi: 10.1108/00400911111102333
- Briscoe, J.P. & Hall, D. T. (2006). The interplay of boundaryless and protean careers: Combinations and implications. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 69 (1), 4-18. doi: 10.1016/j.jvb.2005.09.002
- Britsch, L. (2005) Investigating performance-related problems of young musicians. *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, 20 (1), 40-47.
- Brown, H. (2012). Valuing Independence: Esteem Value and Its Role in the Independent Music Scene. *Popular Music and Society*, 35 (4), 519-539. doi: 10.1080/03007766.2011.600515
- Brown, M. (2011). The power of generosity to change views on social power. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 47 (6), 1285-1290. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2011.05.021
- Brown, R. (2007). Enhancing student employability?: Current practice and student experience in HE performing arts. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 6 (1), 28-49. doi: 10.1177/1474022207072198
- Browne, L. & Hayward, S. (2010, April). The New Age of Newfoundland Music: Young Musicians are Bringing Traditional Tunes to a New Generation. *Downhome* (n.p.)

- Brynnner, J. (2005). Rethinking the Youth Phase of the Life-course: The Case for Emerging Adulthood? *Journal of Youth Studies*, 8 (4), 367-384. doi: 10.1080/13676260500431628
- Bryson, B. (1996). 'Anything but heavy metal': Symbolic exclusion and musical dislikes. *American Sociological Review*, 61 (5), 884-899. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2096459>
- Burke, A. E., FitzRoy, F. R. & Nolan, M. A. (2008). What Makes a Die-hard Entrepreneur?: Beyond the 'Employee' or Entrepreneur' Dichotomy. *Small Business Economics*, 31 (2), 93-115. doi: 10.1007/s11187-007-9086-6
- Burland, K. & Davidson, J. W. (2002). Training the Talented. *Music Education Research*, 4 (1), 121-140. doi: 10.1080/14613800220119813
- Burland, K. & Pitts, S. (2007). Becoming a Music Student: Investigating the Skills and Attitudes of Students Beginning a Music Degree. *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education*, 6 (3), 289-308. doi: 10.1177/1474022207080847
- Burt, R. & Mills, J. (2005). Charting the musical histories of students who aspire to become professional musicians. Retrieved from [http://www.escom.org/proceedings/ESCOM2005\\_Proceedings\\_Performance\\_Matters/html/pdf/RosieBurtJanetMills.pdf](http://www.escom.org/proceedings/ESCOM2005_Proceedings_Performance_Matters/html/pdf/RosieBurtJanetMills.pdf)
- Burt, R. & Mills, J. (2006). Taking the plunge: The hopes and fears of students as they begin music college. *British Journal of Music Education*, 23 (1), 51-73. doi: 10.1017/S0265051705006741
- Butler, D. (2000). *Studies of Artists: An Annotated Directory*. Princeton University Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies. Working Paper #12. Retrieved from <https://www.princeton.edu/~artspol/workpap/WP12%20-%20Butler.pdf>
- Canadian Independent Music Association. (2013). *Sound Analysis: An Examination of the Canadian Independent Music Industry*. Nordicity. Retrieved from <http://www.nordicity.com/media/201336fjtnrdeunp.pdf>
- Carey, G. & Lebler, D. (2012). Reforming a Bachelor of Music Programme: A Case Study. *International Journal of Music Education*, 30 (4), 312-327. doi: 10.1177/0255761412459160
- Castells, M. (2009). *Communication Power*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Caves, R.E. (2000). *Creative Industries*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Chambliss, D.F. (1989). The Mundanity of Excellence: An Ethnographic Report on Stratification and Olympic Swimmers. *Sociological Theory*, 7 (1), 70-86. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/202063>

- Chaykowski, R. P. (March 2005). *Non-standard Work and Economic Vulnerability*. Vulnerable Worker Series No. 3. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Policy Research Networks. Retrieved from <http://files.deslibris.ca.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/cppc/200/200270.pdf>
- Chen, S. M. & Howard, R. W. (2004). Musical Instrument Choice and Playing History in Post-Secondary Level Music Students: Some Descriptive Data, Some Causes and Some Background Factors. *Music Education Research*, 6 (2), 217-230. doi: 10.1080/1461380042000222609
- Cherame, R. A., Sturman, M. C., & Walsh, K. (2007). Executive Career Management: Switching Organizations and the Boundaryless Career. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 71 (3), 359–374. doi: 10.1016/j.jvb.2007.09.002
- Chong, J., Lynden, M., Harvey, D., & Peebles, M. (1989). Occupational Health Problems of Musicians. *Canadian Family Physician*, 35. 2341-2348. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2280293/pdf/canfamphys00165-0145.pdf>
- Clarke, A. (2010, March 7). Newfoundland musicians rock the island. *The Troubadour*. (n.p.)
- Clarke, M., Lewchuk, W., DeWolff, A. & King, A. (2007). ‘This just isn’t sustainable’: Precarious employment, stress and workers’ health. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 30 (6), 311-326. doi: 10.1016/j.ijlp.2007.06.005
- Clawson, M. (1999). When Women Play the Bass: Instrument Specialization and Gender Interpretation in Alternative Rock Music. *Gender and Society*, 13 (2), 193-210.
- Clement, W., Mathieu, S., Prus, S. & Uckardesler, E. (2010). Restructuring Work and Labour Markets in the New Economy: Four Processes. In N. J. Pupo & M. P. Thomas (Eds.), *Interrogating the New Economy: Restructuring Work in the 21st Century* (pp. 43-64). Toronto, ON: Broadview Press.
- Comunian, R., Faggian, A. & Jewell, S. (2011). Winning and losing in the creative industries: An analysis of creative graduates’ career opportunities across creative disciplines. *Cultural Trends*, 20 (3-4), 291-308. doi: 10.1080/09548963.2011.589710
- Comunian, R., Faggian, A. & Jewell, S. (2014). Exploring music careers: Music graduates and early career trajectories in U.K. In N., Crossley, S. McAndrew & P. Widdop (Eds.), *Social Networks and Music Worlds* (pp. 165-188). London, UK: Routledge,
- Comunian, R., Taylor, C. & Smith, D. (2013). The Role of Universities in the Regional Creative Economies of the UK: Hidden Protagonists and the Challenge of Knowledge Transfer. *European Planning Studies*, 1-21. doi:10.1080/09654313.2013.790589

- Cooper, C. L. & Wills, G. I. D. (1989). Popular Musicians Under Pressure. *Psychology of Music*, 17 (1), 22-36. doi:10.1177/0305735689171003
- Coulangeon, P., Ravet, H. & Roharik, I. (2005). Gender differentiated effect of time in performing arts professions: Musicians, actors and dancers in contemporary France. *Poetics* 33 (5), 369-387. doi:10.1016/j.poetic.2005.09.005
- Coulson, S. (2010). Getting 'Capital' in the Music World: Musicians' Learning Experiences and Working Lives. *British Journal of Music Education*, 27 (3), 255-270. doi: 10.1017/S0265051710000227
- Craig, A. (2007a). Practicing poetry: A career without a job. In C. Calhoun & R. Sennett (Eds.), *Practicing Culture*. Oxford, UK: Routledge, pp. 35-56.
- Craig, A. (2007b). Sustainability, Reciprocity, and the Shared Good(s) of Poetry. *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, 37 (3), 257-270. doi: 10.3200/JAML.37.3.257-270
- Cranford, C. J., Vosko, L. F. & Zukewich, N. (2003a). The Gender of Precarious Employment in Canada. *Industrial Relations*, 58 (3), 454-482. doi: 10.7202/007495ar
- Cranford, C. J., Vosko, L. F. & Zukewich, N. (2003b). *Precarious Employment in the Canadian Labour Market: A Statistical Portrait*. Forum on Precarious Employment: Just Labour, 3, 6-22. Retrieved from <http://www.justlabour.yorku.ca/volume3/pdfs/cranfordetal.pdf>
- Creech, A. (2015). Understanding Professionalism: Transitions and the Contemporary Professional Musician. In I. Papageorgi & G. Welch (Eds.), *Advanced Musical Performance: Investigations in Higher Education Learning* (pp. 349-364). Surrey, UK: Ashgate.
- Creech, A., Papageorgi, I., Duffy, C., Morton, F., Hadden, E., Potter, J., de Bezenac, C., Whyton, T., Himonides, E. & Welch, G. (2008a). Investigating musical performance: commonality and diversity among classical and non-classical musicians, *Music Education Research*, (10) 2, 215-234, doi: 10.1080/14613800802079080
- Creech, A., Papageorgi, I., Duffy, C., Morton, F., Haddon, E., Potter, J., De Bezenac, C., Whyton, T., Himonides, E. & Welch, G. (2008b). From music student to professional: The process of transition. *British Journal of Music Education*, 25, (3), 315-331. doi: 10.1017/S0265051708008127
- Crossley, N. (2011). *Towards Relational Sociology*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Crossley, N. (2015). Relational sociology and culture: a preliminary framework. *International Review of Sociology*, 25 (1), 65-85. doi: 10.1080/03906701.2014.997965.



- Cryderman, K. (2015, September 24). TransCanada slashing a fifth of senior staff jobs: warns of more cuts. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/transcanada-warns-layoffs-coming-as-oil-downturn-squeezes-customers/article26516786/>
- Csikszentmihalyi, M., Rathunde, K., & Whalen, S. (1993). *Talented Teenagers: The Roots of Success and Failure*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Cunningham, S., Higgs, P., Freebody, S. & Anderson, P. (2010). *What's Your Other Job? A Census Analysis of Arts Employment in Australia*. Sydney, Australia: The Australia Council for the Arts. Retrieved from [http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/what\\_is\\_your\\_other\\_job\\_the\\_cen-54325a7993203.pdf](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/what_is_your_other_job_the_cen-54325a7993203.pdf)
- Dai, D. Y. & Schader, R. (2002). Decisions Regarding Music Training: Parental Beliefs and Values. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 46 (2), 135-144. doi: 10.1177/001698620204600206
- Davidson, J.W., Howe, M.J.A., Moore, D.G. & Sloboda, J.A. (1996). The role of family influences in the development of musical performance. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 14, 399-412. doi: 10.1111/j.2044-835X.1996.tb00714.x
- Davidson, J.W., Moore, D.G., Sloboda, J.A. & Howe, M.J.A. (1998). Characteristics of Music Teachers and the Progress of Young Instrumentalists. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 46 (1), 141-160. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3345766>
- Dawson, W. J. (1996). Hand and upper extremity trauma in high-level instrumentalists. Epidemiology and outcomes. *Work*, 7 (2), 81-87. doi: 10.3233/WOR-1996-7202.
- Dawson, W. J. (2007). Trauma to the High-level Instrumentalist's Hand and Upper Extremity: An Epidemiologic and Outcome Study. *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, 22 (3), 105-109. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1403701?accountid=12378>
- de Boise, S. (2016). Post-Bourdieuian Moments and Methods in Music Sociology: Toward a Critical, Practice-Based Approach. *Cultural Sociology*, 19 February, 2016, 1-17. Published online before print at [www.sagepub.com](http://www.sagepub.com). doi: 10.1177/1749975516628309
- de Villiers, R. (2010). The incorporation of soft skills into accounting curricula: Preparing accounting graduates for their unpredictable futures. *Meditari Accountancy Research*, 18 (2), 1-22. doi:10.1108/10222529201000007
- DiMaggio, P. (1983). Can Culture Survive the Marketplace? *The Journal of Arts, Management and Law*, 13 (1), 61-87. doi: 10.1080/07335113.1983.9942078

- DiMaggio, P. (2006). Nonprofit Organizations and the Intersectoral Division of Labor in the Arts. In W. Powell & R. Steinberg (Eds.), *The Non-Profit Sector: A Research Handbook* (pp. 432-461). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Retrieved from <http://site.ebrary.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/lib/memorial/reader.action?docID=10210281&ppg=8>
- Dobson, M. (2010). Insecurity, professional sociability, and alcohol. Young freelance musicians' perspectives on work and life in the music profession. *Psychology of Music* 39 (2), 240-260. DOI: 10.1177/0305735610373562
- Dockwray, R. & Moore, A. (2008). *Evidencing Transferable Skills in Undergraduate Music Education*. National Association for Music in Higher Education. Retrieved from <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/evidencing-transferable-skills-in-music-education.pdf>
- Dooley, D. (2008, February 8). Groups gather to bolster Broderick. *The Telegram*. Retrieved from <http://www.thetelegram.com/Living/2008-02-08/article-1443924/Groups-gather-to-bolster-Broderick/1>
- Doxey, C. & Wright, C. (1990). An Exploratory Study of Children's Music Ability. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 5 (3), 425-440. doi:10.1016/0885-2006(90)90031-U
- Drummond, J. D. (1990). The Characteristics of Amateur and Professional. *International Journal of Music Education*, 15 (1), 3-8. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/025576149001500101>
- Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D. & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92 (6), 1087-1101. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.92.6.1087
- Ericsson, K.A., Krampe, R.T. & Tesch-Romer, C. (1993). The role of deliberate practice in the acquisition of expert performance. *Psychological Review*, 100 (3), 363-406. ISSN: 0033-295X
- Fallows, S. & Steven, C. (2000). Building employability skills into the higher education curriculum: A university-wide initiative. *Education and Training*, 42 (2), 75-83. doi:10.1108/00400910010331620
- Farrell, M. P. (2001). *Collaborative Circles: Friendship Dynamics and Creative Work*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press
- Faulkner, R. (1971). *Hollywood Studio Musicians: Their Work and Careers in the Recording Industry*. 1971. Chicago, IL: Aldine Atherton.

- Faulkner, R. (1973a). Career Concerns and Mobility Motivations of Orchestra Musicians. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 14 (13), 334-349.
- Faulkner, R. (1973b). Orchestra Interaction: Some Features of Communication and Authority in an Artistic Organization. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 14 (2), 147-157. doi: 10.1111/j.1533-8525.1973.tb00850.x
- Feature. (2012, November 22). *The Muse*. pp. 11-12. (n.a.)
- Fenwick, T. J. (2006). Contradictions in portfolio careers: work design and client relations. *Career Development International*, 11 (1), 65–79. doi: 10.1108/13620430610642381
- Filer, R. (1990). Arts and academe: The effect of education on earnings of artists. *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 14 (2), 15-40. doi: 10.1007/BF02898280
- Finnegan, R. (2007). *The Hidden Musicians: Music-Making in an English Town* (2nd ed.). Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Fisher, C., Pearson, M., Goolsby, J. & Onken, M. (2010). Developing measurements of success for performing musical groups. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 24 (4), 325–334. doi: 10.1108/08876041011053033
- Fixsen, A. & Ridge, D. (2012). Performance, Emotion Work, and Transition: Challenging Experiences of Complementary Therapy Student Practitioners Commencing Clinical Practice. *Qualitative Health Research*, 22 (9), 1163-1175. doi: 10.1177/1049732312449213
- Fletcher, L. & Lobato, R. (2013). Living and Labouring as a Music Writer. *Cultural Studies Review*, 19 (1), 155-176. Retrieved from <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/csrj/article/view/2588/3447>
- Fontana, A. & Prokos, A. (2007). *The Interview: From Formal to Postmodern*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Forkert, K. (2013). *Artistic Lives: A Study of Creativity in Two European Cities*. Surrey, UK: Ashgate. Retrieved from <http://site.ebrary.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/lib/memorial/detail.action?docID=10759681>
- Frade, C. & Darmon, I. (2005). New Modes of Business Organization and Precarious Employment: Towards the Recommodification of Labour? *Journal of European Social Policy*, 15 (2), 107-121. doi: 10.1177/0958928705051509

- Frederickson, J. & Rooney, J.F. (1988). The free-lance musician as a type of non-person: An extension of the concept of non-personhood. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 29 (2), 221-239. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4121477>
- Frederickson, J. & Rooney, J.F. (1990). How the Music Occupation Failed to Become a Profession. *International Review of Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 21 (2), 189-206. doi: 10.2307/837023
- Freeman, J. (1985) Emotional aspects of giftedness. In Freeman, J. (Ed.), *The Psychology of Gifted Children: Perspectives in Development and Education*. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons.
- Freeman, J. (1991). *Gifted children growing up*. London, UK: Heinemann Educational.
- Freeman, J. (2000). Children's talent in fine art and music – England. *Roeper Review*, 22 (2), 98-101. Retrieved from <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/ehost/detail/detail?sid=58f8969d-d06f-4bfe-9257-ee12861cbe3a%40sessionmgr111&vid=1&hid=125&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWlwLHVybCxlYWQmc2l0ZT1laG9zdC1saXZlJnNjb3BIPXNpdGU%3d#AN=2809614&db=heh>
- Fullick, M. (2013, April 12). Who will hire all the PhDs? Not Canada's universities. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/who-will-hire-all-the-phds-not-canadas-universities/article10976412/>
- Gabor, E. (2011). Turning Points in the Development of Classical Musicians. *Journal of Ethnographic and Qualitative Research*, 5 (3), 138-156. Retrieved from <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/ehost/detail/detail?sid=a1cef2f9-82ce-48d0-9dc9-a58edddce094%40sessionmgr198&vid=2&hid=125&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWlwLHVybCxlYWQmc2l0ZT1laG9zdC1saXZlJnNjb3BIPXNpdGU%3d#AN=61796570&db=aph>
- Gabrielsson, A. & Juslin, P. (1996). Emotional expression in music performance: Between the performer's intention and the listener's experience. *Psychology of music* 24.(1), 68-91. doi: 10.1177/0305735696241007
- Gaunt, H., Creech, A., Long, M. & Hallam, S. (2012). Supporting conservatoire students towards professional integration: One-to-one tuition and the potential of mentoring. *Music Education Research*, 14 (1), 25-43. doi: 10.1080/14613808.2012.657166
- Geel, R., Mure, J. & Backes-Gellner, U. (2011). Specificity of occupational training and occupational mobility: an empirical study based on Lazer's skill-weights approach. *Education Economics*, 19 (5), 519-535. doi: 10.1080/09645291003726483

- Gembris, H. & Heye, A. (2014). Growing older in a symphony orchestra: The development of age-related self-concept and self-estimated performance of professional musicians in a lifespan perspective. *Musicae Scientiae*, 18 (4), 371-391. doi: 10.1177/1029864914548912
- Gibson, C., Murphy, P. & Freestone, R. (2002). Employment and socio-spatial relations in Australia's cultural economy. *Australian Geographer*, 33 (2), 173-189. doi: 10.1080/00049180220150990
- Giles, D.C. (2015). Field migration, cultural mobility and celebrity: the case of Paul McCartney, *Celebrity Studies*, (6) 4, 538-552, doi: 10.1080/19392397.2015.1008530
- Giuffre, K. (1999). Sandpiles of Opportunity: Success in the Art World. *Social Forces*, 77 (3), 815-832. doi: 10.1093/sf/77.3.815
- Gold, M. and Fraser, J. (2002). Managing self-management: successful transitions to portfolio careers. *Work, Employment and Society*, 16 (4), 579-98. doi: 10.1177/095001702321587370
- Government of Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage. (2002). Evaluation of the Provisions and Operations of the Status of the Artist Act. Final Report. Retrieved from <http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/CH44-86-2002E.pdf>
- Government of Canada, Service Canada. (2013). People Serving People. Musicians and Singers. Retrieved from [http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/qc/job\\_futures/statistics/5133.shtml](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/qc/job_futures/statistics/5133.shtml)
- Government of Canada, Statistics Canada (2015, June 29). Sense of belonging to Canada, the province of residence and the local community. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2015004-eng.htm>
- Grant, T. (2015, May 21). Precarious employment still rising in Toronto, Hamilton. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/jobs/precarious-employment-still-rising-in-toronto-and-hamilton/article24531959/>
- Green, A.I. (2011). Playing the (Sexual) Field: The Interactional Basis of Systems of Sexual Stratification. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 74 (3), 244-266. doi: 10.1177/0190272511416606
- Green, A. I. (2016). Sexual capital and social inequality: The study of sexual fields. In N.L. Fischer & S. Seidman (Eds.), *Introducing the New Sexuality Studies* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Routledge. Retrieved from: <https://books.google.ca/books?isbn=1317449177>
- Green, L. (2001). *How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way Ahead for Music Education*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate. Retrieved from <http://site.ebrary.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/lib/memorial/detail.action?docID=10211340>

- Griswold, P. & Chrobak, D. (1981). Sex-Role Associations of Music Instruments and Occupations by Gender and Major. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 29 (1), 57-62.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3344680>
- Gubrium, J.F. & Holstein, J.A. (2012). Narrative Practice and the Transformation of Interview Subjectivity. In J.F. Gubrium, J.A. Holstein, A.B. Marvasti & K.D. McKinney (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft* (pp. 27-45). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Guptill, C., Zaza, C. & Stanley, P. (2000). An Occupational Study of Physical Playing-related Injuries in College. *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, 15 (2), 86-90.
- Hagedorn, R. (1995). Occupational therapy. Perspectives and processes. Edinburgh, UK: Churchill Livingstone. Cited in Hammell, K. W. (2004). Dimensions of meaning in the occupations of daily life. *The Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 71 (5), 296-305. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/212908111?accountid=12378>
- Hallam, S. (2010). 21st Century Conceptions of Musical Ability. *Psychology of Music*, 38 (3), 308-330. doi: 10.1177/0305735609351922
- Hammell, K. W. (2004). Dimensions of meaning in the occupations of daily life. *The Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 71 (5), 296-305. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/212908111?accountid=12378>
- Hammell, K. W. (2009). Self-Care, Productivity, and Leisure, or Dimensions of Occupational Experience? Rethinking Occupational "Categories." *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 76 (2), 107-114. doi: 10.1177/000841740907600208
- Harding, C. T. (2011). Why music entrepreneurship and why in college music training? In G. D. Beckman (Ed.), *Disciplining the Arts: Teaching Entrepreneurship in Context*. (pp. 17-23). Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers.
- Hartup, W. W. (1996). The Company They Keep: Friendships and their Developmental Significance. *Child Development*, 67 (1), 1-13. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.1996.tb01714.x
- Heery, E. & Noon, M. (2008). *A Dictionary of Human Resource Management* (2nd ed). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. E-ISBN: 9780191726712
- Hesmondhalgh, D. (2006). Bourdieu, the media and cultural production. *Media, Culture & Society*, 28 (2), 211-231. doi: 10.1177/0163443706061682

- Hesmondhalgh, D. & Baker, S. (2010). "A very complicated version of freedom": Conditions and experiences of creative labour in three cultural industries. *Poetics*, 38 (1), 4-20. doi: 10.1016/j.poetic.2009.10.001
- Hill Strategies Research Inc. (2014). A Statistical Profile of Artists and Cultural Workers in Canada: Based on the 2011 National Household Survey and the Labour Force Survey. Retrieved from: <http://www.hillstrategies.com/content/statistical-profile-artists-and-cultural-workers-canada>
- Hiller, H.H. & DiLuzio, L. (2003). The Interviewee and the Research Interview: Analysing a Neglected Dimension in Research. *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 41 (1), 1-26.
- Hirvonen, A. (2004). How young piano students become professional musicians: The significance of music competitions in the construction of their identities. In O. Musumeci (Ed.), *Preparing Musicians Making New Sound Worlds* (pp. 81-90). Barcelona, Spain: Escola Superior de Musica de Catalunya and International Society for Music Education. Retrieved from [http://issuu.com/official\\_isme/docs/2004-ceprom-proceedings/81](http://issuu.com/official_isme/docs/2004-ceprom-proceedings/81)
- Hochschild, A. R. (1979). Emotion Work, Feeling Rules and Social Structure. *American Journal of Sociology*, 85 (3), 551-575. doi:10.1086/227049
- Hochschild, A. R. (2012). *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (3rd ed.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press
- Hollstein, B. (2014). Mixed Methods Social Networks Research: An Introduction. In S. Domínguez & B. Hollstein (Eds.), *Mixed Methods Social Networks Research: Design and Applications*. (pp. 3-34). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Hoverman, K., Kuuskoski, J., Weingarten, E. & Zeisler, N. (2010). Fostering sustainable arts careers: Attitudes towards arts entrepreneurship as a core component of collegiate arts training. Cited in Weller, J. F. (2013). *How Popular Music Artists Form an Artistic and Professional Identity and Portfolio Career in Emerging Adulthood*. Education Doctoral Dissertation, St. Paul MN: University of Minnesota. Retrieved from [http://www.music.org/pdf/summit/2010plenary\\_1.pdf](http://www.music.org/pdf/summit/2010plenary_1.pdf)
- Howe, M.J.A. & Sloboda, J.A. (1991). Young musicians' accounts of significant influences in their early lives. *British Journal of Music Education*, 8, 39-63. Cited in Davidson, J.W., Howe, M.J.A., Moore, D.G. & Sloboda, J.A. (1996). The role of family influences in the development of musical performance. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 14, 399-412. doi: 10.1111/j.2044-835X.1996.tb00714.x

- Howells, L. (2015, July 6). NL residents feel strongest sense of belonging, survey finds. *CBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/n-l-residents-feel-strongest-sense-of-belonging-survey-finds-1.3137979>
- Hracs, B., Grant, J., Haggett, J. & Morton, J. (2011). A tale of two scenes: civic capital and retaining musical talent in Toronto and Halifax. *The Canadian Geographer*, 55 (3), 365-382. doi: 10.1111/j.1541-0064.2011.00364.x
- Hracs, B. & Leslie, D. (2013). Living Under the Lights: The intensification and extensification of aesthetic labour for independent musicians in Toronto. *Working Paper Series: Martin Prosperity Research*. University of Toronto. Retrieved from: <http://files.deslibris.ca.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/cppc/239/239034.pdf>
- Hughes, E.C. (1951). Studying the Nurse's Work. *The American Journal of Nursing*, 51 (5). 294-295. doi: 10.2307/3459394
- Hughes, E.C. (1963). Professions. *Daedalus*, 92 (4). 655-658. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20026805>
- Hughes, E. C. (1970). The Humble and the Proud: The Comparative Study of Occupations. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 11 (2), 147-156. doi: 10.1111/j.1533-8525.1970.tb01440.x
- Hughes, E. C. (1971). Cycles, Turning Points, and Careers. In *The Sociological Eye: Selected Papers* (pp. 124-131). Chicago, IL: Aldine Atherton.
- Hughes, E. C. (1971). Institutional Office and the Person. In *The Sociological Eye: Selected Papers* (pp. 132-140). Chicago, IL: Aldine Atherton.
- Hughes, E. C. (1994). The Study of Occupations. In L. A. Coser (Ed.) *On Work, Race, and the Sociological Imagination*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chicago.
- Hyde, L. (1983). *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Jehn, K. A., Shah, P. P. & Chester, A. (ed.). (1997). Interpersonal relationships and task performance: An examination of mediating processes in friendship and acquaintance groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72 (4), 775-790. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.72.4.775
- Jones, C., Hesterly, W. S. & Borgatti, S. P. (1997). A General Theory of Network Governance: Exchange Conditions and Social Mechanisms. *Academy of Management Review*, 22 (4), 911-945. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/stable/pdf/259249.pdf?acceptTC=true>



- Jørgensen, H. (2015). Western Classical Music Studies in Universities and Conservatoires. In I. Papageorgi & G. Welch (Eds.), *Advanced Musical Performance: Investigations in Higher Education Learning*. (pp. 3-20). Surrey, UK: Ashgate.
- Juslin, P. & Laukka, P. (2004). Expression, Perception, and Induction of Musical Emotions: A Review and a Questionnaire Study of Everyday Listening. *Journal of New Music Research*, 33 (3), 217-238. doi: 10.1080/0929821042000317813
- Juuti, S. & Littleton, K. (2012). Tracing the Transition from Study to a Contemporary Creative Working Life: The Trajectories of Professional Musicians. *Vocations and Learning*, 5 (1), 5-21. doi: 10.1007/s12186-011-9062-9
- Kalleberg, A. L. (2009). Insecure Workers: Employment Relations in Transition. *American Sociological Review*, 74 (1), 1-22. doi: 10.1177/000312240907400101
- Kenny, D. T. (2006). Music Performance Anxiety: Origins, Phenomenology, Assessment and Treatment. *Context: Journal of Music Research*, 31. 51-65. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237651501\\_Music\\_performance\\_anxiety\\_Origins\\_phenomenology\\_assessment\\_and\\_treatment](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237651501_Music_performance_anxiety_Origins_phenomenology_assessment_and_treatment)
- Kirnaskaya, D. (2009). *The Natural Musician: On Abilities, Giftedness and Talent*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press
- Kirschbaum, C. (2007). Careers in the right beat: US jazz musicians' typical and nontypical trajectories. *Career Development International*, 12 (2), 187-201. doi: 10.1108/13620430710733659
- Krider, D. (2013). Musicians in Part Time Employment: Keeping Both Hands in Music. *The American Organist*, 47 (3), 54. ISSN: 0164-3150
- Kubacki, K. & Croft, R. (2005). Paying the piper: A study of musicians and the music business. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 10 (4), 225-237. doi: 10.1002/nvsm.27
- Lack of funding puts only traditional music camp in jeopardy. (2012, July 23). *CBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/lack-of-funding-puts-only-traditional-music-camp-in-jeopardy-1.1237275>
- Lazzarato, M. (1996). Immaterial Labour. in P. Virno and M. Hardt (eds) *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

- LeBlanc, A., Jin, Y.C., Obert, M. & Siivola, C. (1997). Effect of Audience on Music Performance Anxiety. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 45 (3), 480-496. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3345541>
- Lejano, R., Ingram, M. & Ingram, H. (2013). *The Power of Narrative in Environmental Networks*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Lee, J. (2009). Open mic: Professionalizing the rap career. *Ethnography*, 10 (4), 475-495. doi: 10.1177/1466138109347001
- Lena, J. & Lindemann, D. (2014). Who is an artist? New data for an old question. *Poetics*, 43 (1), 70-85. doi: 10.1016/j.poetic.2014.01.001
- Lewchuk, W. Clarke, M. & DeWolff, A. (2008). Working Without Commitments: Precarious Employment and Health. *Work, Employment and Society*, 22 (3), 387-406. doi: 10.1177/0950017008093477
- Lewchuk, W. & Lafleché, M. (2014). It's About More Than Wages: The Social Impact of Precarious Employment. *Canadian Dimension*, 48 (3), 24-26. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1543287806?accountid=12378>
- Lin, N. (1999) Building a Network Theory of Social Capital. *Connections*, 22 (1), 28-51. [http://www.insna.org/PDF/Connections/v22/1999\\_I-1-4.pdf](http://www.insna.org/PDF/Connections/v22/1999_I-1-4.pdf)
- Linderman, J. (2000). DIY: The Married Musician's Guide to Staying Married. *Canadian Musician*, 22 (5), 12. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1357821?accountid=12378>
- Lindgren, M., Packendorff, J. & Sergi, V. (2014). Thrilled by the discourse, suffering through the experience: Emotions in project-based work. *Human Relations*, 67 (11), 1383-1412. doi: 10.1177/0018726713520022
- Lingo, E. L. & Tepper, S. J. (2013). Looking Back, Looking Forward: Arts-based Careers and Creative Work. *Work and Occupations*, 40 (4), 337-363. doi: 10.1177/0730888413505229
- MacLeod, M. (2013). *Raising the Bar: The Reciprocal Roles and Deviant Distinctions of Music and Alcohol in Acadiana*. Doctoral Dissertation, Ethnomusicology, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NL. Retrieved from: [http://research.library.mun.ca/10953/1/Macleod\\_Marion.pdf](http://research.library.mun.ca/10953/1/Macleod_Marion.pdf)
- MacNamara, Á., Holmes, P. & Collins, D. (2008). Negotiating transitions in musical development: The role of psychological characteristics of developing excellence. *Psychology of Music*, 36 (3), 335-352. doi:10.1177/0305735607086041

- MacPherson E. (1999). Collective Bargaining for Independent Contractors: Is the Status of the Artist Act a Model for other Industrial Sectors? *Canadian Labour and Employment Law Journal*, 7, 355-589. Retrieved from <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/home.nsf/html/capprt-tcrpap.html>
- Malenfant, R., LaRue, A. & Vézina, M. (2007). Intermittent Work and Well-being: One Foot in the Door, One Foot Out. *Current Sociology*, 55 (6), 814-835. doi: 10.1177/0011392107081987
- Mallon, M. (1998). The portfolio career: Pushed or pulled to it? *Personnel Review*, 27 (5), 361 – 377 doi: 10.1108/00483489810230316
- Mantie, R. A. (2012). Structure and agency in university-level recreational music making. *Music Education Research*, 15 (1), 39-58. doi: 10.1080/14613808.2012.722076
- Manturzewska, M. (1990). A Biographical Study of the Life-span Development of Professional Musicians. *Psychology of Music*, 18, 112-139. doi: 10.1177/0305735690182002
- Martin, C.R. (1995). The Naturalized Gender Order of Rock and Roll. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 19 (1), 53-74. doi: 10.1177/019685999501900104
- Mason, G., Williams, G. & Cranmer, S. (2009). Employability skills initiatives in higher education: What effects do they have on graduate labour market outcomes? *Education Economics*, 17 (1), 1-30. doi: 10.1080/09645290802028315
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London, UK: Sage.
- Massie, A. (1977). Studio/Private Music Teacher. *Music Educators Journal*, 63 (7), 134-135. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3395239>
- Mauss, M. (1990). *The Gift*. London, UK: Routledge.
- May, T. (2015). Symptomatic social science: Reflexivity, recognition and redistribution in the GBCS. *The Sociological Review*, 63 (2), 400-414. doi: 10.1111/1467-954X.12288
- McCready, S. & Reid, D. (2007). The Experience of Occupational Disruption among Student Musicians. *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, 22 (4), 140-146.
- McDowell, L. (2009). *Working Bodies: Interactive Service Employment and Workplace Identities*. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell
- McKeown, T. & Lindorff, M. (2011). The graduate job search process: A lesson in persistence rather than good career management? *Education and Training*, 53 (4), 310-320. doi: 10.1108/00400911111138479

- McPherson, G. E. (1997). Giftedness and Talent in Music. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 31 (4), 65-77. doi: 10.2307/3333144
- McPherson, G. E. (2009). The role of parents in children's musical development. *Psychology of Music*, 37, 91-110. doi: 10.1177/0305735607086049
- Menger, P-M. (1999). Artistic Labor Markets and Careers. *Annual Review of Sociology* 25 (1), 541-574. doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.25.1.541
- Menger, P-M. (2001a). Artists as workers: Theoretical and methodological challenges. *Poetics*, 28 (4), 241-254
- Menger, P-M. (2001b). *Statistics in the Wake of Challenges Posed by Cultural Diversity in a Globalization Context – Are there Too Many Artists?* Proceedings of the International Symposium on Cultural Statistics, 151-172. Retrieved from [http://www.uis.unesco.org/StatisticalCapacityBuilding/Workshop%20Documents/Culture%20workshop%20dox/International%20Symposium\\_Montreal%202002.pdf](http://www.uis.unesco.org/StatisticalCapacityBuilding/Workshop%20Documents/Culture%20workshop%20dox/International%20Symposium_Montreal%202002.pdf)
- Mietzner, D. & Kamprath, M. (2013). A Competence Portfolio for Professionals in the Creative Industries. *Creativity & Innovation Management*, 22 (3), 280-294. doi: 10.1111/caim.12026
- Miller, D.L. (2014). Symbolic Capital and Gender: Evidence from Two Cultural Fields. *Cultural Sociology*, 8 (4), 462-482. doi: 10.1177/17499755114539800
- Mills, J. (2004). Working in music: Becoming a performer-teacher. *Music Education Research*, 6 (3), 245-261. doi: 10.1080/1461380042000281712
- Mills, J., Burt, R. & Moore, H. (2005). 'Professional performer' – or 'professional musician?' Proceedings of 'Performance Matters! International Conference on Practical, Psychological, Philosophical and Educational Issues in Musical Performance, Escola Superior de Educação, Porto, Portugal. Retrieved from [http://www.escom.org/proceedings/ESCOM2005\\_Proceedings\\_Performance\\_Matters/html/pdf/MillsBurtandMoore.pdf](http://www.escom.org/proceedings/ESCOM2005_Proceedings_Performance_Matters/html/pdf/MillsBurtandMoore.pdf)
- Mirchandani, K. (2000), 'The best of both worlds' and 'cutting my own throat': Contradictory images of home-based work. *Qualitative Sociology*, 23 (2), 159-82. doi: 10.1023/A:1005448415689
- Mitchell, W. & Muysken, J. (2008). *Full Employment Abandoned: Shifting Sands and Policy Failures*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar
- Moore, D., Burland, K. & Davidson, J. W. (2003). The social context of musical success: A developmental account. *British Journal of Psychology*, 94 (4), 529-549. doi: 10.1348/000712603322503088

- Morgan, G. & Wood, J. (2014). Creative Accommodations. *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 7 (1), 64-78. doi: 10.1080/17530350.2013.855646
- Music Canada: Economic Impact Analysis of the Sound Recording Industry in Canada. (2012). Pricewaterhousecoopers LLP. Retrieved from <http://musiccanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Music-Canada-Economic-Impact-Analysis-of-the-Sound-Recording-Industry-in-Canada.pdf>
- Music Industry Association of Newfoundland and Labrador. (n.d.) Membership information retrieved from <http://www.musicnl.ca/members.aspx>.
- Myers, D. E. (2008). Lifespan engagement and the question of relevance: Challenges for music education research in the twenty-first century. *Music Education Research*, 10 (1), 1-14. doi: 10.1080/14613800701871330
- Nagel, J. (1988). Identity and Career Choice in Music. *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 12 (2), 67-76. doi: 10.1007/BF02258421
- Nash, R. (1990). Bourdieu on Education and Social and Cultural Reproduction. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 11 (4), 431-447. doi: 10.1080/0142569900110405
- Neil, G., Neil Craig Associates & Sirois, G. (2010). *Status of the Artist in Canada 2010 Update: An Update on the 30th Anniversary of the UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of the Artist*. Conference of the Arts. Retrieved from <http://ccarts.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/StatusoftheArtistReport1126101-Copy.pdf>
- Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council: ArtsNL. (n.d.). Grant information retrieved from <http://www.nlac.ca/grants/index.htm>.
- Newfoundland and Labrador Musicians' Association. (n.d.). Local 820 of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada. Schedule for Minimum Fees for Live Engagements. Retrieved from: <http://cfm820.ca/docs/forms/Scale%20of%20Minimum%20Fees%20Local%20820%202011.pdf>
- Nilsson, J. (2014). The geographies of Swedish musicians' work practices: How, when and where Swedish musicians perform work and creativity in the contemporary popular music industry. Licentiate thesis, Department of Social and Economic Geography, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden. Retrieved from: <http://uu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:743755/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Nóvoa, A. (2012). Musicians on the Move: Mobilities and Identities of a Band on the Road. *Mobilities*, 7 (3), 349-368. doi: 10.1080/17450101.2012.654994

- Oakland, A., MacDonald, R. & Flowers, P. (2013). Identity in crisis: The role of work in the formation and renegotiation of a musical identity. *British Journal of Music Education*, 30 (2), 261-276. doi: 10.1017/S026505171300003X
- Oakley, K. (2009). 'Art Works' – *Cultural labour markets: A literature review*. Creativity, Culture and Education Series. London, UK: Hillprint Media. Retrieved from <http://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/CCE-lit-review-8-a5-web-130.pdf>
- Olsthoorn, M. (2013). Measuring Precarious Employment: A Proposal for Two Indicators of Precarious Employment Based on Set-Theory and Tested with Dutch Labor Market-Data. *Social Indicators Research*, 119 (1), 421-441. doi: 10.1007/s11205-013-0480-y
- Palmer, C. (1997). Music Performance. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 48 (1), 115-138. doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.48.1.115
- Parasuraman, S. & Purohit, Y. S. (2000). Distress and Boredom Among Orchestra Musicians: The Two Faces of Stress. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 5 (1), 74-83. doi: 10.1037/1076-8998.5.1.74
- Park A., Guptill, C. & Sumsion, T. (2007). Why Music Majors Pursue Music Despite the Risk of Playing-related Injuries. *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, 22 (3), 89-96.
- Park, J., Celma, O., Koppenberger, M., Cano, P. & Buldú, J.M. (2007). The Social Network of Contemporary Popular Musicians. *International Journal of Bifurcation and Chaos*, 17 (07), 2281-2288. doi: 10.1142/S0218127407018385
- Parkes, K. A. & Jones, B. (2011). Students' Motivations for Considering a Career in Music Performance. *The National Association for Music Education*, 29 (2), 20-28. doi: 10.1177/8755123310397005
- Patel, P. C. & Thatcher, S. (2014). Sticking it Out: Individual Attributes and Persistence in Self-employment. *Journal of Management*, 40 (7), 1932-1979. doi: 10.1177/0149206312446643
- Patrick, H., Ryan, A.M., Alfeld-Liro, C., Fredericks, J.A., Hruda, L.Z. & Eccles, J.S. (1999). Adolescents' Commitment to Developing Talent: The Role of Peers in Continuing Motivation for Sports and the Arts. *Journal of Youth and Adolescents*, 28 (6), 741-763. doi: 10.1023/A:1021643718575
- Peace, A. (1992). No fishing without drinking: The construction of social identity in rural Ireland. In Gefou-Madianou, D. (Ed.), *Alcohol, Gender and Culture*. (pp. 167-180). London, U.K.: Routledge.

- Pearce, A. (2000). Preparing music undergraduates for work: Embedding opportunities for the development of transferable skills in the music curriculum. In J. Barnes and G. Holt (Eds.), *Making Music Work* (pp. 57-72). London, UK: Royal College of Music. Cited in Brown, R. (2007). 'Enhancing student employability?: Current practice and student experience in HE performing arts.' *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 6 (1), 28-49. doi: 10.1177/1474022207072198
- Perkins, R. (2013). Hierarchies and learning in the conservatoire: Exploring what students learn through the lens of Bourdieu. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 35 (2), 197-212. doi: 10.1177/1321103X13508060
- Peterson, R.A. (1978). The Production of Cultural Change: The Case of Contemporary Country Music. *Social Research*, 45 (2), 292-314. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1297294792?accountid=12378>
- Peterson, R.A. (1997). *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Peterson, R.A. & Kern, R.M. (1996). Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore. *American Sociological Review*, 61 (5), 900-907. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2096460>
- Pettinger, L. (2015). Embodied Labour in Music Work. *British Journal of Sociology*, 66 (2), 282-300. doi: 10.1111/1468-4446.12123
- Pettipas, C. & Jagoda, K. (2012). Creating an Independent Music Business in Canada: A Case Study. *Journal of Enterprising Culture*, 20 (2), 227-243. doi: 10.1142/S0218495812500100
- Pitts, S. (2009). Roots and routes in adult musical participation: Investigating the impact of home and school on lifelong musical interest and involvement. *British Journal of Music Education*, 26 (3), 241-256. doi: 10.1017/S0265051709990088
- Pitts, S. (2012). *Chances and Choices: Exploring the Impact of Music Education*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Potter, P. J. & Jones, I. C. (1995). Medical Problems Affecting Musicians. *Canadian Family Physician*, 41, 2121-2128. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2146452/pdf/canfamphys00094-0083.pdf>
- Prieur, A. & Savage, M. (2011). Updating cultural capital theory: A discussion based on studies in Denmark and in Britain. *Poetics*, 39 (6), 566-580. doi: 10.1016/j.poetic.2011.09.002
- Prieur, A. & Savage, M. (2013). Emerging Forms of Cultural Capital. *European Societies*, 15 (2), 246-267. doi: 10.1080/14616696.2012.748930

- Primeau, L. (1996). Work and leisure: Transcending the dichotomy. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 50, 569-577. Retrieved from <http://ajot.aota.org/> on 11/09/2015
- Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. (2006). *Creative Newfoundland and Labrador: The Blueprint for Development and Investment in Culture*. Retrieved from <http://www.btcrd.gov.nl.ca/artsculture/pdf/culturalplan2006.pdf>
- Pruett, K. D. (2004). First Patrons: Parenting the Musician. *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, 19 (4), 154-159.
- Quinlan, M. (2012). The 'Pre-Invention' of Precarious Employment: The Changing World of Work in Context. *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 23 (4), 3-24. doi: 10.1177/103530461202300402
- Raffiee, J. & Feng, J. (2014). Should I Quit My Day Job? A Hybrid Path to Entrepreneurship. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57 (4). 936-963. Retrieved from <http://content.ebscohost.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/ContentServer.asp?T=P&P=AN&K=97334043&S=R&D=heh&EbscoContent=dGJyMMvl7ESeprc4zOX0OLCmr02eqK5Ssqy4SreWxWXS&ContentCustomer=dGJyMPGnsEqxq69QuePfgeyx44Dt6fIA>
- Ramirez, M. (2012). Performing Gender by Performing Music: Constructions of Masculinities in a College Music Scene. *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 20 (2), 108-124. doi: 10.3149/jms.2002.108.
- Randle, K. & Culkin, N. (2009). Getting In and Getting On in Hollywood. In McKinlay, A. & Smith, C. (Eds.), *Creative Labour: Working in the Creative Industries*. (pp. 93-115). New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Randles, C. (2011). "What is a good musician?": An Analysis of Student Beliefs. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 112 (1), 1-8. doi: 10.1080/10632913.2010.490774
- Renshaw, P. (2004). Connecting Conversations: The Changing Voice of the Artist. In Miles, M. (Ed.). *Innovations In Art and Design. New Practices, New Pedagogies: A Reader*. (pp. 81-96). London, UK: Routledge. Retrieved from <https://pric.wordpress.com/3-theory/connecting-conversations-the-changing-voice-of-the-artist/>
- Rex Goudie only N.L. performer at Eastbound Hoedown. (2015, August 22). *CBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/rex-goudie-only-n-l-performer-at-eastbound-hoedown-1.3200343>.



- Rife, N. A., Shnek, Z. M, Lauby, J. L. & Lapidus, L. B. (2001). Children's Satisfaction with Private Music Lessons. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 49 (1), 21-32. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3345807>
- Roberts, B. A. (1991). *A Place to Play: The Social World of University Schools of Music*. St. John's, NL: Memorial University of Newfoundland.
- Rogers, R. (2002). *Creating a Land with Music: The work, education and training of professional musicians of the 21st century*. London, UK: Youth Music, London. Retrieved from <http://www.youthmusic.org.uk/assets/files/HEFCEreport1.pdf>
- Ross, A. (2003). *No-collar: The humane workplace and its hidden costs*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Saloniemi, A. & Zeytinoglu, I. U. (2007). Achieving Flexibility through Insecurity: A Comparison of Work Environments in Fixed-term and Permanent Jobs in Finland and Canada. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 13 (1), 109-128. doi: 10.1177/0959680107073971
- Scarborough, R. C. (2012). Managing challenges on the front stage: The face-work strategies of musicians. *Poetics*, 40 (6), 542-564. doi: 10.1016/j.poetic.2012.09.001
- Scheib, J. W. (2003). Role Stress in the Professional Life of the School Music Teacher: A Collective Case Study. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 51 (2), 124-136. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3345846>
- Scott, M. (2012). Cultural entrepreneurs, cultural entrepreneurship: Music producers mobilizing and converting Bourdieu's alternative capitals. *Poetics*, 40 (3), 237-255. doi: 10.1016/j.poetic.2012.03.002
- Segers, J., Inceoglu, I., Vloeberghs, D., Bartram, D., Hendrickx, E. (2008). Protean and boundaryless careers: A study on potential motivators. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 71 (3), 359-374. doi: 10.1016/j.vb.2007.09.002
- Shaffir, W. & Stebbins, W. (1991). *Experiencing Fieldwork: An Insider View of Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Shank, B. (1994). *Dissonant Identities: The Rock 'n' Roll Scene in Austin Texas*. Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press.
- Sherman Downey and The Ambiguous Case calling it quits. (2015, March 9). *CBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/sherman-downey-and-the-ambiguous-case-calling-it-quits-1.2986748>.

- Shilton, E. & Banks, K. (2014). *The Changing Role of Labour Relations Boards in Canada: Key Research Questions for the 21st Century*. Toronto, ON: Centre for Law in the Contemporary Workplace, Queen's University Faculty of Law. Retrieved from <http://www.queensu.ca/clcw/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.clcwwww/files/files/LabourBoardReportMay72014.pdf>
- Shuey, K. M. & Jovic, E. (2013). Disability Accommodation in Nonstandard and Precarious Employment Arrangements. *Work and Occupations*, 40 (2), 174-205. doi: 10.1177/0730888413481030
- Simpson, C.R. (2015). Multiplexity and strategic alliances: The relational embeddedness of coalitions in social movement organizational fields. *Social Networks* 42 (2015), 42-59. doi: 10.1016/j.socnet.2015.02.007
- Siisiäinen, M. (2000). Two Concepts of Social Capital: Bourdieu vs. Putnam. Paper presented at the ISTR 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference. "The Third Sector: For What and For Whom?" Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland. Retrieved from: [http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/32972649/Siisiainen-Bourdieu\\_vs\\_Putnam.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/32972649/Siisiainen-Bourdieu_vs_Putnam.pdf)
- Sloboda, J.A. & Howe, M.J.A. (1992). Transitions in the early musical careers of able young musicians: Choosing instruments and teachers. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 40. Pp 283-294. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3345836>
- Smeaton, D. (2003). Self-employed workers: calling the shots or hesitant independents? A consideration of the trends. *Work, Employment and Society*, 17 (2), 379-391. Retrieved from <http://wes.sagepub.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/content/17/2/379>
- Smith, C. & McKinlay, A. (2009). Creative Industries and Labour Process Analysis. In McKinlay, A. & Smith, C. (Eds.), *Creative Labour: Working in the Creative Industries*. (pp. 3-28). New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Smith, D., Comunian, R. & Taylor, C. (2008). Universities in the cultural economy: Bridging innovation in arts and humanities and the creative industries. Paper presented at the International Conference on Cultural Policy, Istanbul. Referenced in Comunian, R., Taylor, C. & Smith, D. (2013). The Role of Universities in the Regional Creative Economies of the UK: Hidden Protagonists and the Challenge of Knowledge Transfer. *European Planning Studies*, 1-21. doi:10.1080/09654313.2013.790589
- Smith Conway, K. & Kimmel, J. (1998). Male Labour Supply Estimates and the Decision to Moonlight. *Labour Economics*, 5 (2), 136-166. doi: 10.1016/S0927-5371(97)00023-7

- Snow, Z. (2015, October 1). Heather Nolan of Lady Brett Ashley speaks on new album. *The Muse*. p. 6.
- Sosniak, L.A. (1985). Learning to be a concert pianist. In B.S. Bloom (Ed.). *Developing Talent in Young People*. New York, NY: Ballantine.
- Sosniak, L.A. (1990) The tortoise, the hare, and the development of talent. In M.J.A. Howe (Ed.), *Encouraging the Development of Exceptional Skills and Talents*. Leicester, UK: The British Psychological Society
- Spahn, C., Strukely, S. & Lehmann, A. (2004). Health conditions, attitudes toward study, and attitudes toward health at the beginning of university study: Music students in comparison with other student populations. *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, 19 (1), 26-34
- Stebbins, R.A. (1979). *Amateurs: On the Margin Between Work and Leisure*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Stebbins, R.A. (1992). *Amateurs, Professionals, and Serious Leisure*. Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Strangleman, T. & Warren, T. (2008). *Work and Society: Sociological Approaches, Themes and Methods*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Stoddart, M. & Tindall, D. B. (2010). 'We've Also Become Quite Good Friends': Environmentalists, Social Networks and Social Comparison in British Columbia, Canada. *Social Movement Studies*, 9 (3), 253-271. doi: 10.1080/14742837.2010.493658
- Sullivan, S.E. (1999). The changing nature of careers: a review and research agenda. *Journal of Management*, 25 (3), 457-484. doi: 10.1016/S0149-2063(99)00009-4
- Sullivan, S. E., & Arthur, M. B. (2006). The evolution of the boundaryless career concept: Examining physical and psychological mobility. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 69 (1), 19-29. doi: 10.1016/j.jvb.2005.09.001
- Swanson, C. (2008). The Private Studio: The Effective Private Studio Teacher. *Journal of Singing*, 65 (2), 219-223. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/docview/1402783/fulltextPDF?accountid=12378>
- Thom, J., McIntyre, E. & Winters, M. (2005). Noise and Hearing Loss in Musicians. Safety and Health in Arts Production and Entertainment. University of British Columbia Centre for Health and Environment Research.

- Thom, M. (2015). The Suffering of Arts Entrepreneurs: Will Fine Art Students be Educated on How to Become Successfully Self-Employed? *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 3 (1), 64-77. doi:10.11114/jets.v3i1.587
- Thomson, K. (2013). Roles, Revenue, and Responsibilities: The Changing Nature of Being a Working Musician. *Work and Occupations*, 40 (4), 514-525. doi: 10.1177/0730888413504208
- Thompson, P., Jones, M. & Warhurst, C. (2007). From Conception to Consumption: Creativity and the Missing Managerial Link. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 28 (5), 625-640. doi: 10.1002/job.465
- Throsby, D. (1994). A Work-Preference Model of Artist Behaviour. In Peacock, A. & Rizzo, I. (Eds.). *Cultural Economics and Cultural Policies*. (pp. 69-80). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic. doi: 10.1007/978-94-011-1140-9\_6
- Throsby, D. (2001). *Economics and Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge, University Press.
- Throsby, D. (2010). Economic analysis of artists' behaviour: some current issues. *Revue d'économie politique*, 120 (1), 47-56. ISSN: 0373-2630
- Throsby, D. & Hollister, V. (2003). *Don't Give Up Your Day Job: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia*. Division of Economic and Financial Studies, Australia Council for the Arts. Retrieved from [http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/entire\\_document-54325d2a023c8.pdf](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/entire_document-54325d2a023c8.pdf)
- Throsby, D. & Zednik, A. (2011). Multiple job-holding and artistic careers: Some empirical evidence. *Cultural Trends*, 20 (1), 9-24. doi: 10.1080/09548963.2011.540809
- Tolmie, D. (2014). Identifying, analysing and aligning "the dream" with vocational preparation: An investigation into first-year music undergraduate career aspirations and motivations. In G. Carruthers (Ed.), *International Society for Music Education, Proceedings of the 20th International Seminar of the ISME Commission on the Education of the Professional Musician*. pp. 73-84. Retrieved from [http://www98.griffith.edu.au/dspace/bitstream/handle/10072/66259/96931\\_1.pdf?sequence=1](http://www98.griffith.edu.au/dspace/bitstream/handle/10072/66259/96931_1.pdf?sequence=1)
- Towse, R. (2000). Cultural Economics, Copyright and the Cultural Industries. *Society and Economy in Central and Eastern Europe*, 22 (4), 107-134.
- Towse, R. (1993). *Singers in the Marketplace: the Economics of the Singing Profession*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

- Trainor, A.A. & Graue, E. (2014). Evaluating Rigor in Qualitative Methodology and Research Dissemination. *Remedial and Special Education, 35* (5), 267-274.
- Tubre, T. C. and Collins, J. (2000). Jackson and Schuler (1985) Revisited: A Meta-Analysis of the Relationships Between Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict, and Job Performance. *Journal of Management, 26* (1), 155-169. doi: 10.1016/S0149-2063(99)00035-5
- Turley, A. C. (2001). Max Weber and the Sociology of Music. *Sociological Forum, 16* (4), 633-653. doi: 10.1023/A:1012833928688
- Umney, C. (2014). Jazz musicians and the structuring of the labour market in Paris and London. Working Paper WERU8, The Business School, University of Greenwich
- Umney, C. (2016). The labour market for jazz musicians in Paris and London: Formal regulation and informal norms. *Human Relations, 69* (3), 711-729. doi: 10.1177/0018726715596803
- Umney, C., & Kretsos, L. (2014). Creative labour and collective interaction: The working lives of young jazz musicians in London. *Work, Employment and Society, 28* (4), 571–588. doi: 10.1177/0950017013491452
- Umney, C. & Kretsos, L. (2015). “That’s the Experience”: Passion, Work Precarity, and Life Transitions Among London Jazz Musicians. *Work and Occupations, 42* (3), 313-334. doi: 10.1177/0730888415573634
- Urberg, K. A. (1999). Some thoughts about studying the influence of peers on children and adolescents. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 45* (1), 1-12. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/docview/230110135/fulltextPDF?accountid=12378>
- Vaag, J., Giæver, F. & Bjerkeset, O. (2014). Specific Demands and Resources in the Career of the Norwegian Freelance Musician. *Arts & Health, 6* (3), 205-222. doi: 10.1080/17533015.2013.863789
- Van Maanen, John. (1988). *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Van Zijl, A.G.W. & Sloboda, J. (2010). Performers’ experienced emotions in the construction of expressive musical performance: An exploratory investigation. *Psychology of Music, 39* (2), 196-219. doi: 10.1177/0305735610373563

- Vosko, F. L., Zukewich, N & Cranford, C. (2003). Precarious jobs: A new typology of employment. *Perspectives on Labour and Income* (Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 75-001-XIE) 4 (10). October 2003. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/75-001-x2003010-eng.html>
- Vuust, P., Gebauer, L., Hansen, N., Jørgensen, S. R., Møller, A. & Linnet, J. (2010). Personality influences career choice: Sensation seeking in professional musicians. *Music Education Research*, 12 (2), 219-230. doi: 10.1080/14613801003746584
- Waldron, V. (2012). *Communicating Emotions at Work*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Watson, A. & Ward, J. (2013). Creating the right 'vibe': Emotional labour and musical performance in the recording studio. *Environment and Planning A*, 45 (12), 2904-2918. doi: 10.1068/a45619
- Weiss, R. S. (1994). *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Welch, G , Papageorgi, I , Haddon, L., Creech, A., Morton, F., de Bézenac, C., Duffy, C., Potter, J. , Whyton, T. & Himonides, E. (2008). Musical genre and gender as factors in higher education learning in music, *Research Papers in Education*, (23) 2, 203-217, doi: 10.1080/02671520802048752
- Weller, J. F. (2013). How Popular Music Artists Form an Artistic and Professional Identity and Portfolio Career in Emerging Adulthood, Education Doctoral Dissertations in Leadership. Paper 43. University of St. Thomas, Minnesota. Retrieved from [http://ir.stthomas.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1043&context=caps\\_ed\\_lead\\_docdiss](http://ir.stthomas.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1043&context=caps_ed_lead_docdiss)
- Wiggins, J. (2011). Vulnerability and agency in being and becoming a musician. *Music Education Research*, 13 (4), 355-367. doi: 10.1080/14613808.2011.632153
- Willis, P. (1997). Theoretical Confessions and Reflexive Method. In K. Gelder & S. Thornton (Eds.), *The Subcultures Reader*. (pp 246-253). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Wolcott, H. (2001). *Writing Up Qualitative Research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Woody, R.H. (2002). Emotion, Imagery and Metaphor in the Acquisition of Musical Performance Skill, *Music Education Research*, 4 (2), 213-224. doi: 10.1080/1461380022000011920

- Woolfson, C. (2010). Precarious Work, Regulation and Labour Standards in Times of Crisis. TheMES on Migration and Ethnic Studies. Institute for Research on Migration, Ethnicity and Society. Retrieved from <http://liu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:389010/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Zafirovski, M. (2001). *Exchange, Action, and Social Structure: Elements of Economic Sociology*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Zelizer, V. A. (1989). The Social Meaning of Money: "Special Monies." *American Journal of Sociology*. 95 (2), 342-377. doi: 10.1086/229272
- Zelizer, V. A. (1994). *The Social Meaning of Money*. New York, NY: Basic Books,
- Zelizer, V. A. (2004). Circuits of Commerce. In J.C. Alexander, G.T. Marx. & C.L. Williams (Eds.), *Self, Social Structure and Beliefs: Explorations in Sociology*. (pp 122-144). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Retrieved from [https://books.google.ca/books?id=tCOIoAGnz54C&pg=PA122&source=gbs\\_toc\\_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.ca/books?id=tCOIoAGnz54C&pg=PA122&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- Zelizer, V. A. (2011). *Economic Lives: How Culture Shapes the Economy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Zendel, A. (2014). Living the Dream: Precarious Labour in the Live Music Industry. MA Thesis, Department of Geography, University of Toronto. Retrieved from [https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/68834/1/Zendel\\_Adam\\_M\\_201411\\_MA\\_thesis.pdf](https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/68834/1/Zendel_Adam_M_201411_MA_thesis.pdf)
- Zwaan, K., ter Bogt, T.F.M. & Raaijmakers, Q. (2010). Career trajectories of Dutch pop musicians: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 77 (1), 10-20. doi: 10.1016/j.jvb.2010.03.004
- Zwaan, K. & ter Bogt, T F.M. (2009). Research Note: Breaking into the Popular Record Industry An Insider's View on the Career Entry of Pop Musicians. *European Journal of Communication*, 24 (1), 89-101. doi: 10.1177/0267323108098948
- Zwaan, K; ter Bogt, T.F.M. & Raaijmakers, Q. (2009). So you want to be a Rock 'n' Roll star? Career success of pop musicians in the Netherlands. *Poetics*, 37 (3), 250-266. doi: 10.1016/j.poetic.2009.03.004
- Zweigenhaft, R. L. (1993). Accumulation of cultural and social capital: The differing college careers of prep school and public school graduates. *Sociological Spectrum*, 13 (3), 365-376. doi: 10.1080/02732173.1993.9982036

## **Appendix 1: Research Instruments**

### **Appendix 1.a: Call for Research Participants via e-mail, social media and posters**

#### **Musicians Wanted for Research Study**

A groundbreaking research study is underway which seeks to explore the experiences of professional musicians living and working in St. John's. This is a project designed to illuminate the work of musicians in this city based on your experience.

If your main style of music performance is either rock, traditional or classical, and you are interested in being interviewed about your career in music, then I would like to hear from you.

I would like to interview you to understand your experiences as a professional musician in St. John's, from your earliest beginnings, through your past and present experiences, and your future plans and hopes.

If you once were in the music profession but changed careers for any reason, I would like to speak with you too!

Interviews will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes, but may run shorter or longer depending on how much information you wish to divulge. Confidentiality and privacy are guaranteed in that your name and identity will not ever be revealed in the final report nor throughout the research and interview process.

This research is based on your narrative as a musician. Interviews will be conducted by musician David Chafe in his role as a PhD student of the Department of Sociology of the Memorial University of Newfoundland.

If you are interested in participating, please contact David Chafe at your soonest convenience at [dbchafe@gmail.com](mailto:dbchafe@gmail.com) or call 726-6464 to learn more and to hopefully schedule an interview. Sixty participants are being sought across various categories and will be accepted on meeting certain criteria, and then on a first-come, first-serve basis. The deadline for contacting David is July 31st, 2014.

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR:

Chairperson  
Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research  
Memorial University  
Email: [icehr@mun.ca](mailto:icehr@mun.ca)  
Phone: 709-864-2861



## Appendix 1.b – Revised Call for Research Participants based on initial responses

### *Classical Musicians Wanted!*

A groundbreaking research study is underway which seeks to explore the experiences of professional musicians living and working in St. John's. This is a project designed to illuminate the work of musicians in this city based on your experience.

The main genres of music performance being explored are rock, traditional and classical. At this stage, I have nearly received the quota of rock and traditional musicians and now wish to focus my attention on classical musicians who are based in St. John's and whose income either in part or in full is derived from performance. If you are interested in being interviewed about your career in music, then I would appreciate hearing from you.

I would like to interview you to understand your experiences as a professional musician in St. John's, from your earliest beginnings, through your past and present experiences, and your future plans and hopes.

If you once were in the music profession but changed careers for any reason, I would like to speak with you too.

Interviews will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes, but may run shorter or longer depending on how much information you wish to divulge. Confidentiality and privacy are guaranteed in that your name and identity will not ever be revealed in the final report nor throughout the research and interview process. This research is based on your narrative as a musician. Interviews will be conducted by musician David Chafe in his role as a PhD student of the Department of Sociology of the Memorial University of Newfoundland.

If you are interested in participating, please contact David Chafe at your soonest convenience at [dbchafe@gmail.com](mailto:dbchafe@gmail.com) or call 726-6464 to learn more and to hopefully schedule an interview.

Participants are being sought across various categories mainly based on number of years of experience and will be accepted on meeting certain criteria, and then on a first-come, first-serve basis. It would be appreciated if interested participants could contact David by no later than October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014 to schedule an interview at your convenience.

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR:

Chairperson  
Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research  
Memorial University  
Email: [icehr@mun.ca](mailto:icehr@mun.ca)  
Phone: 709-864-2861

## Appendix 1.c: Consent Form

Faculty of Arts  
Department of Sociology  
St. John's, NL, Canada A1C 5S7  
Tel: 709.864.8862 Fax: 709.864.2075

### Informed Consent Form

#### Title:

Becoming a Musician in St. John's, Newfoundland: Narratives of Rock, Traditional and Classical Musicians

#### Researcher:

David Chafe  
PhD Candidate  
Department of Sociology  
Memorial University  
Email: dbchafe@gmail.com  
Phone: 709-726-6464

#### Supervisor:

Dr. Judith Adler  
Associate Professor, Department of Sociology  
Memorial University  
Email: jadler@mun.ca  
Phone: 709-864-2075

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled "*Becoming a Musician in St. John's, Newfoundland: Narratives of Rock, Traditional and Classical Musicians*." This is a unique project examining the career trajectories of sixty musicians based in St. John's. I am respectfully requesting your participation in a research interview which will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes, though possibly longer or shorter depending on how much information you wish to share. As part of the process of obtaining your participation, I ask that you understand all possible benefits and risks to you by way of your participation so that your decision to participate or not is fully informed.

Contained herein is all information relevant to the study and your involvements. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, David Chafe, if you have any questions about the study before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

#### Introduction:

I am a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at Memorial University. In order to present a clearer and accurate understanding of the work of musicians, I am presenting a series of narratives as

told to me by musicians of various experiences whose careers are based in St. John's. A total of sixty musicians at different career stages specializing in the genres of either rock, traditional or classical music will be interviewed to gain insight into their career choice, their experiences so far in their careers and their plans for sustaining their careers in music.

The overriding question to be answered by this research is: How do musicians in St. John's, Newfoundland become committed to music as an occupation, and how does the experience of their work change over time?

As a participant in this research, you will be asked a series of interview questions about your experience as a musician. We will begin with your earliest influences and training, proceed through your past and current experiences in the music profession, and discuss your plans for your future as a musician. I believe this will be the first study of its kind, certainly in Newfoundland and Labrador, whereby so many musicians will be given the opportunity to offer their personal narratives of this particular career path and a career which is arguably among the least understood by non-musicians. The outcome will be a document which will inform prospective and current musicians as well as the ever-evolving sociology of music and sociology of work.

The interview will be conducted by me, David Chafe, a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology of Memorial University. I am a professional musician, classically trained, and working as a performer and private teacher. It is preferable that we meet in person for our discussion, at a place that is comfortable for you, be it in your home or place of work. The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed and will last approximately ninety minutes. I may also ask your permission, in addition to the interview, to observe you in your most common music work environment. This observation will be used only to enhance the interview and to even more clearly define the work of musicians.

You may withdraw from the study at any point without penalty and without providing a reason. If you choose to withdraw from the project, your interview recordings, transcripts, and related data will be removed from the project.

#### **Purpose of This Study:**

Many musicians have given media interviews to promote specific projects and ideas, but few interviews have been given which are thoroughly experiential, with the opportunity to expound on the people and conditions which have influenced musicians both positively and negatively at every point along the career path. The music profession is difficult to define because it is so diverse, complex, intensely personal, and with highly individual experiences. By getting to the heart of those experiences and revealing them in a structured way, the music profession will benefit by way of being presented as a more clearly defined profession, at least based on the experiences of those living and working in St. John's. The result will set a precedent and will serve as the basis for future comparison projects elsewhere and across other genres and factors possibly not considered here as primary.

#### **What you will do in this study:**

I will interview you for a period of approximately 45 to 60 minutes with a series of questions pertaining to your development and work as a performing musician in St. John's. You may respond to these questions in as much or as little detail as you would like and are comfortable.

**Length of time:**

The interview will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes, though there will be considerable flexibility with that time frame depending on the extent of your responses.

**Withdrawal from the Study:**

You may stop the interview at anytime, choose not to answer any of the questions, or withdraw from the study altogether. If you withdraw, there will be no cost or consequence of any kind to you. Any information received from you up to that point will not be used in the study and will be destroyed.

**Possible benefits:**

Research respondents will not receive any direct benefits from their participation in the research.

The information you provide to me will go a long way toward establishing the work of musicians in the sociology of work and occupations, an area of scholarly work which has largely neglected the occupation of music to this point. In addition, the report based on these interviews will inform another academic field, that of musicology, as well as present a detailed, clear impression of the work of musicians in St. John's. This study is something of a precedent and will hopefully serve as the basis of additional future research for the purpose of more completely understanding the occupation of music, particularly music performance.

**Possible risks:**

Some of the interview questions are personal and sensitive in nature. This is necessary because every possible experience of becoming a musician will be explored. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer and you may stop the interview at any time.

**Confidentiality and data storage:**

Interview materials (including digital audio recordings of the interviews and typed interview transcripts) will be kept on a password-protected computer belonging to and accessed only by the researcher, David Chafe. Your name will never appear on the audio file or interview transcript. A separate password protected file will link participant names with identification numbers. Only David Chafe will have access to this file. Once this information is entered, the original interview schedule will be destroyed. Only this identification number will appear on interview transcripts or in data analysis files. Only David Chafe and his PhD Supervisor will have access to the interview data, both of whom will be required to sign confidentiality statements. All hardcopy records of our interview will be kept in my home office in a locked file cabinet to which only I will have access.

Data will be kept for a minimum of five years, as required by Memorial University policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research.

**Anonymity:**

Names and other identifying information will be removed from interview transcripts prior to data analysis. No mannerisms, distinguishing features, or work details will be revealed which would compromise your privacy, confidentiality or identity. If any part of this interview is quoted in the final dissertation, a fictitious first name (and no last name) not resembling your real first name will be used. It is assumed that many participants will have audiences and colleagues who might be able to identify them even in the absence of proper names. Therefore, quotations will be edited to remove details that could be used to identify participants.

**Data recording:**

Interview data will be collected using a digital audio recorder. No videos or cameras will be used.

**Member checking:**

David Chafe will provide you with an electronic copy of the edited transcript for your review and approval prior to incorporating your input into the research analysis.

**Reporting of results:**

Quotations from interview transcripts may be used as data in conference papers, journal articles, books, or research reports. Every effort will be made to assure your confidentiality in the reporting of research results. Your name will not be attached to these quotations; descriptors (such as 'musician', or 'songwriter') instead of proper names will be used for all quotations. It is assumed that many participants will have audiences and colleagues who might be able to identify them even in the absence of proper names. Therefore, quotations will be edited to remove details that could be used to identify participants.

**Sharing of results:**

If you would like to receive a summary of the research findings, you will be asked to provide your contact information which will be stored in a password protected electronic file on a password-protected computer. After the data collection and analysis are completed, a summary of results will be sent to you by e-mail or by mail. The research report will describe aggregated results from all participants, rather than individual results.

**Questions:**

You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact:

David Chafe  
PhD Candidate  
Department of Sociology  
Memorial University  
Email: p3dbc@mun.ca  
Phone: 709-726-6464

Dr. Judith Adler - Supervisor  
Associate Professor  
Department of Sociology  
A-4063  
Memorial University  
Email: jadler@mun.ca  
Phone: 709-864-6913

**Ethical concerns:**

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR:

Chairperson  
Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research  
Memorial University  
Email: icehr@mun.ca  
Phone: 709-864-2861

**Consent:**

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that any data collected from you up to the point of your withdrawal will be destroyed.

If you sign this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

**Signatures:**

☐ I have read what this study is about and understood the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

☐ I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation.

I agree to be audio-recorded during the *interview / focus group* ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to the use of quotations. ☐ Yes ☐ No

A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant                      Date

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers.  
I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Principal Investigator                      Date

### **Appendix 1.d: Scripted Interview Questions**

1. When did you start considering music as a career? What kind of support, discouragement or disapproval did you receive? Tell me about the people who have really inspired you to become a musician.
2. Describe a typical day for you. Are there busier times of the year than others? Tell me about those.
3. Tell me about the amount of time you spend each week working in music compared to any other work you do outside of music. What other types of work do you do, and does that have any sort of impact on your music?
4. What sorts of costs are involved in your work? For example, buying or renting equipment, repairs, and so on.
5. What are the best career moments you've had so far?
6. Have there been any major turning points in your career? Tell me about them and how they influenced your work.
7. Was there ever a point where you thought about giving it all up? Has your commitment to music changed in any way over the course of your life?
8. Do you or have you done much work for free? Tell me about those situations and why you work for no money sometimes.
9. Have you ever thought of moving to a bigger city to pursue music? Why have you chosen to stay in St. John's and what are the advantages or disadvantages to being a musician here?
10. Tell me about the different types of people you have to deal with in an average day or week in order to get your music work done.
11. Have you experienced any problem relationships in your work? How have you dealt with those issues?
12. Is there competition in your work? In what ways? How have you been dealing with competition?
13. What does being "professional" mean to you as a musician?
14. Do you feel that being male/female has helped or hurt your career opportunities in any way? How so?
15. How do you feel about the social life that goes along with your occupation? What are your thoughts on the place of drugs and alcohol in a musician's work setting?
16. Do you experience stage fright or have you ever had to deal with physical injury related to your work? How do you cope with injury prevention or health recovery?



17. Has your work affected your family life in any way?
18. As your career develops, what do you hope for? What would satisfy you?
19. (Only for musicians who have been in the profession for many years) Has your work changed in any or many ways over the years? How so?
20. How do you define or measure success? What does or would being “successful” mean to you?
21. Is there anything else you would like to discuss that we haven’t covered here?
22. Now that we have completed the qualitative part of our discussion, I would like to ask you some additional demographic questions.
  - a. What is your gender?
    - i. Male
    - ii. Female
    - iii. Other
    - iv. Prefer not to answer
  - b. What is your age?
    - i. \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii. Prefer not to answer
  - c. What is your ethnicity?
    - i. White/Caucasian
    - ii. First Nations (Aboriginal, Metis)
    - iii. Asian
    - iv. Black/African-Canadian
    - v. Hispanic
    - vi. Other \_\_\_\_\_
    - vii. Prefer not to answer
  - d. What is your marital status?
    - i. Married
    - ii. Common Law
    - iii. Divorced
    - iv. Widowed
    - v. Single (Never Married)
    - vi. Other \_\_\_\_\_
    - vii. Prefer not to answer
  - e. Other than music, what other work do you do? \_\_\_\_\_

- f. What is your highest level of education?
  - i. Not completed high school
  - ii. Completed high school
  - iii. Some college or university
  - iv. Complete college or university degree
  - v. Prefer not to answer
- g. What is your annual income from music performance? \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. Prefer not to answer
- h. What is your annual income from other occupations? \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. Prefer not to answer

## Appendix 2: Summaries of Participant Demographic Data and Interview Responses

Table 1: Demographic Data

	All Subjects	Rock	Traditional	Classical
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Gender				
Male	32 (59.3)	19 (82.6)	7 (70.0)	6 (28.6)
Female	22 (40.7)	4 (17.4)	3 (30.0)	15 (68.2)
Age Mean (STD)	36.4 (12.4)	34.4 (12.9)	38.3 (12.3)	37.4 (12.1)
Age Range	19 to 72	19 to 72	25 to 66	22 to 66
Ethnicity				
Caucasian	54 (100.0)	23 (100.0)	10 (100.0)	21 (100.0)
Marital Status				
Married	16 (29.6)	5 (21.7)	2 (20.0)	9 (42.9)
Common law	8 (14.8)	4 (17.4)	3 (30.0)	1 (4.8)
Divorced	2 (3.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (10.0)	1 (4.8)
Widowed	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Single	28 (51.9)	14 (60.9)	4 (40.0)	10 (47.6)
Other Work				
Performance only	9 (16.7)	1 (4.3)	5 (50.0)	3 (14.3)
Teach music	14 (25.9)	4 (17.4)	3 (30.0)	7 (33.3)
Retail	2 (3.7)	2 (8.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Finance	1 (1.9)	1 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Other entertainment	2 (3.7)	1 (4.3)	1 (10.0)	0 (0.0)
Govt/Civil service	1 (1.9)	1 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Retirement income	1 (1.9)	1 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Other music	4 (7.4)	3 (13.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.8)
Marketing/sales	3 (5.6)	2 (8.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.8)
IT/Communications	3 (5.6)	2 (8.7)	1 (10.0)	0 (0.0)
Other non-music	4 (7.4)	2 (8.7)	0 (0.0)	2 (9.5)
Combination teach/other	10 (18.5)	3 (13.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (33.3)
Education				
Not completed high school	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Completed high school	2 (3.7)	2 (8.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Some college/university	6 (11.1)	4 (17.4)	1 (10.0)	1 (4.8)
Degree college/university	46 (85.2)	17 (73.9)	9 (90.0)	20 (95.2)
Income-Performance				
Less than \$10,000	23 (42.6)	11 (47.8)	2 (20.0)	10 (47.6)
\$10,000 to \$19,999	7 (13.0)	5 (21.7)	1 (10.0)	1 (4.8)
\$20,000 to \$29,999	9 (16.7)	4 (17.4)	2 (20.0)	3 (14.3)
\$30,000 to \$39,999	6 (11.1)	0 (0.0)	4 (40.0)	2 (9.5)
\$40,000 to \$49,999	4 (7.4)	1 (4.3)	1 (10.0)	2 (9.5)
\$50,000 to \$64,999	2 (3.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (9.5)
\$65,000 to \$79,999	1 (1.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.8)
\$80,000 or more	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Does not know	2 (3.7)	2 (8.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Income- Other				
Less than \$10,000	16 (29.6)	4 (17.4)	7 (70.0)	5 (23.8)
\$10,000 to \$19,999	8 (14.8)	5 (21.7)	1 (10.0)	2 (9.5)
\$20,000 to \$29,999	6 (11.1)	3 (13.0)	1 (10.0)	2 (9.5)
\$30,000 to \$39,999	4 (7.4)	1 (4.3)	1 (10.0)	2 (9.5)
\$40,000 to \$49,999	3 (5.6)	1 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	2 (9.5)
\$50,000 to \$64,999	5 (9.3)	3 (13.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (9.5)
\$65,000 to \$79,999	1 (1.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.8)
\$80,000 or more	2 (3.7)	1 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.8)
Does not know	3 (5.6)	2 (8.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.8)
No response	6 (11.1)	3 (13.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (14.3)
Music genre				
Rock	23 (42.6)			
Traditional	10 (18.5)			
Classical	21 (38.9)			
Music genre grouped				
Rock/Traditional	33 (61.1)			
Classical	21 (39.9)			
Genre of training/career				
Classical/Classical	21 (38.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	21 (100.0)
Classical/Non-classical	11 (24.1)	9 (39.1)	2 (20.0)	0 (0.0)
Non-classical/Non-classical	22 (40.7)	14 (60.9)	8 (80.0)	0 (0.0)
Where career started				
St. John's	45 (83.3)	21 (91.3)	9 (90.0)	15 (71.4)
Elsewhere in NL	2 (3.7)	2 (8.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Elsewhere in Canada	6 (11.1)	0 (0.0)	1 (10.0)	5 (23.8)
Other country	1 (1.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.8)
Years in professional music				
Less than 10 years	25 (46.3)	11 (47.8)	3 (30.0)	11 (52.4)
10 years or more	29 (53.7)	12 (52.2)	7 (70.0)	10 (47.6)
Quit music				
No	45 (83.3)	18 (78.3)	9 (90.0)	18 (85.7)
Yes	9 (16.7)	5 (21.7)	1 (10.0)	3 (14.3)
Interview location				
Participant's workplace/home	21 (38.9)	11 (47.8)	1 (10.0)	9 (42.9)
Interviewer's workplace/home	6 (11.1)	1 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	5 (23.8)
Public	27 (50.0)	11 (47.8)	9 (90.0)	7 (33.3)

Table 2: Participant Interview Responses

	All Subjects	Rock	Traditional	Classical
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Age of earliest recollection				
Less than 9 years	37 (68.5)	12 (52.2)	7 (70.0)	18 (85.7)
9 to 12 years	6 (11.1)	3 (13.0)	1 (10.0)	2 (9.5)
13 to 18 years	5 (9.3)	4 (17.4)	1 (10.0)	0 (0.0)
19 years or older	2 (3.7)	1 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.8)
Unknown	4 (7.4)	3 (13.0)	1 (10.0)	0 (0.0)
Age of career choice in music				
Always knew	24 (44.4)	14 (16.9)	5 (50.0)	5 (23.8)
Junior high	7 (13.0)	1 (4.3)	1 (10.0)	5 (23.8)
Senior high	11 (20.4)	6 (26.1)	0 (0.0)	5 (23.8)
Later	12 (22.2)	2 (8.7)	4 (40.0)	6 (28.6)
Career influences				
Parents/family only	27 (50.0)	11 (47.8)	6 (60.0)	10 (47.6)
Teachers only	6 (11.1)	3 (13.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (14.3)
Peers only	5 (9.3)	5 (21.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Parents and teachers	11 (20.4)	1 (4.3)	2 (20.0)	8 (38.1)
Teachers and peers	1 (1.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (10.0)	0 (0.0)
Parents and peers	1 (1.9)	1 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
None	3 (5.6)	2 (8.7)	1 (10.0)	0 (0.0)
Major career turning points				
No	12 (22.2)	6 (26.1)	2 (20.0)	4 (19.0)
Yes	42 (77.8)	17 (73.9)	8 (80.0)	17 (81.0)
Considered quitting music				
No	18 (33.3)	7 (30.4)	5 (50.0)	6 (28.6)
Yes	36 (66.7)	16 (69.6)	5 (50.0)	15 (71.4)
Worked for free				
No	4 (7.4)	3 (13.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.8)
Yes	50 (92.6)	20 (87.0)	10 (100.0)	20 (95.2)
Considered move to other city				
No	19 (35.2)	8 (34.8)	5 (50.0)	6 (28.6)
Yes	35 (64.8)	15 (65.2)	5 (50.0)	15 (71.4)
Problem music relationships				
No	12 (22.2)	5 (21.7)	2 (20.0)	5 (23.8)
Yes	42 (77.8)	18 (78.3)	8 (80.0)	16 (76.2)
Competition				
No	13 (24.1)	6 (26.1)	3 (30.0)	4 (19.0)
Yes	41 (75.9)	17 (73.9)	7 (70.0)	17 (81.0)
Your gender advantaged				
Advantaged	12 (22.2)	4 (17.4)	3 (30.0)	5 (23.8)
Disadvantaged	7 (13.0)	1 (4.3)	2 (20.0)	4 (19.0)
Both	10 (18.5)	5 (21.7)	1 (10.0)	4 (19.0)
advantaged/disadvantaged				
No opinion/comment	25 (46.3)	13 (56.5)	4 (40.0)	8 (38.1)

Opposite gender advantaged				
Advantaged	8 (14.8)	1 (4.3)	3 (30.0)	4 (19.0)
Disadvantaged	7 (13.0)	3 (13.0)	2 (20.0)	2 (9.5)
Both	10 (18.5)	5 (21.7)	2 (20.0)	3 (14.3)
advantaged/disadvantaged				
No opinion/comment	29 (53.7)	14 (68.9)	3 (30.0)	12 (57.1)
Stage fright				
No	18 (33.3)	8 (34.3)	4 (40.0)	6 (28.6)
Yes	36 (66.7)	15 (65.2)	6 (60.0)	15 (71.4)
Physical problems				
No	36 (66.7)	18 (78.3)	8 (80.0)	10 (47.6)
Yes	18 (33.3)	5 (21.7)	2 (20.0)	11 (52.4)
Work affected family life				
No	11 (20.4)	5 (21.7)	3 (30.0)	3 (14.3)
Yes	43 (79.6)	18 (78.3)	7 (70.0)	18 (85.7)

Canadian Federation of Musicians - Newfoundland and Labrador  
 AFM Local 820  
 59 Duckworth Street, St. John's NL Canada A1C 1E6  
 telephone: 709-722-8005 email: info@cfm820.ca

### SCHEDULE OF MINIMUM FEES for LIVE ENGAGEMENTS (Effective January 1, 2011)

These are **MINIMUM** rates. (Musicians may always be paid more.) Pension (10%) is to be calculated based on these rates and paid in addition to scale by the employer. Local work dues (3% of scale) will be collected from the leader or solo musician based on scale rates as shown here. These are not broadcast rates. For broadcast rates please call the Local or consult the CBC contract.

ENGAGEMENT TYPE	DESCRIPTION	LEADER	PLAYER	LENGTH	ADDITIONAL NOTES
<b>Casual</b>	Clubs, lounges, cafés, restaurants, piano bars, with/without dance floor	\$150	\$100	Up to 3 hours	For each additional half-hour, add \$25 per player and \$37.50 for leader
<b>Private</b>	Private parties, receptions or social functions	\$150	\$100	Up to 3 hours	For each additional half-hour, add \$30 per player and \$45 for leader
<b>Stage</b>	Musical theatre, comedy, dinner theatre, review, light opera, variety shows, parade floats, Broadway shows	\$187	\$125	Up to 3 hours	Per additional hour, add \$30 per player/\$45 per leader  Rehearsals - \$70 for rehearsal up to 2 hrs, then \$17.50 per half-hour
<b>Major Concert</b> (indoor or outdoor - NOT symphonic or classical)	Mile One, St. John's Arts & Culture Centre, Holy Heart, any indoor or outdoor concerts for 1000 people or more	\$300	\$200	Up to 3 hours	For each additional half-hour, add \$50 per player  Rehearsal fees \$50 per hour, up to 2 hour rehearsal, then \$25 per half-hour
<b>Minor Concert</b> (indoor or outdoor - NOT symphonic or classical)	RCA Hall, DF Cook Recital Hall, Petro Canada Hall, church halls, community centres, local festivals	\$225	\$150	Up to 3 hours	For each additional half-hour, add \$35 per player  Rehearsal fees - \$50 per hour, up to 2 hour rehearsal, then \$25 per half-hour

<b>Chamber Music Concert/Recital</b>	Chamber Music Concert, MUN recitals, etc.	\$300 Conductor or Concert master \$225 Sectional Leader	\$150 Member	Up to 2 hours	For each additional hour, add \$35 per player  Rehearsal fees - \$40 per hour up to 2 hour rehearsal then \$20 per half-hour
<b>Symphonic</b> (Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonia and visiting orchestras)	NSO and NSO Sinfonia and visiting orchestras	\$100 Concert master  \$50 Principal player	\$40 Core player  \$25 Student	Up to 3 hours	Rehearsal fees to be determined by local agreement
<b>Educational</b> (Concerts and Workshops)	Public or private school classroom or gym	\$150	\$100	Up to 2 hours per session	For each additional hour for a group or class add \$30 per player