VIOLIN PERFORMANCE TRAINING AT COLLEGIATE SCHOOLS OF MUSIC AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE PERFORMANCE PROFESSIONS: A CRITIQUE AND RECOMMENDATION

D.M.A. Document

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Musical Arts in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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2003

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ABSTRACT

The Bachelors of Music degree has traditionally included a strong liberal arts emphasis in curriculum structure and an emphasis on solo performance skills and repertoire in the applied studio. Professions in music performance are highly competitive (even the very best schools can only claim that 15% of their graduates earn their living at performance) and therefore highly specialized. Solo careers are extremely rare, while careers in chamber music and orchestra playing are more attainable. This would not be the first time it has been pointed out that music academia does not necessarily provide strong training in skills which are vocationally relevant to its future graduates. In order to address the broad topic of college music curriculum structure and the music performing professions, this document focuses on violin pedagogy in undergraduate programs, specifically the Bachelors of Music (BM) degree, and the performance career specialties of solo, chamber and orchestra. Areas of critique include assumptions of academia about the nature of its responsibility for student’s futures, relevance of teaching strategies to the job market, the employability of the well-rounded scholar, the lack of vocational counseling resources and other such issues. In the past ten years, sincere attempts at reforming college programs have taken place at such schools as the Manhattan School of Music, Eastman School of Music, the Cleveland Institute of Music, the University of Colorado and others. Taking these factors into consideration, the
author offers a proposal for undergraduate violin instruction which incorporates vocational education and counseling, a career decision after two years and specialized training for the remainder, as well as a vocational minor to serve as a back-up plan. It is hoped that this document will promote healthy discussion about the programs of collegiate schools of music in their complex task of training well rounded students as well as employable ones.
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The origins of this document may be found in the author’s personal experience of college music education and transition to the professional world of music. After completing a graduate degree from one of the countries leading conservatories, it was a shock to be jobless and having to either give up the dream of being a musician or find creative means to make do with minimal resources. After deciding to continue in music, this process included free-lancing, orchestra auditions, jobs outside of music and now more schooling. In spite of what would be identified by some as failure, this journey has nevertheless been very educational about the processes of education and vocation.

Personal experience was strengthened by observation and conversation with other musicians who shared similar experiences. Furthermore, the author’s work at The Ohio State University has sought to substantiate these views by various means of research - including interviews, surveys and reading documents on the subject. In order to reduce the understandably large scope of this topic, the emphasis has been placed on the Bachelors of Music Degree program and the specific training and careers relevant to violinists, though many implications are broader.
In order to reach the point of making a generalization about the process, one must ask a series of questions which sound like a catechism:

*What is the nature of collegiate schools of music?*

To teach potential music teachers and performers the glory of art music from many vantage points, including history, theory and the learning of at least one primary instrument. The emphasis is on the development of a rich interior life of music and culture, whether the student ever makes a living from this training or not. These ideals are accomplished through the apprentice relationship with the instrumental teacher, classes in a broad array of subjects and participation in various ensembles.

*What is the nature of the music profession?*

The performing roles that may provide a living wage are soloist, chamber musician or orchestral musician. Attaining the rank of soloist is considered the ultimate success, followed by chamber music and orchestra music. Teaching is a common element of the performer’s career mixture, but full-time teaching has often been looked down upon by performers as a fall-back position. Jobs are extremely difficult to come by and, though there are positions which pay comfortable salaries, most pay significantly lower in comparison to corresponding levels of achievement in other professions.

Considering the generalist leanings prevalent in music schools and the extreme vocational risk of pursuing a career in music performance, one can begin to see the potential for a schism. Factoring in the simple math of great numbers of college music students joining the work force each year against the paucity of jobs opening in the field, one begins to see an even wider fissure. Some questions worth asking are:
What percentage of BM graduates typically succeed as performers with the current method of training?
Is this percentage acceptable to institutions, the music industry and students?
What happens to the students who fail after graduation?
Who bears the responsibility for this failure?
Are there options to the current method of training which could decrease the level of unemployment?

The purpose of this document is to answer these questions in detail, with a working theory as follows:

Collegiate violin pedagogy is built upon traditions of the past, some of which fail to adequately prepare students for the world outside of the Academy. In order to best serve the students of the 21st Century, it would be wise to evaluate both the current mode of training as well as the demands of the performing professions. As a result, healthy debate may ensue, which will assist the Academy in refining its dual role as teacher of scholars and professionals.

The remainder of this document will present the work already done on this general topic, evidence of the nature of music schools and music professions, a critique of their juxtaposition, a review of new developments in this area, and a proposal for how schools could more effectively serve their students.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly analyses of the relevance and effectiveness of collegiate music schools and anecdotal writings on the nature of musical professions are abundantly available, while other topics (such as advice to prospective musicians, analysis of the musical temperament and manuals on teaching the violin) have been treated in print to a lesser degree. What is lacking in this area is a document that deals with the specifics of college undergraduate violin pedagogy and careers in solo, chamber music and orchestras while maintaining a perspective of the broader topics of classical music performance and collegiate music education.

The existing document which most closely resembles this work is the dissertation of Staci Scalfari (1999), *The Bachelor of Music Degree in Performance: An Analysis of Degree Purpose, Curriculum Structure, and Practicality for Orchestral Instrumentalists in the Classical Field*. This work includes a review of the history of undergraduate degrees in music, a summary of the Bachelors Degree in Performance curriculum and a presentation of performance opportunities for players of orchestral instruments. The conclusion of the document reads, “in addition to accepting too many underqualified performance majors, most BMP programs do not provide adequate and thorough
preparation for the professional world of performing” (Scalfari, 1999, p. 177). Listed among the recommendations is the comment “more research is needed in artist specialties…e.g., freelancing, performing as a soloist, chamber music performance, and orchestral performance” (Scalfari, 1999, p. 178). The present document attempts to follow this thread in more detail, as well as maintaining a more specific focus on violin performance and including a proposed model which reflects the conclusions of the document.

Ingrid Tsung (1991) authored the dissertation *Level of Job Satisfaction as Identified by Music Performance Graduates*, which also bears resemblance to this work. The stated purpose was “to provide information about the job satisfaction of music performance graduates…whose careers had not yet developed into a full-time, under-contract position either as solo or orchestral performers. This study also provided information about the relationship between education and performance training, and how it prepared music performance graduates for career options” (Tsung, 1991, p. 14). The methodology of the dissertation was a survey of 165 part-time musicians from music schools in the New York City metropolitan area. It was concluded that music performance graduates were satisfied with their work life and would choose their current path again, if given a chance to do it over again. In contrast, “respondents discourage future students from studying music performance” (Tsung, 1991, p. 83) and the statistics of respondents’ satisfaction with their formal education/performance training and career options were very mixed, with the majority only “fairly well” (the middle of five options on the scale) satisfied with the training they received. Implications listed in this
document include “future music performance majors need to be advised on the reality of the music business and how to prepare for it” (Tsung, 1991, p. 87) through the development of career counseling programs, teaching of practical skills for the job market and equipping for alternative careers other than music. Tsung’s document is both more narrow (part-time professionals, including neither full-time performers nor those with music degrees not presently working in the music field) and more general (all music school graduates) than that which is being dealt with in this document. One relevant recommendation was to “examine different instrument groups of performance graduates…” (Tsung, 1991, p. 90) which is largely the aim of the present document.

Four dissertations explored elements of the development of orchestral musicians. Lawrence Cummings (1969) wrote *The Vocational Development of the Symphony Musician*, which utilized printed material, interviews and questionnaires to draw conclusions about the topic. A sample of the conclusions drawn from this work include the importance of orchestra experience and having connections in getting work; the relatively low pay, job insecurity and necessity of additional work to meet financial obligations; the necessity of extra-musical personal characteristics and skills in finding satisfaction in the orchestra; and the importance of vocational guidance in making a career decision. Karen Kleeh-Tolley (1989) composed *An Investigation Into Aspects of Becoming a Professional Performing Artist: The Case of Symphony Musicians and Ballet Dancers*, in which she examines elements of career choice for orchestral musicians. Attention is paid to family dynamics that effect career choice as well as retrospective evaluation of music graduates obtained through a survey. Statistics of
interest include 82.8% who would make the same decisions, given what they know now, versus 9.4% who would have definitely chosen a different career path. Of the reasons cited for choosing an orchestral career, the leader was the love of the art at 55.5%, with the sentiment that it was simply a natural progression at 23.8%. Factors in the career decision for orchestral musicians was also a topic in Influences of Selected Family Background, Training, and Career Preparation Factors on the Career Development of Symphony Orchestra Musicians: A Pilot Study by Quentin Marty (1982). Using a pair of questionnaires, Marty also explored a secondary topic regarding college-level performance training. The conclusions from the study include the suggestion that “college curricular programs be re-examined, with the intentions of better preparing students for the very practical aspects of an orchestral career and alerting them to all possible career options” and “perhaps an even more important consideration than the curriculum is the role of the college studio teacher…(who) should have insight into the many aspects of a career in performance, and thus should responsibly try to satisfy the student’s educational needs as he develops his career as a successful orchestral performer” (Marty, 1982, p. 80-81). The dissertation of James Dumm (1978) proposes to help the symphony violinist prepare for the profession by augmenting the student’s etude work with orchestral excerpts. Entitled Orchestra-Repertoire Studies for Violin, the document attempts to resolve the issue of what is “the proper training of violinists for orchestral playing within the framework of the traditional studio curriculum” (Dumm, 1978, p. xi). Dumm reviews the available etude literature and then proposes specific orchestral excerpts which closely correspond to the etudes in technical demands.
The chamber music version of Dumm’s document is *A Compendium of Chamber Music Excerpts (1750-1890) Selected and Organized Pedagogically for the Violin According to Technical Requirements* by Lynn Ledbetter (1984). The list of 401 excerpts are organized by technique under the headings of Bowing Patterns and Techniques, Left Hand Technical Requirements, and Special Technical Effects. Ledbetter remarks “Just as…the greater availability of jobs exclusively in the orchestral area produced an increased demand for volumes of orchestral excerpts, a similar phenomenon may result in a need for chamber music excerpts” (Ledbetter, 1984, p. 3).

Three dissertations follow a path similar to those of Marty and Kleeh-Tolley in exploring aspects of career choice among musicians. Most prominent is the work of Julie Nagel (1987), entitled *An Examination of Commitment to Careers in Music: Implications for Alienation From Vocational Choice*. The document provides extensive psychological material on the complexities of career choice for musicians, including the necessity of a decision in what would otherwise be viewed as a premature developmental stage. One implication of Nagel’s efforts to blend vocational and personality research includes the assertion that “the function of a college curriculum should be examined” (Nagel, 1987, p. 191). Michael Doubek (2001) also examines elements of career choice in his dissertation *Career Awareness of Accomplished Classical Musicians in Positions of Higher Education*, though his emphasis is more in terms of the collegiate curriculum preparing teachers rather than performers. Doubek concludes that “many teachers are trained in performance during their formal studies, (but) they eventually become music educators quite serendipitously,” a reality he suggests “is not a deficiency of the
individual, but rather a deficit in the curriculum” (Doubek, 2001, p. xii). Mary Land (1979) addresses some of the same issues as a secondary aim in her dissertation The Role of Counseling in the Career Development of Musician’s - A Case Study. While the emphasis is on the students’ development in relation to their involvement (or lack of involvement) in psychiatric counseling on campus, Land compares vocation-related topics such as factors in career choice, levels of career commitment and satisfaction, and levels of continued involvement and income from ventures in music. The study focused on former students of the Manhattan School of Music and, among the conclusions, Land writes “these findings suggest that music students experienced many problems related to their career choice and training in a ‘high risk’ profession, where few can expect to achieve outstanding success and recognition” (Land, 1979, p. 148).

In addition to dissertations on related topics, there are many books, conference proceedings, and articles from periodicals that are relevant to this discussion and will be referred to throughout this document and listed among the references. To cite a few examples, the American Music Teacher published a pair of articles offering two different perspectives on the relevance of the Bachelors Degree in Music Performance. Steve Roberson strongly criticized the status quo, saying “The BM performance degree is an anachronism, and the conservatory has been rendered a preservatory populated by the hopeful and the hopeless” (Roberson, 1994, p. 13), while Gregory Pepetone countered his argument, saying that “the products of today’s degree programs in performance may not be fulltime performers, but they are an indispensable girder in the infrastructure of professional music” (Pepetone, 1995, p. 27). The College Music Symposium published a
similar give-and-take, with George Houle offering a lengthy list of suggestions for consideration in college music departments - including the conclusion that “the performer faces a number of opportunities and difficulties in pursuing his occupation that the usual education does not anticipate” (Houle, 1974, p. 34) - while Barbara Maris responded many years later with the conclusion that “we are not totally responsible for preparing the professional musicians of the twenty-first century. Our greatest influence as teachers probably will be on those students who do not get doctorates or end up on the stages at Lincoln Center or the Grammy Awards” (Maris, 2000, p. 17). One final sample of a series taking up this debate is the published proceedings from the National Association of Schools of Music 77th Annual Meeting in 2001. John Deal presented The Music Curriculum in 2020: Is It Time For a Major Overhaul?, Kenneth Fuchs presented The School of Music in the Year 2020, and John Schaffer presented Toward 2020: Collaborative Partnering. Deal highlighted a variety of ways in which curriculum tinkering has left that curriculum in a disjointed condition, concluding “we must reassess why and how we do what we do” (Deal, 2002, p. 106); Fuchs reviewed the difficult issues of economic pressure on the academic structure and also weighed in on curricula, saying “what we are really talking about is reimagining undergraduate and graduate curricula” (Fuchs, 2002, p. 112); and Schaffer promoted the idea of schools and professional orchestras collaborating as a response to both economic and academic pressures.
This review of the related literature has been an attempt to present the most compelling sources from a deep pool of relevant dissertations, books and articles. Beyond this, the author is inclined to believe that there may be as many sources in existence as one is willing to continue hunting for. The conclusion from this assortment of resources, however, indicates that the goals of this document take aim at a subject which has been dealt with in a piecemeal fashion, at best, and deserves the full attention of a D.M.A. document.
CHAPTER 3

THE NATURE OF COLLEGIATE TRAINING

In order to address the culture of music performance education, one must first acknowledge the broader issues endemic to academic institutions as a whole. George Rogers summarized the key elements in a concise manner when he wrote “Higher Education in the United States has traditionally encompassed both the idea of the liberal arts and the concept of professional education aimed at preparing individuals for a specific vocation. These somewhat incompatible ideas coexist in many universities in surprising harmony” (Rogers, 1988, p. 106). The history of this educational dichotomy is well documented by Scalfari, who traces the roots of the Bachelor of Arts degree in the United States, which was “a nonvocational degree, its purpose being to provide students with a broad, liberally-oriented education” (Scalfari, 1999, p. 30). More detailed performance training was thought to belong in the domain of the Conservatory of Music, though such institutions were scarce until midway through the 20th Century. Scalfari and Tsung also review the development of varied degree programs, including the BA, BS and BME.

A sampling of the arithmetic of music schools finds that nearly 12,000 music degrees were awarded by member institutions of the National Association of Schools of
Music in a one-year period in 1984-85, 2,100 of which were performance degrees earned by graduates who play orchestral instruments (Rogers, 1988). Ten years later, statistics compiled by a different source from the same member institutions totaled 82,795 music degrees (the number of performance degrees were not included) awarded from 535 schools (Beeching, 1996).

The components of the BM degree in violin performance include one-on-one work with a master violinist, participation in performing ensembles, core music courses in theory and history, and general courses in the liberal arts. These are the components which will be examined below.

3.1 The Applied Studio

In 1996, Beeching summarized what remains the core element of collegiate violin education, “Conservatories and music schools still use the nineteenth-century model - students are apprenticed by master teachers in whose hands they place their future” (Beeching, 1996, p. 18). The reputation of this teacher is one of the primary factors for a student choosing a given school and thereafter this teacher serves as violin tutor, career model and academic adviser. Manturzewska (1990) reported that “an important factor in the optimal artistic and professional development…is the personality, musical competence, and personal culture of the teacher” and “this relationship is paramount for the entire future career” (Manturzewska, 1990, p. 134). The forum for this relationship is the weekly, one-on-one lesson, in some schools augmented by periodic studio classes in which all the students of the teacher convene to play for one another and address a variety of issues determined by the teacher.
The most fundamental task of the violin teacher is the teaching of skills related to
playing the instrument. At their most basic level, these include the mechanics of the left
hand, right hand and the remainder of the body. Each of these involve extremely intricate
physical movements which warrant specific attention, yet they must also be coordinated
into a cohesive whole.

Ivan Galamian (1962), perhaps the greatest violin pedagogue of the 20th century,
committed the majority of his *Principles of Violin Playing & Teaching* to the mechanics
of the left and right hands. The mere listing of the skills in the table of contents is
enough to suggest the complexity of the task of teaching and learning to play the violin:

*The Left Hand*
- Body and instrument posture; holding the instrument; left arm; wrist; hand;
fingers and thumbs. Movements of the left hand: vertical movement of the
fingers; horizontal movement of the fingers; crossing of strings; sliding motion of
fingers and hand; vibrato movements. Intonation. Timing. Special technical
problems: shifting; double stops; trills; left hand pizzicato; harmonics; chromatic
glissando. Fingerings. Vibrato: types of vibrato; study of the vibrato; special
problems in the vibrato.

*The Right Hand*
- Fundamentals: the system of springs; holding the bow; the physical motions;
drawing the straight bow stroke. Tone production: the three main factors - speed,
pressure, sounding point; the slightly slanted stroke; character and color of the
tone and various styles of tone production; faulty tone production. Bowing
patterns: legato, détaché, fouetté or whipped; martelé; collé; spiccato; sautillé;
staccato; flying staccato and flying spiccato; ricochet. Special bowing problems:
bow attack; change of bow; alternating fast and slow bows; harmonics; chords.

With such a comprehensive task of mastering these techniques and then
coordinating them, the remainder of the body may sometimes receive less attention. On a
basic level, the alignment of feet, hips, shoulders and head are addressed as well as
physical motions which assist, rather than hinder, the freedom of the student to perform
on the instrument. Beyond this, there have emerged methods, such as the Alexander
Technique and the Feldenkrais Method, which assist musicians in overcoming physical
obstacles to effective performance. However such methods are primarily learned outside
of the studio.

The vehicles for applying and coordinating these technical skills are traditionally
scales and etudes. The leading scale books were developed by Galamian and Carl
Flesch. Etudes fall into two general categories, those which are highly repetitious
exercises of specific techniques (i.e. Sevcik, Schradieck, Dounis) and those which
emphasize a given technique in the context of a more musical excerpt (i.e. Rode,
Gavinies, Wieniawski). While every violinist is expected to be rooted in these staples,
the use of them in advanced collegiate study varies. In one study (Reimer, 2003a),
twenty-four violin faculty rated etudes as fourth and scales as sixth in frequency of use in
their lessons. Nevertheless, both were in the range of the “Often Used” category and
some teachers further added that they left scale and etude study to be administered by
their teaching assistants.

The purpose of all this technical study is to apply it in making music, so the
remainder of the lesson is devoted to performance repertoire. It is a significant aspect of
a violinist’s training that this material is almost exclusively solo repertoire. In the same
study as cited above (Reimer, 2003a), the leading form of music chosen by faculty for
study was concerti for violin and orchestra, followed closely by the unaccompanied Bach
Sonatas and Partitas. Ranking third, fifth and seventh in the study were Sonatas for
violin and piano, short encore pieces and works from the contemporary period,
respectively. Of significantly lesser frequency in lessons was the study of orchestral and chamber music parts, which were usually left to the initiative of the student. The purpose of studying this material is not only to develop the skills of violin playing, but to develop the subtleties of the techniques into the making of art. In this realm come the concepts of phrasing, dynamics, rubato, standard performance practice, and all manner of interpretive elements. In most schools of music, the student’s development is measured by juries (somewhat informal auditions played before the applied faculty each term) and ultimately by a solo recital, of which most schools require either one or two. To summarize, the traditional model of lesson study is that the solo repertoire is the most relevant material to the development of a high level of violin playing. As one teacher, who wished to remain anonymous, put it, “If you can play a Tchaikovsky Concerto well, then you can sit down and play a Tchaikovsky string quartet or a Tchaikovsky Symphony without any problem…”

“The teacher-master…does not only concentrate on the technical side of the student’s performance, but steers the development of the entire personality” (Manturzewska, 1990, p. 134). In reality, this concept is usually limited to modeling - the teacher’s performance/teaching career is carried out in view of the students and they glean from that model what they can about the music profession. Stephen Shipps presents one of the hindrances to more involved mentoring when he writes “TIME!!! Multiplying out the typical four-year sequence of 28 lessons per year, the teacher has only 28 times 4 or 114 violin lessons to have this young person ready for a job or for graduate school. Can you imagine - just 114 hours of training to transform a talented
student into a professional-level violinist” (Shipps, 1992, p. 55)? The other hindrance is the concern about wrongly discouraging a student from pursuing their dreams, as one teacher said “The teacher should not be the one to say they can’t make it. What if I am wrong? Besides, if someone doesn’t have the talent, they don’t need me to tell them…My job is to encourage them” (Post, 1999, p. 76).

3.2 Ensemble Training

A common element of the music school curriculum is the requirement to participate in a variety of performing venues. These opportunities most closely approximate the environments of the professions which the students hope to attain - concert soloists, chamber music performers and orchestral performers. Other classes may be offered which address the “how to” aspect of these performance situations.

The soloist element is already the primary focus of the student’s lesson with the teacher and receives expression in the required recitals, but most schools also hold concerto competitions. These serve a double purpose, preparing students for possible International Competitions which serve as springboards to solo careers, and awarding the winners with the opportunity to play their concerto with the school orchestra.

Participation in chamber ensembles is required for at least one year by many music schools. The classes are similar to lessons, as the ensembles are coached by one of the faculty on the skills and repertoire of small ensemble playing and may have opportunities to perform in recital. Personnel in a group may be assigned by the faculty or students may coordinate this themselves, they may remain together for only one term or may evolve into a longer-term commitment, and may consist of anywhere from two
members to an octet. One teacher wishing to remain anonymous, speaking of Sonatas as chamber music, said “the chamber music I teach is piano and violin and that’s very, very important…and it’s simpler to do it with one pianist than it is to do it with three other people in a quartet…”

The school orchestra is virtually required for every violinist, during every term of their college career. Rehearsals are often set up on a schedule of three per week, lasting two hours each, with three concerts each term. The educator in orchestral playing is the conductor, with the occasional input of other faculty in sectionals. The other aspect of orchestral playing is the audition procedure for entrance into the profession, so many schools also offer an orchestra repertoire class, where the usual audition excerpts are taught. Occasionally, these may also be supplemented by mock auditions, where the procedures of auditioning may be practiced in addition to the repertoire.

3.3 Musicianship and Liberal Arts Training

Applied lessons on the violin and participation in performing venues are most directly related to the vocational side of the student’s education, but these account for roughly one-third of the credits. The majority of credit hours lie in two other categories - music core and liberal arts courses. These are the subjects which are largely recognized as the signature of the musical scholar.

In a comparison of curriculum data from assorted collegiate websites and the work of Scalfari (1999), it appears that the majority of schools require a music core curriculum of 30 to 35 credit hours. The vast majority of these credits may be found in the disciplines of music theory and music history, though also included may be
conducting, piano, pedagogy, Eurythmics and/or a number of other alternatives. Theory is easily the most extensive requirement, nearly equaling the applied credit requirements by itself in some schools. Within the domain of theory courses fall such topics as composition, analysis, sight-singing, dictation, and ear-training.

A similar number of credit hours are normally required in non-music courses. These may vary a great deal in regard to choice - most schools will require courses in reading, writing and perhaps a foreign language, others will leave this area almost completely to the discretion of the student, while yet others have extensive requirements for what courses will qualify. The Ohio State University, for instance, requires coursework in 1) Writing and Related Skills, 2) Quantitative and Logical Skills, 3) Natural Sciences, 4) Social Science, 5) Arts and Humanities, 6) Diversity Experiences and 7) Foreign Language. These differences in the constitution of the liberal arts curriculum led one researcher to conclude “The curriculum has given way to a marketplace philosophy; it is a supermarket where students are shoppers and professors are merchants of learning” (Diamond, 1998, p. 2-3). The challenge to curriculum planning, according to experts in the field, is “to find the balance that will provide choice while preserving culture, one that will provide exposure to alternative perspectives while avoiding fragmentation” (Stark & Lattuca, 1997, p. 354-355).

An attempt to summarize the non-performing aspects of the students education leaves one with two strikingly different pictures. On the one hand, there is the music core curriculum, which has been described in the following way: “I have recently observed that in many regards we are dealing with a music curriculum from the 1950s - a
curriculum that has changed only minimally in five decades” (Deal, 2002, p. 104). On the other hand is the liberal arts curriculum, which has undergone revision but with the result that “scholars frequently describe the educational experience of our students as disjointed, fractured, and totally unstructured” (Diamond, 1998, p. 2).

The general picture of collegiate violin performance training emerges as a program steeped in tradition, a broad-based liberal arts education and well-rounded musical training combined with the venerable model of apprenticeship to a master teacher for the learning of the craft. This apprenticeship is focused on the skills and repertoire of the soloist, the ideal outcome of the culture. As the 20th century progressed, perhaps the most apparent development was the increase in number of course options and the freedom in choosing electives from among this “supermarket” of options in the liberal arts area, while music requirements remained mostly the same.

While this overview of Academia has primarily been concerned with the views and intent of educators, it would be incomplete without at least one view from the perspective of a student:

“When I attended conservatory, the prevailing attitude toward preparing for a musical career seemed to be that if you practised your solos you’d be fine on graduation day. Playing in the college orchestra was a necessary evil, but one scarcely practised the parts. Chamber music was required and most of us liked it, but the obligatory collaboration with composition majors was considered tedious. Theory, composition and conducting classes were seen as a waste of time. For music history and pedagogy we’d take turns going to class to make notes so we could scrape through the exam. Learning concertos - that was the key to a career” (Owen, 2000, p. 48).
CHAPTER 4

THE NATURE OF VIOLIN PERFORMING PROFESSIONS

On the most basic level, violinists have three performing options - concert soloist, chamber musician or orchestral musician. Scalfari and Joseph Shirk (1996) add freelancer and military band to this list and Elizabeth Dossa (1992) includes early music ensembles, yet one can see how each of these can be incorporated into the list of the “big three” - freelancing as a combination of these categories, military and early music ensembles falling beneath the umbrella of either large or small ensembles. On the other hand, Shirk claims “The performer’s marketplace constitutes no homogeneous grouping that can easily be summarized. The profession is characterized by a wide array of work settings, diverse identities, and paths to career development and enhancement” (Shirk, 1996, p. 74-75). Beeching adds to this description, “Successful musicians are often diversified - the quintessential ‘multipreneurs,’ who have more than one career project or vocation. Musicians typically stretch themselves in many directions, performing and teaching in several venues…” (Beeching, 1996, p. 34). As an example, one anonymous survey participant, when asked to identify their primary performing specialty in addition to their faculty duties, replied “I have soloed with orchestra dozens of times and given numerous solo recitals, have played all manner of chamber music with many fine
musicians and, although I have never solely made a living playing in a professional orchestra, I have been Concertmaster of a number of orchestras (also Principal Violist).” This culture of “music generalist” is common and powerful among violinists, which may explain the lack of research into the nature of specialization.

In her book, Ronda Ormont (2001) presents four realities which performing musicians must face in order to survive in the profession:

Reality #1: Competition is fierce
“Only 1.5 percent of the U.S. labor force is actually employed in artistic work.”

Reality #2: Salaries are low, especially relative to fields that demand similarly high levels of expertise and talent
“For every one artist who makes it big, there are ten more who just manage to make a living and hundreds more who struggle with no financial reward at all.”

Reality #3: Objective standards for evaluating artistic competence don’t exist.
“In the arts, excellence may or may not be rewarded.”

Reality #4: Success is difficult to sustain.
“Even top artists in a field…are frequently unable to utilize high praise and recognition to sustain success” (Ormont, 2001, p. 7-8).

Shirk confirmed this perspective when he said “Statistics clearly indicate that the individual who is seeking a position as a performer in the classical music world faces overwhelming odds against securing a full-time position that pays a living wage” (Shirk, 1996, p. 73). He projects that there would need to be at least 1,832 employment opportunities in one year to handle the music school graduates alone. In addition to those graduates, there is also a greater number of unemployed and underemployed musicians seeking to improve their lot, along with international players. A variety of trends throughout the 20th century have swelled the ranks of quality performers significantly in the United States, including the substantial involvement of women in what was
previously a male-dominated field, the migration of Jews escaping Hitler’s Germany in the 1930’s and 1940’s, the effects of the Suzuki method which dramatically increased the quality and quantity of children learning the violin at a young age, the explosion of Western Classical music in Japanese and other Asian cultures which resulted in many people in those cultures traveling to the United States for music training and remaining to compete for jobs, and the more recent influx of fine performers emigrating from the former Soviet Union after the fall of Communism and subsequent economic hardships.

For those violinists seeking career stability in the areas of solo, chamber or orchestral performance, there are three broad categories worth considering. The initial category is perhaps the most imposing and also the most discussed - how does one break into the field and find success against such formidable odds? Like the academic culture of music schools, there are cultures of jobs as well. These cultures, or job environments, are the subject of the second category, followed by the characteristics of the people who work within those environments.

4.1 Entrance Into Careers

One can scarcely read an article about professions in music performance without encountering dire statistics about the low probability of success. If the mere facts of the situation are not sufficient to induce shock, then the explanations probably will. Why is success so improbable? Because it requires enormous talent and hard work, applied to a highly stressful and exhausting process of career pursuit, only to find out that factors beyond your control play a significant role.
4.1.1 Odds of Success

It may not be possible to provide accurate statistics to determine the odds of success for solo, chamber or orchestral violinists, but using common sense and what data is available, one may paint a picture near enough to the truth to appreciate the difficulties.

The easiest job to get is a chair in the orchestra. Consider the simple math: Bjorneberg and Stearns (1986) reported that there were more than 1,500 orchestras in the United States, employing 2,700 full-time musicians and another 5,000 to 7,000 part-time musicians; ten years later, Beeching (1996) reported that number grew to approximately 6,500 musicians who were employed full-time in American orchestras; assuming that violinists comprise roughly 25% of the orchestra personnel, one figures that 1,625 violinists were fully employed orchestral musicians in 1996. Actual opportunities seem to evaporate, however, as various data is factored into the equation. During a one-year span from 1997 to 1998, less than 209 full-time violin openings were posted in the *International Musician* (Scalfari, 1999). A panel of Chicago Symphony members added “people rarely leave a coveted orchestra chair. Once a specific vacancy is filled, it may remain that way for more than 30 years. ‘Barring a disaster, that position won’t open until the end of your careers’” (Career Forecast, 1989). These precious few openings, compared to the number of violinists in search of work, create the potential for horror stories (though it should be noted that these stories exceed the norm - some openings may draw only twenty or so auditioners), a sampling of which are included below:
*In 1976, Josef Gingold was amazed to report that a single opening in the back of the second violin section of a major American orchestra elicited 35 auditionees who were required to perform from an impressively difficult repertoire list. Gingold concluded, “the person chosen, a splendid fiddler whom I happened to know, was overjoyed at having been selected. Sixty years ago he might have pursued a solo career” (Gingold, 1979, p. 20).

*In 1990, it was reported (Uscher, 1990) that 357 resumes were received for a single section position in the San Francisco Symphony and that the Cleveland Orchestra received 150 applications for a second violin position.

*In 1994, it was reported (Fleming, 1994) that 237 violinists applied for 3 openings in the Pittsburgh Symphony, but none were selected; the same article also mentioned that 348 resumes were submitted for the Principal Second position with the Cincinnati Symphony.

*A 1999 article (Post, 1999) reported that 400 violinists applied for one opening in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra.

If orchestral violinists have it bad, chamber musicians have it worse. The figures are even more difficult to quantify, as Chamber Music America identified over 2,500 independent ensembles and presenting organizations in a 1992 report, but received only a 32% response rate to a subsequent survey (Bury & Procter, 1992). The respondents included 16% string quartets, 10% piano trios and quartets, and 15% duos, leading to a rough estimation of 215 violin positions existing in chamber music. Of those ensembles reporting, however, 92% of the members found it necessary to supplement their income
and fewer than 20% received a “substantial majority” of their income from ensemble activities. Factor this into the previous figure, and one finds only 43 full-time chamber music violin positions in existence. It is of no surprise then, when the following comments are found in print:

*“It is almost impossible to earn a living just playing chamber music concerts” (Owen, 2000, p. 50).

*“Devoted chamber musicians often seem to follow their art form as if it were an unwise love affair” (Dossa, 1992, p. 66).

*A 2001 Chamber Music America study painted a picture of the normal string quartet: “It will cobble together a modest income principally from residencies and local performance fees, with perhaps a bit of touring…Individual members will supplement ensemble income by teaching, subbing, taking commercial work, and relying on the support of a working spouse or partner” (Rubin, 2001, p. 46).

To be a soloist is the most cherished fantasy in the violinist’s universe, the classical music world’s equivalent to rock stars, athletes and politicians. Nearly every violinist, at some time, desires to be the next Heifetz, Perlman or Midori, but the odds of success are minuscule, at best. One teacher remarked that “many students will enjoy some solo playing as part of a mixed professional diet, but very few can survive solo playing alone. And few have any idea of what this implies, or of the very limited market” (Owen, 2000, p. 48). Eileen Cline adds “…sad stories abound of the devastation of young people who go to the ‘right’ schools and study with the ‘right’ teachers, spending years of their lives working almost exclusively toward participation in one or
more major competitions. These students dream of becoming the next to burst onto the concert scene in a blaze of glory that history indicates will never happen again in the magnitude it did for Van Cliburn in 1958” (Cline, 1990b, p. 28). As Josh Bell said, “the reality is that there’s only so much room for so many soloists…You don’t want to discourage people, but when do you say, ‘you’d better cut your losses’” (Dossa, 1992, p. 65). Besides the very small niche for international soloists, there is the uncertain chemistry that leads to success in this area. Bernard Holland wrote “It sounds like a non sequitur…but many high talents do not do well in the professional world, while players with the biggest names, playing on the biggest stages for the biggest audiences are not necessarily the best musicians available” (Holland, 1984, p. 1).

4.1.2 Career Steps

While acknowledging the formidable odds against success in violin performing professions, there remains opportunity - every year there are openings that someone will fill. The next question is “what are the procedures for competing to be that ‘someone?’” The catch-all phrase is “practice,” but there are different procedures for pursuing orchestra, chamber and solo jobs. I conducted a survey (Reimer, 2003b) of 26 performers in the three specialties and 40 influencers of the three performance environments in an attempt to determine a number of career dynamics, including the steps to vocational success.

The specialist in orchestral performing enjoys both the greatest career opportunity and the most clearly defined path to success. The obvious method is to win an audition for an orchestral position, though this is easier said than done when many fine performers
are following the same plan. Orchestral violinists listed elements of training as the next most significant (studying with a reputable teacher and taking an orchestra repertoire class), followed by factors they could not control, summed up under the word “luck.”

The influencers of orchestra careers varied somewhat, suggesting that free-lance work or substituting with orchestras is the second most important step to career success, followed by participation in an orchestra repertoire class. After a slight drop-off, influencers listed the necessity of having a fine instrument as the fourth most important factor, with luck listed sixth. One explanation of the slight discrepancy between performers and influencers may be explained by Mike Levine, who writes “the audition process is in reality a very political one…horror stories…and happen when the powers that be in the orchestra (the conductor, the contractor, or the section leader) know in advance who they want to hire to fill the opening. They can’t just offer this person the job because they’re obliged by union rules to go through with the audition process. So they go through the motions of having the auditions, knowing all along who’s going to win. This kind of a charade is unfortunate…the only positive in this kind of situation is that sometimes the other players who make it to the finals end up getting on the sub list for the orchestra” (Levine, 1997, p. 148-149). In this scenario, the performer has little control over the situation, making luck a significant factor in the process; while influencers may be more inclined to see the benefits of getting on the sub list, which may give them the advantage in a future audition “charade.” Lest a person think a career is secured upon winning an audition, there is also the reality of probation, in which the victor must prove they can also play as part of the team. As one musician put it, “The system of orchestra auditions
is…not a perfect one; many factors, impossible to ascertain at an audition, go into the making of a good orchestral player—his ensemble ability, his sense of rhythm when playing with the whole orchestra, his ability to follow the conductor, his rapport with fellow players, and his sense of dynamics…For these reasons a new player in the Boston Symphony is accepted on a one-year probationary basis, during which time the conductor can judge all of his qualities not immediately apparent at an audition” (Seltzer, 1975, p. 181).

In contrast to the unionized audition process of the orchestral violinist, gaining employment in chamber music is entirely another matter. Chamber music influencers established no clear-cut route for an individual to take, listing luck as the primary factor, closely followed by networking with others to form a new ensemble and auditioning for a vacancy in an established group. The performers switched the top two factors, rating the networking as the most important factor, followed by luck, then a tie between auditioning for an existing group and studying with a reputable teacher. For chamber musicians, success on a personal level and on a group level are both at stake, so the survey also explored the success factors for the group. The same four answers were chosen by performers and influencers, though in slightly different orders. The performers clearly chose the work with a prominent chamber music coach as the most important factor in the group’s success, while the influencers listed it fourth. Tireless promotion of the ensemble was the influencer’s first choice, though the performers listed it third. The other two choices of both groups were the importance of making connections in the music industry and receiving positive reviews from live performances. The aspect of
luck was not presented as an option on the group level, but is an acknowledged reality, according to Kathleen Lenski of the Angeles Quartet, who cited luck on the individual level (“The Quartet dropped out of the sky into my lap”) and the group level (“We hope to be in the right place at the right time for a residency”) (Dossa, 1992, p. 66). How violinists become members of chamber ensembles is a very serendipitous process that may be just as accurately portrayed in stories as in statistics. Susan Freier of the Ives Quartet credits her teacher, Dorothy DeLay, with connecting her to an existing group that had lost a member (Owen, 2000). Quartet legends Arnold Steinhardt (1998) and Abram Loft (2003) committed their stories to print, providing a wealth of information about the process of birthing a chamber music career. Steinhardt parallels his own journey through solo and orchestral careers toward chamber music alongside music relationships formed during his years at the Curtis Institute and the Marlboro Festival, culminating in a foursome that was encouraged to take the plunge by Rudolf Serkin and Alexander Schneider. Loft was on a very different course, studying musicology in pursuit of a college teaching career when three members of the Fine Arts Quartet came calling on the advice of mutual acquaintances to fill a second violin vacancy. Loft had not been doing much playing before joining a reading session with the other three in something of an audition, so he was surprised when he was called to join the group a few days later. Enhancing the mystery of the process, Loft writes “Neither then, nor at any point during the ensuing twenty-five years (you must believe this), did I ask my colleagues why they had chosen me from among those they had tried” (Loft, 2003, p. 33-34).
One might think that the International Competition is for the soloist what an audition is for the orchestral violinist, but according to the survey, this is not the case. Instead, the performers’ top six factors included networking (impressing fellow musicians and making connections in the industry), luck, good reviews for live performances and recordings and having a quality instrument. The same factors were evident from the influencers, with industry connections ranking first, followed by reviews of live performances and a quality instrument, reviews of recordings and luck, and impressing fellow musicians. Janice Papolos reinforces these findings when she wrote “I always thought talent, technique and lucky breaks were the underpinnings of successful careers. However, the more I began to examine the careers of colleagues and friends, the more I was able to trace the provenance of engagements and opportunities to networking systems” (Papolos, 1986, p. 37). On a personal level, Isaac Stern recalled the difficult transition from child prodigy to accepted solo artist in his book My First 79 Years (1999). His story demonstrates the fine line between the factors mentioned in the survey and by Papolos - he benefited greatly from a sponsor who assisted in procuring teachers, opportunities and an instrument, yet it was not due to the child’s networking skills, but the good fortune to be talented and linked up with such a helpful advocate. Stern’s breakthrough was to be his recital debut in New York City (he was already a success in San Francisco at 17 years of age), but poor reviews threw him into crisis, delaying his emergence by nearly two years. After returning to California to further polish his playing, he returned to New York and finally enjoyed the breakthrough he was
seeking. As he wrote, “That second Town Hall appearance was the real beginning of my professional life” (Stern, 1999, p. 29).

4.1.3 Career Requirements

Closely related to career stepping stones are the characteristics necessary for violinists to establish themselves as professionals. For instance, once a musician schedules the audition, what is it that will give them the best chance of emerging victorious? Luck may be a significant factor for soloists and chamber musicians, but what are the characteristics which put candidates in the best possible position to benefit from fortunate circumstances? A more detailed treatment of this topic will ensue later (see Section 4.2.2), though from the perspective of those who have already succeeded in the professions. While the aspiring and established solo and chamber violinists differ hardly at all, the aspiring orchestral musician must prepare in a much different way than the established orchestra performer, due to the soloistic nature of auditions.

The dichotomy of the orchestra audition - a seemingly objective means of choosing new members which, nevertheless, may turn into a charade - also extends to the specific qualities which define the winners of the untainted auditions. Does the committee wish to hear a soloistic audition with aggressive tempos and highly personal interpretations or would they prefer the kind of controlled, accurate playing that would fit well into the orchestra’s violin section? One example of this dilemma is well expressed by a cellist, who remarked “The problem is they are not auditioning your ability to play in an orchestra. Once when auditioning for the San Francisco Symphony, in the finals I was asked to play a passage from Mendelssohn’s Italian Symphony. It was marked
pianissimo. I did my best to play softly, as indicated. Edo de Waart, the conductor, remarked: ‘Can you play it louder? You’ll never hear that in a big hall.’ Yet if someone in a section did play that passage loudly, the person would stick out like a sore thumb” (Uscher, 1990, p. 34). Shirley Fleming, observing teachers at the Manhattan School of Music, heard both sides of the equation as one faculty member told a student “think more soloistically, paint a picture, tell a story” while another teacher critiqued the mock audition of a student by saying “You have a virtuoso style which you try to emphasize. As a juror, that bothered me. I might admire you, but I wouldn’t want you in my section” (Fleming, 1994, p. 26, 27). In spite of this confusion, the fundamental qualities which are required in an audition are relatively clear. The expert in the field, Gingold, explained the mindset of audition committees when he wrote “they are looking for fine tone quality, good intonation, good rhythm, well-articulated technical passages, and intelligent musicianship” (Gingold, 1979, p. 21). Violist Charles Noble wrote of a similar list of basic criteria, including “excellent intonation and rhythm; a rich and powerful sound with the ability to blend into the section sound; a mature sense of musical style; and a full control of technical issues of the left and right hands” (Noble, 1999, p. 700). In addition to the technical/musical side of the audition, the musician must also have a strong enough ego to survive the pressures of the audition trail and to take the inevitable rejection, reflected in a comment by bassist Timothy Cobb, “In this business, you’ve got to be armor-plated” (Fleming, 1994, p. 26). For a more detailed review of audition criteria, one may consult the DMA document of Joan Griffing, who polled concertmasters on many aspects of the audition process.
The requirements for success in chamber music are eclectic and mysterious. On the one hand, it requires an extremely refined technique and musical sense, as Steinhardt recalled on two different occasions: “The quick, light, running notes…came out unevenly. All the concerto playing in the world had not prepared me for this kind of bow stroke. It was a jeweler’s work, the setting of small diamonds in a ring…” (Steinhardt, 1998, p. 92-93) and “a listener hearing us individually would have to conclude that each of us prized suppleness above all; each of us tried to make music that was not like a hard object but more like clay still being sculpted, even like ocean waves moving constantly forward and back” (Steinhardt, 1998, p. 90-91). A very different characteristic is the interpersonal kind, which includes the networking necessary to join an ensemble - “when I was a student I wanted to form a quartet, so I played with a lot of weekend groups. In the summers I attended festivals and told everyone I knew, especially teachers, that I wanted to form a quartet” (Owen, 2000, p. 49) - and the ability to get along with people once the group is formed - “the constant carping, close quarters, lack of personal control, and sheer difficulty of working in an inescapable foursome are good reasons why the large majority of quartet players have ultimately gone on to graze in different pastures” (Steinhardt, 1998, p. 108). Yet another very different quality is creativity in a business sense - “young players need to be as prepared for the logistical and economic realities of making a career - such as the hours they’ll spend coordinating schedules with other musicians, getting themselves and their instruments to performances all around the world, publicizing their activities, and handling their financial accounts- as for the actual moments of onstage performance” (VanClay, 1999, p. 32) - while Loft offered a detailed
account of the business responsibilities of the Fine Arts Quartet, including this
description of the duties of the cellist:

“George Sopkin was also concerned with distribution and sales questions and was
always active…in the vital area of maintaining relations with friends and
supporters of the quartet. George also was active in planning our season’s
programs, keeping in touch with guest artists and our Chicago-area auditorium
administrators, coordinating the several schedules, and making sure that they
meshed with the calendar of the Milwaukee campus (where they had a

In the end, the chamber musician must enjoy the work enough to risk the uneven
schedule and financial status that such a vocation carries. Loft describes his ideal picture
as “one where all members of the group know each other well, have perhaps started the
ensemble together; are compatible personally, technically, and musically; and seem able
to look forward to a long association” (Loft, 2003, p. 189) Steinhardt describes the
fundamental reality philosophically:

“After a lifetime in music…a person is bound to develop powerful convictions.
Note after note, phrase after phrase, the modest decisions one makes, some
seemingly insignificant, slowly gather into something that can be called a
predilection, and finally a fully evolved set of personal laws, a kind of
Constitution of Performance. At each rehearsal, these four conglomerations of
opinion collided…The four of us often fought tenaciously for each note, each
dynamic, each tempo, giving in only reluctantly to the will of the majority…The
definition of a professional string quartet might be ‘a never-ending succession of
unsuccessful attacks on the individual’s ego by an ever-stronger and more

The requirements for success in a solo career are more similar to those of
chamber music than orchestral work. The recipe is simple on one hand, “a career as a
soloist is reserved for the select few who have established themselves as concert artists,
who are exceptionally talented, and who happened to be at the right place at the right
time” (Scalfari, 1999, p. 129). Searching for an explanation of the key characteristics for
a soloist in competition (which carries over to the career in general), Cline writes “the factor common to any success in competitions always has been the display of a high level of competence and achievement. In addition to that, the paying public, along with most jurors, looks for something extraordinary - that elusive quality that makes a star. It is given various labels, all translating to individuality and insight combined with compelling conviction that can move the listener where he or she could not otherwise go” (Cline, 1990a, p. 63). Stern expressed similar ideas, writing “the art of making music is a highly personal affair that involves the performer, the instrument, and the public…to abide by the strict disciplines of music and, accepting those limitations, develop an individual voice; to become perceptive and honest; and above all, to recognize how to convince the listener - not go to the listener, but bring the listener to you - that is the mark of musical artistry” (Stern, 1999, p. 3). Expanding on the concepts of the performer and the audience, Charles Steier writes “if your personal, financial, physical, spiritual, mental, relaxation, practice, study, rehearsal, performance and evaluation skills, techniques, needs or priorities are not mastered, defined, refined and perpetually balanced as your life changes you will not survive” and “the audience is there to establish a personal relationship with you. If the audience is not happy with you, your performance, or the music - in that order - you are lost” (Steier, 1992, p. 23-24). Holland reported on the characteristics necessary for success, concluding that “certainly a great career hangs on great talent, but many of the necessary ingredients for professional success have little to do with playing at all” (Holland, 1984, p. 1) from which he claims ambition, toughness and enterprise are critical factors. Holland quoted ICM manager Marvin Schofer, who
said “Ultimately the public buys personalities - in even the most serious of artists”
(Holland, 1984, p. 19).

4.2 Work Environments

Once violinists succeed at establishing themselves within a performing profession, they must make the transition to daily working within the culture that comes with it. Every job has its rules, norms, chain of command, relationships, compensations, schedules, duties, expectations, humor and, no doubt, much more. That this is also true of the music professions is evidenced by a tongue-in-cheek article from 1969:

“The [New York] Philharmonic is a political group, a complex little city-state that one of its keener internal observers characterizes as ‘a small town.’ Philharmonicsville, N.Y. (pop. 106; principal industry, classical music) is, in fact, the paradigmatic small town, with its gossips and idealists, its clubs and cliques, its precinct captains and its activists, its joiners and its fence-sitters, its cranks and village wits…However, despite its cosmopolitan cast, Philharmonicsville is more nearly homogeneous than any modern town. Like all great orchestras and small towns, it is inbred and sometimes contemptuous of outside opinion…Without anyone’s willing it, an orchestra bends to its common purpose (some would say flatten) all the diverse human types that enter it. There comes to be a recognizable symphony orchestra personality, an orchestra level of talent, an orchestra temperament. Like any walled city, the orchestra demands of its inhabitants submission to authority and unquestioning response to a leader. Not that the demands are invariably met, of course, humans being humans” (Seltzer, 1975, p. 161).

Vocational expert John Holland developed a theory of vocations which include some of the following ideas:

“…the environments in which people live and work can be characterized by their resemblance to six model environments: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional…Each environment is dominated by a given type of personality, and each environment is typified by physical settings posing special problems and opportunities…a congruent or fitting environment is one in which a person’s preferred activities and special competencies are required and
his or her personal disposition and its associated characteristics - a special outlook on the world, role preferences, values, and personal traits - are reinforced” (Holland, 1985, p. 1-11).

There are many aspects to a vocational environment so those dealt with here will be less than totally comprehensive. The goal is to paint an accurate enough picture of the orchestra, chamber and solo environments so as to appreciate their differences.

4.2.1 Compensation and Schedule

When issues of salary and benefits are raised, orchestral musicians are closest to the typical work world. Scalfari compiled financial information from the 1997-1998 season and reported that the average minimum salary for ICSOM orchestras (International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians, the largest budgeted organizations) was $49,551, with the New York Philharmonic the top at $82,180 and the Honolulu Symphony the lowest at $20,800. The corresponding numbers for ROPA orchestras (Regional Orchestra Players Association, smaller budgeted organizations including per-service orchestras) was a minimum average salary of $16,801 (for salaried members, not counting per-service positions), with the Fort Worth Symphony at the top end with $39,152 and the Flint Symphony the lowest at $2,006. Besides financial and musical rewards, orchestral playing tends to have minimal added societal compensation as the section violinists work in relative anonymity as a team of many players who are overshadowed by conductors and soloists.

The “work week” of the orchestral musician resembles that of a college professor more than an office worker. The Scalfari study found the average number of work weeks in a year (for ICSOM orchestras) to be forty-three and the average number of services per
week to be eight (of two and a half hours each). Lest one think that twenty-hour weeks and nine weeks of vacation make this the ultimate “soft job,” it would be wise to consider the intensity of work within a rehearsal or performance and the fact that significant hours of practice are necessary to do the job, though they are not counted as work time. A further time issue would include touring, of which Scalfari reported an average maximum number of days on tour per year was forty-nine.

In 2001, *Chamber Music* magazine presented a study on the business side of chamber ensembles and concluded that the financial aspect of the profession remained discouraging. In a study of 13 ensembles, the net income per player ranged from $9,241 to $176,500, with the majority clustered in the $26,154 to $58,278 range. A previous study by the same organization in 1989 had concluded that “net income per player, even for those in the most successful groups, is shockingly low. Without a residency to provide a safety net, most of the groups could not survive economically” (Rubin, 2001, p. 27). In the most recent study, this last point was again emphasized, as the traditional string quartets (except for the anomaly, the $176,500 group) counted residency income as 46% to 112% of their net income. As for extra-monetary compensation, chamber musicians occupy a much larger proportion of the spotlight, so prestige and other benefits of fame may be part of the rewards of their work, though tempered by the small niche which chamber music occupies in the American entertainment industry.

Chamber musicians, as the most eclectic performers, often have a baffling montage of scheduling issues, as evidenced by this job description of Abram Loft:
“With its appointment to the (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) faculty in
1963, the Fine Arts Quartet had added a new and demanding element to its
workload, and we were all the busier as a result. Over the years, we taught our
several instruments and organized and coached the student chamber music
ensembles. Before the department acquired musicology faculty, I gave one or
another classroom course, and the entire quartet took part in team-taught lectures.
We sat on academic committees, attended departmental and university faculty
meetings, and presented noontime lecture concerts during the year for the general
student body. We also recruited new string students and conducted year-end
juries for string majors. This was in addition to our formal concerts on campus
and the continuation of our concert series in Chicago and its North Shore, our
domestic and foreign touring, and our recording activity” (Loft, 2003, p. 112).

In spite of this voluminous rendition of the quartet’s work life, Loft did not
include the hours of individual practice, ensemble rehearsal time and the
logistical/business duties that the quartet members split among themselves. A similar,
yet different description of duties attributed to the Chicago Chamber Players serves as a
comparison:

“(the group offers) a traditional subscription series of 13 concerts, which they
often follow with discussion sessions and receptions. They play ten Mondays a
year without charge for lunch-time crowds at the Chicago Cultural Center. They
visit two low-income public schools regularly to provide music education. They
play for ailing and aging audiences in such nontraditional venues as the
Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago and homeless shelters. They offer celebrity
narrators at family concerts and provide free tickets to children who could
otherwise not attend. They perform live on WFMT-FM. They commission new
works. They break up into whatever combinations of players are needed. They
take seriously their roles as servants to the public and as activist symbols of
Chicago’s cultural life” (Rubin, 1998, p. 60).

Solo careers, like most chamber music careers, are adventures in self-
employment, so security is at a minimum and pay scales are highly variable and hard to
quantify. Scalfari contacted four of the large management agencies in 1999 and found
that fees per concert could range from $1,500 to beyond $45,000. In addition to concert
fees, the most famous soloists may earn significant fees through recording contracts and may also enhance their income through the soloists version of the residency - an adjunct professorship at one or more music schools. For the superstar(s) of the violin, perhaps a million dollar income is possible, but those qualifying for this distinction would number less than the fingers on one hand, while the rest would earn significantly less. In addition to financial wealth, successful soloists enjoy the fame of their lofty status and may exercise significant influence on society, as evidenced by the humanitarian work of musicians like Yehudi Menuhin and Pablo Casals.

The lifestyle of the soloist is the least stable, as they are part of the “international ‘jet set’ and perform in recitals and concerts dozens of times each year…[which entails] constant travel from one city to another, or from one continent to another…hours of practice in strange hotel rooms, eating in good and bad restaurants…musical interchange with good and not-so-good orchestras and conductors on almost a daily schedule…” (Seltzer, 1989, p. 178-179). Holland noted “the traveling virtuoso’s life is rarely a pleasant one. Some brilliant musicians look at the airports, the motels, the cardboard food and go back to teaching…Soloist’s on the road have their local presenters to please - a job which usually extends well after the concert. Players are expected to go to post-concert parties, eat hors d’oeuvres or cookies (often when they’ve had no dinner)…Some artists keep diaries noting the names of the local sponsors, their children and even their dogs, so that three years later they will have at their fingertips the proper greetings” (Holland, 1984, p. 19). Ellen Highstein concurs, writing “A successful solo…career is maintained not simply by an ability to keep playing well, but by a great tolerance for
conditions that would not be tolerable for many of us. You have to like, or at least not mind, being on the road: living out of suitcases, rarely being home and maintaining a comparatively sketchy family life. You must be able to remain capable of smiling at those who are putting you up, picking you up at terminals, or entertaining you at a pre- or post-concert party, when you’d far rather be watching TV in your hotel room. And you must be able to concentrate and prepare for performance after long airplane flights or dealing with lost luggage. And on and on” (Highstein, 1991, p. 198). Simply put, the soloist tends to live out of the suitcase, traveling each week to a different city where they rehearse with an orchestra a couple of times, perform a couple of times, engage in the additional commitments that have been added to the schedule (teaching a Master Class, attending receptions, giving interviews, performing in other contexts, etc.), and then jump onto the next plane out of town for another destination.

4.2.2 Duties and Skills

The duties of an orchestral violinist, on a very basic level are 1) to attend every rehearsal and concert, arriving early enough prior to the beginning of the service so as to be adequately warmed up for work, 2) to keep one’s skills honed and practice one’s part so that rehearsal can focus on ensemble issues, 3) to always play within the context of the orchestra in general, and the violin section in particular - never drawing attention to oneself, and 4) to accept one’s role within the structure of the orchestra without public contentiousness. Practical suggestions for orchestral playing may be found in the writing of Erica Sharp (1985) and Nancy Whear (1984).
According to those who influence the section violinist’s job environment, the most important skills are accuracy of intonation and rhythm followed by the ability to blend with the section and follow the conductor (Reimer, 2003b). After this are the related skills of quickly assimilating new repertoire and sight-reading. Physical stamina and bravura right hand skills are listed eighth and ninth, but another survey (Reimer, 2001) indicated that orchestra players may require more stamina and bowing skills than either chamber musicians or soloists. Beyond playing skills, relational and personal skills will be dealt with later in this chapter.

As can be expected, the chamber violinist’s duties are more highly varied, but could include 1) to consistently show up in a timely fashion and ready to perform at the mixture of engagements on the group’s schedule, 2) to keep one’s technical skills polished to a high level, yet remaining flexible enough to adjust to the group’s requirements, 3) to have the physical and emotional stamina to handle the stresses of travel, full schedules and performing difficult music in the public spotlight, 4) to perform whichever logistical/organizational duties have been assigned in a timely and effective manner, 5) to remain committed to working through the various personal/relational issues which arise among ensemble members and 6) to promote oneself and the group effectively in the public eye whenever necessary.

Accuracy of intonation, rhythm and blending/following were also the most highly rated skills for chamber musicians by those in their work environment. The varied nuances of tone and the power to project their sound were rated next, followed by the importance of knowing the musical score. In another similarity to orchestra skills,
stamina was listed only eighth by the influencers, but the other survey (Reimer, 2001) rates chamber musicians as a close second to orchestral musicians in this category, with less total program length, but more lengthy sustained passages.

On one hand, the soloist might be able to get by if they simply “play great,” but to be truly successful, one must 1) show up to rehearsals and concerts and play at an extremely high level, both technically and musically, 2) maintain a varied repertoire by memory at all times and be able to accomplish focused practice in distracting environments, 3) maintain an image that keeps the interest of the public, 4) communicate effectively with conductors and other musicians whom one is collaborating with, and 5) have the stamina to deal with the stresses of the road and the constitution to perform while sick, tired or bored.

Intonation and rhythm are also highly valued by the soloist’s environmental influencers, but there are additional qualities which are particularly unique to the soloist’s skill set. The power to project into a large concert hall is rated second, bravura left hand skills is rated fifth and the ability to memorize is rated sixth. In general, the scoring for soloists was higher on all but a few categories in comparison to orchestral and chamber violinists.

4.2.3 Organizational Structure and Relationships

In a sense, the orchestra is like a factory in which the workers do the most important work of creating the product, but sit at the bottom of the management pyramid. At the top of pyramid is the “orchestra’s leadership troika - the board (of directors) chair, the music director (conductor), and the managing director.” According to Richard
Hackman, who conducted a study on symphony orchestras, “A strong board of directors can ensure that an orchestra has the financial wherewithal that makes good playing possible…A strong music director is critical to an orchestra in setting its artistic direction and in its development as a musical ensemble…the job of the managing director (is) to balance these sometimes competing sources of influence…” (Judy, 1996, p. 7). Each of the leadership troika has some form of support staff - the chairperson has the remainder of the board of directors, the music director has the assistant conductor and personnel manager, and the managing director has the administrative support staff. Arbitrating between the administrative wing of the organization and the musicians, to varying degrees, are the union representative, the orchestra committee, the concertmaster and other principal players of the orchestra.

Within this organizational structure, the section violinist is a part of three intense but different relationships. The most dominating is the relationship of performer to conductor. Seymour and Robert Levine deal extensively with this situation in an article on stressors in the orchestra workplace, a sample which is included here:

“Underlying the behavior of conductors and musicians in the orchestra is the myth of the conductor as omniscient father (‘maestro,’ ‘maître’) and the musicians as children (‘players’) who know nothing and require uninterrupted teaching and supervision…the myth makes virtually all communication from musician to conductor impossible…the natural consequence of omniscience is omnipotence…(so) if the conductor has complete control over the work environment, then the musicians have none. This is actually the fundamental structure of the orchestral workplace. During rehearsals or concerts, musicians experience a total lack of control over their environment. They do not control when the music starts, when the music ends, or how the music goes. They don’t even have the authority to leave the stage to attend to personal needs. They are, in essence, rats in a maze, at the whim of the god with a baton” (Levine & Levine, 1996, p. 18-20).
The second authority relationship in the orchestra environment is with the section leader. Sharp, in her practical book on orchestra playing, provides important pointers on this relationship:

“try to watch your principal as much as possible. If he or she is playing at the point, do so also. If he is playing spiccato, don’t play on the string. Sometimes, if you are lost, you can tell where you are by watching your principal - especially after a number of rests. Don’t play if he isn’t playing...It’s the principal’s responsibility to lead the section. If he fails to make an entrance when he should, you won’t be blamed for hesitating also” (Sharp, 1985, p. 34).

Finally, the violinist shares a music stand with another, so there is an inherent relationship which must be maintained. Herbert Kupferberg wrote a colorful description of the demands of this partnership:

“Adjusting to one’s immediate neighbor both musically and personally is essential, since musicians see their stand partners almost as much as their wives, and find them much more inescapable...stand partners often develop musical ideas and interests together. Since they work from the same sheet of music they have to see to it that bowing indications, accents and other markings are clearly distinguishable” (Kupferberg, 1969, p. 200).

If any of these three relationships are difficult for a given violinist, the orchestra experience can become an extremely negative one, especially since there is little to nothing that can be done about them. In order to survive in such an instance, a person must not take the actions of a difficult authority figure personally or must employ people skills to resolve conflicts with the stand partner (or petition to be re-seated).

In direct contrast to the orchestral organization structure, the chamber musician is part of something virtually structure-less. Perhaps this is why Richard Hackman’s (Judy, 1996) research into thirteen professions placed string quartets at the top of ratings regarding general job satisfaction and satisfaction with growth opportunities, while
orchestra musicians were seventh and ninth, behind prison guards, mental health
treatment teams and flight attendants, among others. Steinhardt described it well when
he wrote:

“I was entering a social unit with no boss, no underlings, and certainly no
conductor. What was one to call a group of four men who regarded each other
equally, or as equal as they wanted to be? We had no formal laws or elected
representatives. We had simply voted ourselves into office. This wasn’t a
corporation, either. No legal contract bound us together…There were no leaders
in this group - or were there four leaders? Perhaps we were democracy in its
purest, most ideal form. The four of us had to search out each other’s strengths
and weaknesses to create a working organism that operated in complete freedom
from layers of command” (Steinhardt, 1998, p. 88).

Levine and Levine counter that “Anyone who has worked in a small group
certainly will recognize that the ‘quartet myth’ is false; no group of four individuals is
composed of ‘equals’ in any meaningful sense” (Levine & Levine, 1996, p. 17). Rather
than being forced to decide which party is correct, it would be well to consider that each
is possible in various ways, depending on the unique blend of a given foursome. In
addition to the possibility of hierarchy within the group, there is also a potential
administrative structure to be dealt with (an agent or manager, presenters of events,
academicians if the group has a residency at a school) and a constituency to be satisfied
(presenters and audiences). Papolos adds that “successful ensemble members invariably
say that it’s the person in the group with the warm, immediate personality that logs the
bookings or makes contact with management firms” (Papolos, 1986, p. 38).

The relationships in chamber music work are certainly focused on the members of
the group in an intense way. Papolos developed a course entitled “Can This Marriage Be
Saved: Interpersonal and Organizational Guidelines for Ensembles” and drew some of
the following conclusions: 1) “In 100 percent of the ensembles who rated one person a prima donna, the group fell apart or was forced to part company with that person” and 2) “groups who had members who have no thought to the feelings of others and were not able to join in, share, and exchange, were also destabilizing to the morale and to the playing of the group” (Papolos, 1986, p. 37). For these reasons, it may be claimed that the chamber music business is one of the most interpersonally demanding of any performance vocation, an assertion which countless tales of disastrous ensemble conflicts can well attest.

The soloist’s relational environment and organizational structure is similar to that of the chamber musician, with the significant exception that they do not have partners to share the burdens, ease the loneliness or get into conflict with. This dichotomy is a defining characteristic of the soloist’s workplace - the need to present oneself well to constant waves of unfamiliar conductors, presenters and audiences, without much opportunity for supportive relationships of depth. What they do have are the agents/managers and presenters as administrative support and audiences as their clientele. To a degree, they must obey the former and please the latter in order to remain successful. Emphasizing the need of the soloist to impress, Papolos suggests that success is closely related to “networking systems - people who cared and thought enough of a person to make recommendations and offer help” (Papolos, 1986, p. 37). Bernard Holland confirms this thought when he wrote “word of mouth between conductors counts for much in the business of getting along…If you work well with a conductor in one city, the word tends to spread” (Holland, 1984, p. 19). As for performing collaborations, the
soloist may experience some of the same issues as chamber musicians in regard to communication and conflict management when working with an accompanist, but the length of the collaboration need not be as long-term, thereby reducing somewhat the stress involved.

4.3 Worker Characteristics

In many cultures, including the United States at the outset of the 21st century, people are predominantly type-cast by what they “do” - that being their primary vocational activity. In other words, one’s work environment tends to define one’s identity. This is no less true for musicians, who may chafe at being boxed into a singular identity, yet cannot escape their specialty - Itzhak Perlman the soloist, Eugene Drucker the chamber musician, Glenn Dicterow the orchestra concertmaster. The work of John Holland seeks to determine if this combination of work and identity are a happy fit. His work postulates that a person will be most fulfilled and happy in their work if their personality is congruent with the dominant personality of their work environment. Now that the work environment has been explored in significant detail, it remains to examine what the performers are truly like and whether such a congruence does exist.

4.3.1 Personality

Holland, Papolos and a host of other observers of classical music professions agree that personality plays a major part in the success of performers, yet many musicians are extremely hesitant to explore this topic in greater depth. This may be the explanation for the reason why no data beyond the anecdotal exists to differentiate the orchestra personality from the solo personality and the chamber music personality. As a start, then,
one must review what material has been developed about the personality of musicians, both from the result of studies and anecdotes, from the most general assessments to those more specific.

The general subject of the artistic personality could appropriately begin with John Holland’s definition: “The special heredity and experiences of the Artistic person lead to a preference for ambiguous, free, unsystematized activities that entail the manipulation of physical, verbal, or human materials to create art forms or products and to an aversion to explicit, systematic, and ordered activities” (Holland, 1985, p. 23). Perhaps the most substantive work on the artistic personality has been done, however, by Anthony Kemp, who authored *The Musical Temperament* as well as many other documents on aspects of this topic. Kemp concludes one article by writing “A stable group of primary factors for the performing musician has been shown to exist across the whole age-span and linked with introversion, pathemia and intelligence…they suggest an ability to withdraw into a colourful and imaginative inner mental life, at the same time providing the single-mindedness necessary for the acquisition of technical skills…the paradox of the musician’s personality is that this rigid and inhibited aloofness is invariably linked with the remaining primaries of pathemia, namely sensitivity and imagination” (Kemp, 1981, p. 11-12).

Several researchers applied the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to musicians with varying results. Barbara Henderson (1984) sited a data bank sample of music performers which determined a personality type of ENFP (Extraversion-Intuition-Feeling-Perceiving). Characteristics of an ENFP include:
“Warmly enthusiastic, high-spirited, ingenious, imaginative. Able to do almost anything that interests them. Quick with a solution for any difficulty and ready to help anyone with a problem. Often rely on their ability to improvise instead of preparing in advance. Can usually find compelling reasons for whatever they want” (Myers & McCaulley, 1985, p. 21).

Performing musicians in Arkansas were the subjects of Carolyn Gibbons (1990) doctoral work, which projected a type of INFP (the only difference being Introversion rather than Extraversion):

“Full of enthusiasms and loyalties, but seldom talk of these until they know you well. Care about learning, ideas, language, and independent projects of their own. Tend to undertake too much, then somehow get it done. Friendly, but often too absorbed in what they are doing to be sociable. Little concerned with possessions or physical surroundings” (Myers & McCaulley, 1985, p. 21).

Thomas Wubbenhorst (1994) employed the MBTI with a group of performers including graduate music students at the Yale University School of Music and the Georgia State University School of Music (no string players included). His conclusions found music performers to fall within the ENFJ type (deviating from the others primarily in finding a preference for Judging rather than Perceiving):

“Responsive and responsible. Generally feel real concern for what others think or want, and try to handle things with due regard for the other person’s feelings. Can present a proposal or lead a group discussion with ease and tact. Sociable, popular, sympathetic. Responsiveness to praise and criticism” (Myers & McCaulley, 1985, p. 21)

There is even less research attempted to discern differences between string players in general, or violinists in particular. John Davies conducted interviews with members of a Glasgow, Scotland orchestra about stereotypes of the different sections and noted that the strings scored highest in neuroticism and anxiety, drawing comments from the brass players along the lines of “arrogant, oversensitive and unathletic” (Davies,
Builione and Lipton sought to build a stronger document on this topic, surveying musical high school students in New York state, and came up with similar traits of “feminine, intelligent and introverted” (Builione & Lipton, 1984, p. 39).

With no more specific data available on violinists and their specific performance specialties, I found it necessary to develop a survey which would provide a place from which to start quantifying the differences, if indeed they exist. This survey (Reimer, 2003b) included two different groups for each specialty - performers who work primarily in that particular group and the influencers (see Section 4.1.2) whose viewpoint has much to do with the assumptions made about artistic personalities. For orchestral musicians, the influencers included conductors, concertmasters, personnel managers, orchestra executives and members of audition committees. Chamber music influencers included directors of competitions, jurors of competitions, presenters, managers, critics and representatives of recording companies. Influencers of the solo strata included directors of competitions, jurors of competitions, managers, critics, representatives of recording companies and orchestra conductors. Two different surveys were utilized: the Strong Interest Inventory was administered to the performers (this tool utilizes Holland’s six personality types), and a derivative of Holland’s work (the author’s work using forced choice methods between words representing Holland’s six types) was administered to the influencers.

As a general conclusion, the study revealed a striking dichotomy. The solo, chamber and orchestral performer groups all tested out identically - Artistic-Social-Investigative (ASI), with the Artistic scores significantly higher than the rest. From the
influencers, however, emerged quite a different result. Soloists were perceived as primarily Enterprising, chamber musicians ranked highest in Social, and orchestral musicians ranked highest in Conventional. Several possibilities may explain these dramatic differences, including the fallibility of the author’s version of Holland’s work, the inability of the Strong tool to measure the subtle differences within a specific profession, the limited numbers of survey participants (26 performers and 40 influencers), erroneous stereotypes held by the influencers, or unintended sabotaging of the test by participants who lack familiarity with vocational testing tools. Of great interest, however, are the implications if this test is accurate. In such a case, the conclusion would be that there exists a tremendous incongruence between the personalities of professional violinists and the environments in which they work.

In the orchestra category, the performers indicated the same ASI type as the other specialties, but scored lower than chamber musicians and soloists in all three types. The only item of interest is that the Enterprising quality, which is ranked last by the other two specialties, ranks fourth among orchestral performers and is the only one of the six types in which the orchestral musicians scored higher than the others. From the perspective of the influencers, however, the Artistic personality type was the lowest of the six, with the profile strongly weighted toward Conventional-Social-Realistic. To further highlight this disparity, the Conventional category is the opposite of Artistic on Holland’s hexagonal model of how the six types relate. Some of the descriptions of the Conventional Type include:
“Prefers to work within the structure of an organization or institution. Values are characterized by traditional virtues (e.g., conservative, religious, economic, and political aims). Believes it is desirable to be ambitious, obedient, and polite...Perceives self as conforming and orderly, and as having clerical and numerical ability” (Holland, 1985, p. 27).

One can see many of these characteristics in the descriptions of the orchestral environment written about previously, and can also appreciate the secondary qualities of the Social type (the large number of people and diverse relationships within an orchestra) and the Realistic type (values of being practical and working with one’s hands). As for the modest strength in the Enterprising type from orchestral performers (ranked fifth by the influencers), one conjecture may be that the incongruence between Artistic types working in Conventional jobs may cause musicians to seek hobbies or second careers outside of music that express their creativity and result in Enterprising-type ventures.

Chamber music performers scored highest in every category except Investigative and Enterprising, and had particularly high scores in the Artistic category. Chamber music influencers, in contrast, made the Social type the overwhelming personality characteristic of the chamber music profession. This should come as no surprise, considering the intensity of relationships within an ensemble and the necessity of networking outside of the ensemble in order for a group to survive. Bunched together after the Social type are Enterprising, Artistic and Conventional. The inclusion of the Artistic type, apart from the obvious fact of dealing with artists, is that chamber musicians may most follow the freedom and idealism which are stereotypical of the Artistic type. The Conventional type can be linked to the group nature of chamber music activity (similar to the orchestra), but the Enterprising type may be explained by
Holland’s description of that type’s self-beliefs: “Perceives self as aggressive, popular, self-confident, sociable, possessing leadership and speaking abilities…” (Holland, 1985, p. 26). These qualities lend themselves to the entrepreneurship or self-marketing which are essential for any chamber music ensemble to survive. Strengthening the Social-Enterprising-Artistic (SEA) type conclusion is the fact that the Artistic and Enterprising types are the most closely linked to Social on Holland’s hexagonal model. Of potential interest is the Investigative type, which one might expect to be a strong quality of chamber musicians who rely a great deal on residencies at Music Schools (Investigative typology is associated with University professors). According to the numbers, however, chamber music performers rated Investigative as a modest third and influencers rated this type as tied with Realistic for last.

There is little of note regarding the scoring of solo performers. They scored higher than the mean on each of the primary types (ASI), but followed the mean in the order of the six types. In the view of the influencers, however, the solo personality emerged as yet another distinct entity from orchestra and chamber musicians, as they projected high scores on Enterprising and Artistic, followed by Social (EAS). The soloists affinity for the spotlight and all it entails would be consistent with the Enterprising quality, while the emphasis on artistic freedom and excellence in performance would account for the high scores in Artistic. While soloists do not have the day-to-day relationships at work like orchestral and chamber players, their need to engage with their audience and a constantly revolving cast of accompanists (pianists and orchestras) would explain the Social typology. Of interest is the fact that the soloist’s
EAS personality type encompasses the same types as chamber musicians (SEA), while the Social type is the only one which they have in common with the orchestra category. This presence of the Social typology also appears to stand in contrast to the common conclusion of the majority of musician personality testing which indicates a strong quality of introversion.

4.3.2 Musicality

The differentiation of musical skills between the violin specialties have already been examined through the eyes of the influencers, but the views of the performers should also be considered for any differences or similarities of opinion.

The influencers rated the primary skills of orchestra musicians as 1) accurate intonation, 2) accurate rhythm/tempo, 3) blending and following, 4) ability to learn repertoire quickly and 5) sight-reading. The performers primarily agree with this assessment, with two exceptions. They switched the top two skills, reflecting the orchestra wisdom that almost anything can be overcome as long as the musicians play together; and they listed subtlety of tone as the fifth highest skill rather than sight-reading. This last difference is especially minimal since both characteristics are listed fifth or sixth by both performers and influencers. In the final analysis, the primary skills of an orchestral violinist are to blend with the ensemble, neither disrupting the group with faulty intonation, rhythm or tone.

The views of performers and influencers differ much more in the area of chamber music skills. Those with influence listed the primary skills as 1) accurate intonation, 2) accurate rhythm/tempo, 3) blending and following, 4) subtlety of tone, 5) power to
project and 6) knowledge of the score. The performers, in contrast, chose “leading and projecting” as the most important skill and subtlety of tone second. Accuracy of intonation and rhythm were relegated to sixth and third, respectively, and the power to project was lowered to seventh. It would seem that a blended ensemble sound, without the disruption of faulty intonation and rhythm, would be the highest ideal of those who influence the work environment while the performers more highly value the initiative of performance, in the leading and projecting of a melodic line to the blending and following of an accompanying line.

The small sample size of solo performers most hindered this category of skill assessment. The influencers listed the primary solo skills as 1) accurate intonation, 2) power to project, 3) accurate rhythm/tempo, 4) subtlety of tone, 5) bravura left hand skills and 6) memorization. The performers gave unanimous high scores for seven skills (rhythm/tempo, intonation, tone, knowledge of the score, physical stamina, leading and projecting, and having a unique personal interpretation) and nearly as high of scores for four others (power to project, memorization and left/right hand bravura skills). Drawing conclusions from this mix of data is far from scientific, yet may be useful for further discussion. It would seem that the influencers, like those of chamber and orchestra musicians, prefer clean playing (accuracy) while soloists may place a higher value on the flamboyant nature of their trade - leading and powerfully projecting their unique voice and personal interpretation through the bravura skills of both hands.
In the final analysis, though playing the violin is a fairly uniform activity, the professions of solo, chamber and orchestral playing vary widely in the ways they are accomplished, the working environments that surround them and, to a lesser degree, the characteristics of the people who perform them. It is the potential incongruence between the performers and their environment that is a concern of this document and for the profession in general.
CHAPTER 5
CRITIQUE

It would be nothing new to accuse collegiate institutions of being out of touch with professional realities. The image of the “Ivory Tower” has long been one of promoting utopian ideals within the protective isolation of the campus. It would be consistent, therefore, to assert that music schools are just as disconnected from the real world as any other discipline within academia. In an article by John Flower, appropriately titled *The music curriculum in contrast to the music profession: a lack of fit*, he states “The practice of music-making espoused and taught by many musicians holding academic teaching posts fails in its relationship and application to what actually happens in today’s market-place of music. Much of what is taught is unresponsive to current constituent needs and, to an extent, perpetuates needs of 100 and 200 years ago” (Flower, 1985, p. 52). The testimony of Flower is verified by many others:

*“Making a living as a full-time musician is rarely as uncomplicated as music school…the walls of the ivory tower immediately begin to crumble in the face of the job market and its cruel realities” (Luckey, 1999, p. 32).

*“It seemed to those at the (Concert Artists) Guild that most musicians, when they emerge from conservatory, are unprepared for the demands they face in the professional world. Though most pre-professional training may be less than adequate in regard to the realities of post-graduation life, musicians face an additional handicap which is, perhaps, unique; they are encouraged, in preparing for a life in music, to specifically avoid thinking about anything but art…When
reality hits, they find out that it’s not all they need, by a long shot. The effect of meeting the field as it is…can be like an ice cold bath” (Highstein, 1991, p. 1).

*“The chances for full-time employment, even for the better B.M. graduates, are miniscule. Considering further the total time and money invested in music study, including four or more years of college, the situation for many graduates must be very frustrating: they find themselves unable to do what they have spent much of their lives preparing to do…The present system does one great disservice not only to the vast majority of B.M. students who will not be able to find work, but also to those who do find work…The oversupply of labor makes music a buyer’s market and means that few musicians will ever be properly compensated for their talent and years of training” (Rogers, 1988, p. 107).

*“The current system of study only reinforces myths about the quality and quantity of jobs available in music…The myth is fueled by a lack of sophistication about the real world. Students propel themselves with the blind optimism that only people with zero experience can possibly have…Two, five, or ten years after they graduate, music alumni frequently find themselves working in dead-end office temp jobs to make ends meet, with no health insurance or benefits, hoping that their big break will occur even as they grow bitter about music, their education, and their future” (Beeching, 1996, p. 18).

*Joseph Robinson, in a published interview, pointed to studies that found only ten percent of Oberlin Conservatory graduates were making their living as music performers, with Juilliard graduates only slightly better at fifteen percent. Robinson adds “very few conservatory graduates have ever been able to go on and earn their living as performers. It is astonishing for laymen to encounter that fact, because we wouldn’t tolerate law, medical, or business schools with that kind of yield” (Post, 1999, p. 75).

*“What other profession would accept such a dismal placement record for its graduates? Would medical schools be content to enroll students in programs with fulltime employment rates in the single digits? Questions of ethics and accountability arise, and the answers for many are terribly dismaying…Precious few question the appropriateness of drawing new generations of professional performance majors into the almost certain trap of a life of fulltime employment frustration…The paradigm must change. What worked a hundred years ago is no longer valid” (Roberson, 1994, p. 13-15).

If one accepts the general premise of these arguments, that between music education and music professions there is “a lack of fit,” it would be necessary to further explore the issue and determine where faulty assumptions, irrelevant curriculum and inadequate teaching are being perpetuated. It is only through this analysis that one can then move to change in the theory and practice of training future musicians.
5.1 Premises of Academia

There is a fine line dividing what is tradition and what has become a myth. Perhaps a working definition might be that a myth is a traditional practice which contains elements of truth mixed with elements of fiction. It is hoped that the following critique will point out some of the fiction without disparaging the remaining truths.

*The Myth of the Sufficiency of Practice*

“Classical musicians are perhaps unique in believing the myth that great artistry, and more practicing, are all they need, and that having to go out and work on developing a constituency is proof of artistic failure” (Highstein, 1991, p. 8). Illustrating this myth is Peter Schoenbach, who organized a Professional Music Round Table while dean of the Curtis Institute, only to have director Rudolf Serkin comment, “Why bother? Just tell them to practice” (Schoenbach, 2000, p. 6). Certainly, the skills necessary to play the violin at the professional level are complex and voluminous, requiring a great amount of time to learn and perfect, but to reduce vocational counseling to the “just practice” mantra is to over-simplify the realities of the workplace. Personal and business skills are almost invariably necessary to career success while other aspects are beyond the control of the performer (luck).

*The Myth of the Totem Pole*

John de Lancie, explaining the culture of the Curtis Institute, said “When Rudolf Serkin was director of the Institute from 1973 to 1977, there was considerable expansion of the chamber music department. In the time of Zimbalist and Hofmann, there was an accent on the soloist…you might say that there was a sort of totem pole and there were
priorities when I took over in 1977. What I have tried to do is take the totem pole from a vertical position to a horizontal one and create an equal sense of importance for every department” (Modi, 1983, p. 20). What de Lancie was referring to is the normative myth of music careers. At the top of that totem pole is the ideal of being a soloist, after which comes chamber musician, orchestra musician, teacher and amateur, in that order. As Waleson concluded, “most…string players at least flirt with one ambition: to be a soloist. Years of working on the solo repertoire with their teachers strengthens that goal. Then reality sets in: Very few people can make a living as a soloist, and the disappointed young musician finds him or herself ill-prepared even to think about other options” (Waleson, 1994, p. 45). Further illustrating the ripple effects of the solo emphasis, Carl Flesch wrote “the tragedy of the orchestra violinist’s career is, that his activity from the very first is equivalent to a renunciation, that it does not represent a beginning supported by joyous hopes, but in most cases forms the close of a period of painful disappointments and hopes destroyed. Nearly every orchestra violinist, once upon a time, has dreamed of becoming a celebrated soloist. Had his teacher not confirmed him in this supposition, he might, perhaps, betimes have taken up some other profession. An orchestra violinist of this type, therefore, will and must always be discontented with his lot” (Seltzer, 1975, p. 188). The supremacy of the solo ideal is so powerful that each of the remaining notches on the totem pole are measured as corresponding levels of failure. A young quartet violinist may cover their embarrassment about failing as a soloist by asserting that at least they are not in an orchestra or teaching!
There are a variety of notions which make up the myth of music as a mystical entity which defies question for evaluation. One researcher recalls “For many, science and art are antithetical. To apply one in the study of the other seems absurd, if not blasphemous…on the grounds that music was said to be too spiritual a thing to be measured statistically” (Chalmers, 1977, p. 32). A teacher cited a similar dynamic in regard to teachers avoiding giving counsel to their students, calling it the “seminary syndrome”: “…in which the conservatory becomes a kind of religious school with everyone serving at the altar; whether one is doing it very well or merely competently are irrelevant, as long as one is devoted” (Highstein, 1995, p. 45). A logical extension of this belief is an institutionalized perspective of the preceding quote - it is nobody’s place to say who is vocationally viable and who is not. Maris states this clearly when she says “I do not believe it is the responsibility of the 35,623 college teachers at 1817 institutions of higher education…to prepare the next generations of opera singers, symphony conductors, virtuoso performers, and recording engineers…whether our music students support themselves as professional musicians - or as realtors, bankers and beauticians, I believe there will be room in the future for all the musical people today’s teachers can nurture” (Maris, 2000, p. 13). Pepetone returns to the mystical as a defense against pedagogical specialization: “There are no Shangri-Las in this world, no sanctuaries where the treasures of art, intellect and spirituality are safe from the depredations of modern life. Colleges, universities and conservatories, however, come closest to serving that function. Of all the music degrees a student can pursue, the performance degree still
offers the best opportunity to escape the fads and trivialities of modern society and find a
way to the real heart and core of the Western aesthetic experience…” (Pepetone, 1995, p. 26). Beeching is sympathetic to these ideals, but states “Many people view an
undergraduate degree not so much as training in a specific area but as a stepping-stone, as
rather expensive Life Preparation. But the schools that accepted them and took their
tuition dollars have some responsibility to help students deal with their futures…”
(Beeching, 1996, p. 18).

The Myth That More (School) is Better

This BM “stepping-stone” is often thought to lead to graduate study for more
specialized training - more is better. Roberson counters by writing “proponents of the
performance degree suggest that it is merely preparation for graduate school and is not
intended to be the ultimate degree. However, few if any college catalogs advertise it as a
transitional degree; indeed, it is typically represented and marketed for what it is - a
terminal professional degree. Further, for those who go on to graduate school - the
majority who do so because they are unable to find jobs in their chosen field -
employment prospects upon completion of a master’s or doctoral degree in performance
are, at best, only marginally improved” (Roberson, 1994, p. 13). Rogers confirms this by
citing a statistic that 68% of performers pursue doctoral work primarily because of
unemployment and concludes that “for many persons, graduate school only postpones the
unemployment problem rather than solves it” (Rogers, 1988, p. 109). According to a
survey (Reimer, 2003b), finishing a degree program is ranked quite low among
accomplishments leading to performing success, so more degrees would seemingly multiply an ineffective career strategy.

The Myth of the Employability of the Well-Rounded Person

It has been claimed that the skills that are necessary for a high level of musical accomplishment combined with a liberal arts education will make a student vocationally viable in many attractive work environments either on the periphery or completely outside of music. Beeching alludes to this when she writes “Many undergraduate music majors do not end up musicians. Is this a waste of their money, time, talent? No. The years of practice and discipline, the appreciation of cultural contributions to civilization are a legacy for a lifetime, whether one becomes a computer whiz, a legal services lawyer, a doctor, a social worker” (Beeching, 1996, p. 18). There are several problems with this half-truth: 1) graduates with broader liberal arts degrees (such as the BA) are more likely to receive this benefit of the doubt, 2) though many skills/abilities are transferable to other fields, there is so much competition in every field from candidates with specialized degrees and experience that a predominantly musical resume will rarely allow the person in question a chance to present their case in an interview, 3) in order to build a broader resume, one may need to consider returning to school for another degree, which not only costs additional money, but may have a few nasty surprises, as Post recalled “it turned out that not one credit of (her friend’s) four year undergraduate career at the august Peabody Conservatory was acceptable to the University of Pennsylvania, so he had to do all four years of undergrad work all over again before he started his Masters and a Ph.D” (Post, 1999, p. 77). If a BM graduate must return to school in order to be
viable in another job market, especially if they have to return at the undergraduate level, would this not refute Beeching’s claim regarding “a waste of... money, time, talent?”

*The Myth of the Unlimited Time of Students*

One of the major problems to be found among the many proposals for improving the BM exacerbates an already significant problem in music schools. There is an underlying belief that students have a surplus of dispensable time (why else would they be partying until all hours of the night?) which educators would be well advised to fill. Roberson makes this error when he writes “the dedicated musician will find a way, as she always has, to seek maximum fulfillment of artistic expression. The BA music major, and the students of music education and arts administration can, if they want, play or sing just as well as performance majors” (Roberson, 1994, p. 15). Pepetone appropriately refutes this, writing “anyone acquainted with the realities of the vocational degree programs knows better. Most of my students who are involved in these programs complain of having too little practice time” (Pepetone, 1995, p. 27). Tadeusz Wronski captures this dilemma precisely when he writes “the teacher spends about one hour a week with each student; this, coupled with the demands of teaching (recitals), means that he does not have sufficient time to acquaint the student with the fine points of the methodology of playing or teaching. There is not even time to teach the student how he should work, how to develop his talent, how to shape his musical memory, how to conquer his stage fright, how to correct the faulty functioning of his hands, how to dislodge his psychological blocks. We barely have time to prepare the pieces to be played for recitals” (Wronski, 1979, p. 172). As Highstein adds, “the chance to have an
hour to talk about issues…with the most important person in one’s musical life (the teacher) is all too rare…lesson time is limited to discussion of a limited number of specific musical and technical issues…” (Highstein, 1995, p. 24). One specific example of the institution’s disregard for student schedules, as well as a disregard for orchestral careers, is the common practice of counting the school orchestra class as one credit. Typically, a student could spend six to eight hours per week in rehearsals, which by itself would make the single credit a mockery. But if orchestra were perceived as a vital element having strong vocational implications, it would involve an additional number of hours to practice the parts and to receive sectionals. The clear message sent by one credit is that orchestra is not important and that practice of orchestra parts outside of rehearsal is not essential to the success of the group. The implied message of academia is quantity, not quality; survival, not excellence; finishing requirements, not training for the next stage of life.

The Paradox of a Self-Perpetuating System

The great irony in performance education is that a music degree is of very minimal importance in the minds of performers, yet those same performers (whether they completed degree programs or not) are the ones who return to schools as applied faculty and perpetuate the degree emphasis as the road to vocational success. In fact, a study shows (Reimer, 2003a) that orchestra, chamber and solo performers tend to gravitate back to the traditional solo emphasis in their collegiate teaching. It only makes logical sense that they have no reason to criticize a system that was bestowed upon them by their teacher and “worked” for them. There are further factors such as the need for enough
students in a program to pay the salaries of faculty and administrators, so the motivation for change is very limited.

5.2 Vocational Counseling

Questionable philosophical assumptions about education inevitably lead to questionable practices in education. Emphases on liberal arts education, solo performance careers, instrument practice as solitary vocational strategy and lack of accountability for student’s futures lead to decisions which continue to mislead students while maintaining the institutional status quo. Most critiques of the system focus in varying ways on counseling systems, both at the applied and institutional levels.

Prior to examining the ways in which vocational counseling falls short at the majority of collegiate institutions, the very issue of career decision should be briefly discussed. Julie Nagel committed an extensive amount of work in her dissertation to the subject of career decisions of musicians, claiming the field to be unique for two reasons: 1) “a musician cannot decide to enter a career in the arts at an age when most career decisions are made (e.g. adolescence and young adulthood). The musician must begin serious study and intense training at a very young age,” and 2) “the job market for musicians is much more problematic than it is for other professionals. Unemployment is high, pay is often inadequate, and many must work at jobs considerably below the level for which they were trained” (Nagel, 1987, p. 3). A demonstration of this first point is the work of Manturzewska, who writes “between 10 and 14 we observe greatest progress in the development of performance capabilities.” Her study implies that collegiate training may be near the end of the musician’s formative growth stages, identifying Stage
II from the ages of six to fourteen ("period of intentional, guided musical development, where basic technical and performance capacities, and musical knowledge are gained") and Stage III from ages fourteen through twenty-two ("the stage of formation and development of the artistic personality…he or she seeks models and ideals and gradually joins the professional community") (Manturzewska, 1990, p. 133-134). Mary Land sums up the problems of early vocational development and commitment, writing

"Musicians…enter the conservatory with a great deal of training and professional experience behind them…not only are they likely to have made an early career choice, but they are pressed to foreclose and make an intense commitment, often before there is a basis in emotional maturity and sufficient experience of the world…Musicians are not permitted the same freedom (as other college students) to explore a variety of interests and try out different career roles" (Land, 1979, p. 129-130). For the purposes of this study, it should be noted that musicians make decisions to pursue music as a career at a very early age, even prematurely as Land implies, and the association they are making with professional music is predominantly the solo career. Conversely, the musician may not make a reasoned decision about the direction they will go within the music profession until after they have completed college. Both of these factors bypass one of the primary intents of the college experience - to explore careers, decide on a career path, and train specifically for that path.

*Lack of Private Counseling*

Frequently a music student will choose a school based on the presence of a specific teacher of their instrument rather than the school itself. From the point when that
student enters college, the violin teacher exerts a tremendous amount of influence over each student in the studio. Not only is the teacher the sole and unquestioned dispenser of direction about the playing of the instrument, they are also typically the academic adviser as well. Along with the tremendous power should come a tremendous amount of responsibility, but that is frequently not the case. Many teachers are fervently opposed to giving any career counsel, especially if it should be negative. One professional recalled a conversation with reputed pedagogue Dorothy DeLay: “Do you ever tell a student…when you sense that they’re not going to be able to make a living, (that they will not succeed)? And she said that it’s not her place to destroy somebody’s dream. And that everything that they’re learning can be applied to whatever they go into…”

Another example was related by Highstein, who recalled a conversation with a piano professor, “I asked him how many of his 18 students…have a chance of ‘making it’ in a professional sense. He answered, ‘One, maybe two.’ I asked what the other 16 think they’re going to do; his answer was ‘They think they’re going to be me.’ But they’re not” (Highstein, 1995, p. 45). If the person who knows best what a student can do on the instrument and, theoretically at least, knows the risks and the requirements of the performing professions, yet does not speak honestly to each student about their career potential and limitations, then they are covertly or overtly negligent. Highstein continues “True, it is inappropriate for a teacher to make sweeping judgements about the gifts, potential and future of each student, and to predict success or failure…But a responsible teacher can give the student the benefit of hard-earned wisdom, including the fact that nowadays a good teaching job isn’t simply a fall-back after not making it as a performer,
and that there is a broad range of career possibilities (even within performance), each having its own set of standards and requirements. Many teachers, and indeed many schools, avoid giving their students serious ongoing quality evaluations” (Highstein, 1995, p. 45). It is understandable that most teachers have had no training in vocational counseling and there are documented cases of mediocre students eventually winning lucrative positions in orchestras, yet these real concerns are not license for the omission of counseling, merely reminders for careful, sober evaluation and perhaps some further training or resourcing to improve a teacher’s skills for this vital function.

Lack of Institutional Counseling

The teaching profession may be deserving of criticism for the current state of student dis-information, but institutions have also been complicit in the affair. It is a rare case where a music school has staff dedicated to vocational counseling, not to mention psychological counseling and physical training. Highstein (1995) compared her findings about music schools to other disciplines and noted the following:

Staffing - University of Chicago Graduate School of Business had 15 full-time staffers at Career Services office compared to one or fewer in most music schools

Workshops on Career Topics - Kennedy School of Government sponsors weekly career workshops compared to six or fewer per year in music schools

Job Postings - Columbia School of Journalism maintains a 24-hour hotline with the week’s top vacancies compared to a modestly updated bulletin board at music schools
Getting students seen and heard - USC School of Cinema-Television sponsors three screenings of its students in front of industry employers annually and send scripts to agents on behalf of students compared to music schools where no such help is offered.

Only ten of the nineteen premier music colleges covered in that study even offered “a career office strictly for music students staffed by at least one full-time person” (Highstein, 1995, p. 24). Part of this dilemma may be attributed to confusion about responsibilities. It has been assumed that the applied teacher knows the student and the professions best and will therefore counsel appropriately, while the rest of academia assumes trained vocational counselors will provide the best assistance to students. Given the general lack of knowledge about the intricacies of music performing professions in the counseling field, there is good reason to doubt the academy’s solution. Nevertheless, schools should be proactive, for their students sake, either to train music teachers in skills of counseling or to train counselors in the specifics of music professions. As is often the case, a combination would probably be most beneficial, so students get at least a couple of perspectives from counselors with different strengths and perspectives.

5.3 Specialized Training and Survival Plans

Institutional assumptions lead to faculty operating procedures, curriculum priorities and classroom practices. With the focus on a liberal arts education and solo technique and repertoire, corresponding to a lack of vocational counseling, there lies great potential for the “disconnect” that Flower speaks of. The practical means of making a living are left out of the mix, or assumed to be dealt with though never verified.
Career-Specific Skills

If college music education is principally about developing solo instrumental skills and professional success is based on three different job descriptions, then there is possibly an oversight in education. Orchestral musicians need slightly different bowing, sight-reading and ensemble skills, while chamber musicians need the flexibility to make many subtle and instantaneous adjustments for ensemble while maintaining concentration for long periods of time under significant performance stress. The easy retort of schools is that the school orchestra is where orchestra skills are taught by the conductor, while the chamber music coach addresses all such matters of chamber music technique. While there may be outstanding examples of conductors and coaches who are excellent teachers of these two crafts, it seems likely that they would be in the minority. Just as the violin teacher is severely limited by a one-hour time slot to communicate technical and musical skills, a conductor has limited time to prepare approximately 75 marginally committed students for concerts and likely is not an “educator” anyhow (often having reached only as high on the conductors “totem pole” as a school orchestra job), while the chamber music coach has similarly limited time like the applied teacher (combined with multiple students like the conductor), making it difficult to do much more than respond to students on details about whatever piece happens to be played at a coaching. Once again, specific skills are assumed to be dealt with, when in fact students are able to pick them up by osmosis at best.
Teaching and Entrepreneurial Skills

Doubek states that “While many teachers of music are trained in performance during their formal studies, they eventually become music educators quite serendipitously…not (having) received substantial training for teaching in classroom settings or for serving as mentors…this is not a deficiency of the individual, but rather a deficit in the curriculum” (Doubek, 2001, p. xii). This deficit is another demonstration of the “totem pole,” in which performance majors avoid the so-called fall-back career of teaching by ignoring the entire music education curriculum. Additionally, the thought of teaching business, communication and entrepreneurial skills to music students may be the furthest thought from the minds of curriculum masters at most schools. Certainly time is an issue, along with a desire to give students an extensive freedom of choice about their coursework but, as can be seen from looking at the performing professions, these topics are crucial to the success of individuals and ensembles at the professional level. Also of significant concern are the predictions of a dire future for traditional performance venues and the necessity of creating new markets in order for classical music to survive at all. Rubin writes “In an era of brand names, no industry needs, or can support, more than a few branded athletic shoes, colas, toothpastes, strings quartets, cellists or tenors: The media have neither the motivation nor the patience to pay attention to more than the Emersons, Ma, and Pavarotti” (Rubin, 1997, p. 44). In such an environment, with conventional performance options diminishing, it is more important than ever for prospective musicians to learn creativity in job planning strategy.
Viable Back-up Plan

Finally, given the odds of failure among performance candidates, the teaching of music vocational skills should be augmented by a cohesive backup plan. Students have a variety of required and elective classes to take in other areas, but there is little cohesion or concern about such from music academicians. Simple logic would assert that a 0-15% chance of success in one’s field should make a person vigilant about developing a fall-back option. The lack of time may be a daunting factor, but so too is unemployment! One further difficulty is that, as already mentioned, musicians typically make very early decisions to specialize in music, so that little thought may have been given to discovering careers that have similar skills and concepts. One hypothesis about the confusing results of my personality survey (Reimer, 2003b) may be that musicians have little aptitude for identifying cross-over skills and ways of thinking, thus simplifying all career considerations to a “music” or “not interested” vocational stance. For a student’s own good, academia should have the foresight to require at least the beginnings of a coherent employment strategy at the periphery or outside of music so that they may fulfill their moral responsibility to leave students in better shape than when they arrived on campus.
CHAPTER 6
PROPOSAL

During the time between the author’s own experience of encountering the professional music world for the first time and the writing of this document, there have been numerous articles, books and plans formulated to address some of these issues. Before proposing a new model, some of these trends will be reviewed here.

6.1 Review of New Strategies for Music Education

Reduce Numbers of Students and Programs

Traditional vocational counseling, if attempted at all, has relied on something akin to scare tactics. Typical statements include: “only do this if you cannot conceive of doing anything else, and do it without the idea of making money doing it”; “At any hint of doubt, pursue another field! It has to be what you want more than anything else in the world”; “If you can’t support yourself by the age of thirty, do something else” (Post, 1999, p. 76). The logical extension of this line of thinking is for schools to adopt an institutional policy of discouraging students from enrolling in performance degrees and attempting to enter the performance professions. Rogers shared variations on this theme, “it seems clear that there are two different but related problems under discussion. The first is the oversupply/unemployment issue, and the second is the question of good
advising for college music students. In other words, the second problem consists of
telling our students about the first problem. The relationship between the two is as close
to a clear-cut cause and effect situation as we are likely to find…” Rogers’
recommendations include more realistic counseling from applied faculty and higher
standards for those entering Bachelors of Music programs. His thoughts on this latter
idea are that only “extraordinarily gifted” musicians should be accepted into BM
programs, defining that quality as “a clear potential to perform better than their applied
teacher” (Rogers, 118, p. 112-113). Roberson proposed the most daring form of degree
limitations in 1994, asserting that “so limited is the performance job market that the
major conservatories alone could probably more than meet the demand.” Roberson
repeated suggestions by Rogers that applied teachers take a more active role in
counseling and that audition standards be raised, but he also questioned whether many
schools should even offer the degree - “The existence of the BM performance degree
should be regulated by the profession, perhaps through the auspices of the National
Association of Schools of Music, in such a way that the number of music departments
offering the degree would be limited to the realities of the market demand.
Unfortunately, the inertia of tradition makes implementing this recommendation highly
improbable.” At the very least, says Roberson, “Let us break with tradition and steer all
but the incredibly gifted performers away from performance degrees” (Roberson, 1994,
p. 15). The fact that no subsequent support for these ideas emerged from the research for
this document may confirm Roberson’s skepticism.
Increase Percentage of Students in Music Education

Another of Rogers’ recommendations included “musicians who express any interest in teaching at any level should be encouraged to pursue the B.M.E. degree. These persons, in many cases, are desperately needed in the schools, where they stand a good chance of being employed in music on a full-time and long-term basis” (Rogers, 1988, p. 114). Rogers believes the BME degree should supplant the BM degree as the primary degree for undergraduate music students. The argument that too many college music students enroll in performance degrees with minimal chances of vocational success and not enough enroll in music education with excellent chances of vocational success is further developed by Dean Angeles, in a 2001 interview - “By recruiting so many performance majors, state universities are doing a great disservice to potential string teachers who have no chance of being hired by an orchestra after graduation. Universities will continue with this practice until the legislature or state board of education holds them responsible for producing a given number of educators each year.” Angeles, reflecting on his work as string educator and orchestra conductor at Loyola University in New Orleans, proposes “my ideal is for 50% of our 75-piece orchestra to be education majors, 20% music therapy majors, and 30% music business, performance, or composition majors” (Baumer, 2001, p. 30-31). Angeles, like Roberson, seems to have been justified in his pessimism regarding substantive change since no subsequent material was discovered on the reversal of college emphasis of BM and BME degrees.
Broaden BM Requirements

A related concept to diminishing BM degrees and increasing BME degrees is the more general notion of increasing the breadth of undergraduate music degrees. As Pepetone states, “(BM degrees) permit an unnecessarily specialized approach to music. In my experience, musicians are notorious for their general lack of intellectual culture” (Pepetone, 1995, p. 26). As a result, Uscher asks “How can we better help our students face life after university? Teaching students to be good researchers…teaching them to be voracious readers…learning to write well…establishing priorities…helping them find durable role models and discerning advocates…and, of course, inspiring a value system…So what can a music graduate do?” Her answer: “Nearly anything he or she chooses” (Uscher, 1995, p. 146). The comments of Pepetone and Uscher appear to be a new face on the old tradition of a liberal arts education, though Uscher cites four schools where this “progressive” type of training is being developed and implemented: “The Ohio State University…and the Eastman School of Music…both have programs that address the need for a new kind of arts leadership at many levels, from reaching new audiences to making policy. California Institute of the Arts…and the University of Michigan…both emphasize a broadly based definition of music and arts, emphasizing collaboration, diversifying degree programs, and stressing the limitless capacity of technology as a critical tool for the 21st-Century artist” (Uscher, 1997, p. 51).

Specialized Training

Rather than becoming more general in their educational offerings, several schools have developed new strategies for specialized training in career-specific directions. As
early as 1975, the Shepherd School of Music (Rice University) began a five-year Orchestral Studies Program that combined bachelors and masters degrees for students desiring to train specifically for orchestral performance (Bjorneberg & Stearns, 1986). In 1991, the Manhattan School of Music inaugurated a Graduate Program in Orchestral Performance which includes “private study with a faculty of distinguished, professional orchestral musicians; orchestral repertoire coaching with faculty members; master classes and special coaching ensembles with guest orchestral artists; orchestral performances under internationally acclaimed conductors; chamber music coaching; experience in the contemporary orchestral repertoire; mock orchestral auditions; audition preparation; and extra-musical training in community service and the business of orchestral music” (Manhattan School of Music website). The Eastman School of Music received a great deal of attention when they followed a series of studies in 1994 with a major overhaul of their undergraduate programs. James Undercofler, director of academic affairs who instituted the new changes said “There seemed no question that there was going to have to be major undergraduate reform in music, and we soon came to agree that two years down the road, we at Eastman are going to have to give up a major part of our existing curriculum and simply reconstruct. The key to keep in mind is that what we do here absolutely has to be relevant to the work that’s out there.” (Anything But Easy, 1996, p. 21). In the past, Eastman had an internship relationship with the Rochester Philharmonic, but in 1999, the school built upon that relationship an Orchestral Studies Diploma program to assist students in pursuing that specific line of work. Other schools have developed similar programs, such as an orchestral internship arrangement between the
University of Wisconsin and the Madison Symphony Orchestra in 2000, the Professional Studies Program at the Cleveland Institute of Music which has often become an orchestral training program (CIM will also inaugurate an elite program for concertmaster training in 2003) and the Curtis Institute of Music, which has a history of emphasis on orchestral playing - “The whole school is geared around the orchestra” said one former student (Waleson, 1994, p. 48).

In addition to specialized training in orchestral careers, some schools offer similar training in chamber music: Juilliard offers an Artist Diploma in String Quartet studies and the University of Michigan has a Master of Music in Chamber Music degree. Another career-related innovation has been implemented by the University of Colorado, which established an Entrepreneurship Center for Music in 1998.

Another form of specialized training is that which is utilized within the studio. One strategy is summarized by Stephen Shipps, “Where do these (orchestral) pieces fit in the lesson plan? The logical solution is to replace as many etudes as possible with orchestral repertoire. The technical difficulties are similar. Etudes are used to solve technical difficulties and then usually not played again until you are faced with teaching them. Orchestral repertoire can be used immediately when students audition…” (Shipps, 1992, p. 57). He outlines a series of orchestral excerpts to substitute for specific technical issues and the etudes that are normally used to teach them in an American String Teacher article entitled The Orchestra Etude Book - A Guide to Survival Repertoire. James Smith (1966) developed a graded scale in his book Using Orchestral Excerpts as Study Material and James Dumm (1978) followed a similar path in his...

6.2 A New Program

There is no one simple way to solve the dilemmas which have been outlined in this chapter. For every supposedly antiquated tradition, there is wisdom which it would be foolhardy to dismiss, while for every modern solution, there are problems to be resolved. Should the number of BM degrees be reduced and monitored in relation to the market? I believe the BM degree is vocationally oriented rather than a general education program, so I would agree that this recommendation be strongly considered. Should there be a shift in balance away from the BM and toward the BME? Considering the job market and the importance of nurturing a flagging classical music audience, there is a greater need for educators at the public school levels, so yes. Should the entrance standards for BM students be higher? In order to communicate a more realistic view of student’s vocational futures, I believe they should be held to standards of achievement much more closely resembling the professions than their high schools - yes (if their mock audition for orchestra repertoire class could not possibly win them a position, how could they be given any grade higher than a C?). While more stringent views of the BM degree would be appropriate, one must consider the contrasting reality that we reside in the
United States, where people are free to pursue what they choose, as opposed to Totalitarian regimes, where children showing propensity for sports or secret service have been whisked away to highly-specialized training for the remainder of their adolescence.

As Joseph Robinson stated, “Conservatories exist to give fanatics a chance to succeed, to do what they are intent upon doing” (Post, 1999, p. 75). The purpose of my solution, therefore, is to find a better balance of exposure to the broad possibilities of the performing professions followed by realistic counsel and increasing specialization within the undergraduate program - a career-specific program of study.

6.2.1 Recruitment of Students

The preface to any discussion of the BM degree includes the events happening prior to a student’s enrollment. Schools and high school students enter into negotiation about their mutual futures - the schools maintain certain entry standards which prospective students must meet while students shop for a school and/or a violin teacher which they believe will give them the best opportunity for success. Class standing, grade point average, test scores on college aptitude tests, scores on music theory and history tests, and other forms of measurement may be considered, but perhaps more than anything else, the question is “how well do you play?” It is at this juncture that the fundamental standards of a school are first revealed, and for those students who are accepted and in turn accept the school’s invitation, it is the moment when the school inherently accepts certain responsibilities for the student’s future. In this career-specific program of study, there are primarily two issues which must be addressed: the student’s long-term goals and their potential to reach a professional level of skill. The former is
perhaps more symbolic at this stage, to communicate that their future is also a concern of the Academy, for vocational indecision is virtually a tradition in undergraduate study (and a valid tradition implied by the career decision work of Nagel, Manturzewska and Land). The latter issue is both more initially important and more difficult to assess. Who is to say what a student may accomplish after four years of work with the resources available to them at the school of their choice? Still, it is important to set high standards for their basic skill level and to do so against a professional standard. Whether that student shows the potential to be one of the better performers at a particular school is inconsequential in comparison to whether they have the potential to succeed as a professional performer. This is not to say that the door is closed to all others, for whom entry into a BME, BA or BS degree program may be the more propitious course.

6.2.2 General Education Module

The first two years of a student’s career-specific undergraduate education would be most similar to the traditional format. Lessons with the studio teacher would include the usual tools of the trade (scales, etudes and strategically chosen repertoire) to address any deficiencies in technique and repertoire. Orchestra and chamber music participation would be required, as would study of the broader categories of musical knowledge - theory, history and pedagogy. Non-music liberal arts courses which establish the school’s definition of the scholar, especially in the University, would also be required. The difference would be in carrying out the mission to expose students to the realities of the career options within their broader field of study. This strategy should be woven into
the program in a coherent and explicit manner, including performance, secondary music and general studies.

It is not enough to assume that participation in the school orchestra is adequate exposure to the culture of the orchestral vocation. Nevertheless, it may begin there, if the orchestra is run in a professional manner. Seating auditions should be run in a professional audition format (including orchestral excerpts in addition to solos, played behind a screen and run by a proctor, etc.), rehearsals and concerts should be scheduled in a more condensed sequence (one or two weeks from start to finish), support tasks should be assigned to students (personnel manager, union representative, orchestra librarian, etc.), and orchestra decorum enforced during rehearsals. The job of the conductor should include the educational aspect of explicitly teaching what is required of a professional orchestra and why, while it may also conversely require that person to give up some elements of control to allow student initiative. In order for concerts to be presented in a much shorter time frame, the orchestra parts should be included among the repertoire taught in the studio, with the additional advantage being the validation of this repertoire as worthy of individual study and practice. Music courses (perhaps History of the Orchestra) and general studies courses (exploring non-music disciplines with similar skill requirements and work environment characteristics) would also be important to understanding various aspects of the orchestra career. The most critical aspect, however, is that these pieces of the puzzle be brought into a whole, which would best be accomplished by a career forum, requiring a faculty member to bring all of these
elements into a cohesive whole, while encouraging students to talk about both the rewards and difficulties of this line of work.

In order to understand the world of the chamber musician, a new student should be immersed in the democracy of the discipline. Students would form their own groups, set their own rehearsal and performance schedules, find their own performing niche, book facilities for their activities, promote their performances and other skills necessary to chamber music survival. Performances would be required, perhaps with the size of the audience factored into the grading process. The traditional coaching sessions with faculty would remain a key feature, though for coachings to deal primarily with ensemble issues, the repertoire should also be incorporated into the student’s studio work. Broader music study could include the history of chamber music and the general education curriculum should include at least an Introduction to Communication. Drawing these elements together and helping students process the interpersonal and organizational difficulties would again be the work of the faculty member teaching the career forum.

In the case of the soloist, the student with the ability and temperament to succeed in this line of work has likely already begun the process of a career. They may have already won a competition, debuted as concerto soloist with a professional orchestra or presented a recital to critical review before enrolling at the school. For those who have such aspirations but no such exposure and for the rest who should at least experience the soloist’s job characteristics, the normal features of recitals and concerto competitions should be required, as a start. The recitals should require more initiative of the student and the competitions should be run more professionally. The repertoire and skills for
these activities would naturally be dealt with in the studio, while biographical studies of soloists and general studies training in business skills (marketing, public relations, event planning) would help fill out the knowledge of the profession. As before, the cohesion and discussion of these elements would be dealt with in the career forum, which would incidentally relieve the studio teacher of the burden of doing all the vocational counseling during the lesson time.

While the aspects of violin training, general musical education and extra-musical education are being satisfied in coordination with the mission of presenting the performance options, there is one additional course of study to be included. As an outgrowth of general music and academic studies, the student should be exploring an alternative vocational direction outside of performance. Whether this be musicology, Arts management or accounting, the student should develop a plan for a minor area to be presented to the vocational counseling center at the end of the two-year general educational phase. In order not to overburden the student with activities, the emphasis of the back-up plan is to develop an interest and formulate a plan - not to acquire substantial credit hours in alternate courses.

At some schools, students are not allowed to declare a major until after one year (Scalfari, 1999), or certain requirements, are passed. In a similar way, this plan would include the declaration of a major specialization at the end of the two-year general sequence. Like any other major, this declaration of specialization is not irrevocable, but serves to keep the student’s program focused on the purpose of their studies - training to make a living in a competitive job market as well as to make positive contributions to
Throughout the two-year process, the student should have access to multiple sources of vocational guidance, including their applied teacher and the teachers of the career forums, as well as individuals with expertise in this area, be they vocational counselors with knowledge about the arts or faculty/staff designated as advisers. The means of implementing this support structure could take many forms, but some suggestions include: 1) provide training in vocational counseling for applied teachers, 2) do not leave the applied teacher alone in this task, but create some kind of additional network, 3) create informal vocational counseling groups by utilizing counseling, vocational services and other on-campus personnel with local music professionals and current faculty/staff with mentoring abilities in this area as an alternative to establishing a formal music vocational counseling office. With the aid of this support structure, students should complete their initial two-year segment with decisions about the direction of their performance specialization and non-performance minor.

6.2.3 Specialization Module

After the broad array of the first two years, the student would have a more focused program of study with adequate time to practice in their final two years. This program would pick up where they left off in the introductory phase to whichever specialty they have chosen.

Specialization Module - Solo Track

As previously mentioned, the solo career path is the most closely related to traditional college pedagogy, so less change would be necessary. Soloistic violin skills have been held up as the standard, so work on virtuoso techniques would continue -
double stops, harmonics, and left-hand pizzicato in the left hand and flying staccato, flying spiccato and powerful sound production in the right hand, for example. Depending on the individual teacher’s philosophy, these techniques may be taught through the use of scales and etudes, though at the more advanced levels, scales appear to decrease in emphasis while etudes increase.

The core repertoire of the soloist has been listed already, though the typical pre-college development of the prospective soloist may have already superseded this requirement by the time of enrollment or shortly thereafter. As the applied teacher prescribes this material and teaches it, they must seek a balance between the technical near-perfection which is a prerequisite for the profession and the development of a winsome, individual voice which will allow the student to separate themselves from the competition. The basic repertoire list is described in greater detail here:

**Bach: Solo Sonata or Partita**
Arguably the pre-eminent violin repertoire, combining advanced technique with difficult musical style demands that must be performed without the comforting assistance of accompaniment.

**Mozart: Concerto**
The Concerto No. 3 in G major is most commonly considered a student concerto, while No. 4 in D major and No. 5 in A major are considered essential to a violinist’s repertoire.

**Beethoven: Sonata**
In the survey for *Studio Dynamics...*, Sonatas (most often those by Beethoven) were listed by teachers as the third highest priority behind Bach and Concerti. While the *Kreutzer* Sonata would be at the more advanced end, there are plenty to challenge the technique and develop musical sensitivity.

**Romantic Concerto**
Perhaps the focal point of the repertoire, whether by demand in concert halls or by the traditions of European pedagogy, the Romantic concerto is a genre with plenty of outstanding examples to choose from. For a student, this often means a choice from among the following: Bruch Concerto in G minor, Dvorak Concerto in A minor, Glazunov Concerto in
A minor, Lalo Symphonie Espagnole, Saint-Saens Concerto in B minor, Vieuxtemps Concerto in A minor, Wieniawski Concerto in D minor, etc.

Virtuoso Piece
Popular with audiences and convenient for teaching purposes (because of their shorter length), the single-movement work is an important feature in a violinist’s repertoire; the most familiar include many favorites by Kreisler, Sarasate, Wieniawski and Saint-Saens, as well as standards like Ravel’s *Tzigane*, the Bizet-Waxman *Carmen Fantasy* and Chausson’s *Poème*.

Contemporary Piece
While 20th Century works have not attained as strong a niche in the public eye as those listed above, they remain an important part of a soloist’s vocabulary; listed in the repertoire requirements of the International Tchaikovsky Competition is “One of the major pieces by the following composers: R. Strauss, Schoenberg, Bartok, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Messiaen, Lutoslawski, Shchedrin, Schnittke” (International Tchaikovsky Competition website).

The required repertoire for the professional soloist must first enable that violinist to present an adequate program at an International Competition. By comparing the repertoire lists for the International Violin Competition of Indianapolis, the International Mozart Competition, the Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition, the Hannover International Violin Competition and the International Tchaikovsky Competition, the core repertoire would provide a significant start. Repertoire that should be added in the specialist track of undergraduate training would include:

1) A second Bach unaccompanied work (the 2nd Sonata and 3rd Partita would meet the requirements for all five competitions)
2) The Beethoven and Tchaikovsky Concertos
3) A second Beethoven Sonata, two Mozart Sonatas and a Romantic Sonata
4) Three Paganini Caprices
5) Another virtuoso piece

Learning competition-level repertoire is one step for the violinist in becoming trained for the vocation of soloist, but real experience is equally necessary. The
traditional venues have already been mentioned - the school concerto competition (with the winner playing their concerto with the orchestra) and recitals - but the student should also explore various national and international competitions and seek to play solo performances with local orchestras (civic, community or youth orchestras). One aspect of this is the particularly soloist skill of memorization, as one soloist put it “memory is a muscle and has to be exercised (in performance). If it’s not exercised on a regular basis, then it will feel very daunting to one to do it.”

Soloist’s may know their repertoire at a deeper level than any of the specialties, partly as a result of playing a dozen concertos from childhood until they retire. It may also be attributed to various necessities in the solo workplace - the factor of memorization mentioned already, the ability to react quickly to a conductor in rehearsal (asking to begin again at a particular place in the score), knowing where liberties of interpretation can be taken without confounding a conductor and orchestra, and understanding the balance of composer intent and performer license. In order to facilitate this knowledge in college, the traditional theory and history courses are important, though an Independent Study-like course in the compositional structure of the core concerto repertoire may be a commendable application of this study.

While many schools and teachers provide similar training as that which is listed here, the vast majority provide little or nothing in terms of the extra-musical aspects of the profession. Whether a school wishes to follow the lead of the University of Colorado in creating an arts entrepreneurship center, the Eastman School of Music in constructing a music course in “Entrepreneurship in Music,” or partner with a university business
school, communications department and/or career services department, there should be adequate training available in dealing with press kits, agents, promotional events and the rest of the business aspect. Fortunately, there have been many books recently published about various aspects of this side of the profession (Black, Goldstein, Highstein, Levine, Loehr, Ormont, Paplos, Pollak, Stier, Uscher, Gaines and McCormack, Mullis and Orloff). If a school chooses to incorporate coursework into the music side of the curriculum to deal with these issues, it would still be valuable to require prospective soloists to take business-type courses outside of the music environment.

**Specialization Module - Orchestra Track**

While the solo curriculum and traditional college teaching pedagogy are closely related, the work of the Manhattan School of Music, the Cleveland Institute of Music, et al. has begun a movement to emphasize the once neglected orchestra performance training. Within my program, once a student declares a specialization in orchestral performance, they would continue to hone their skills in the school orchestra, lessons and their general studies.

Within the studio, there is the necessity of incorporating a variety of directions into one strategy. Preparation for auditions require that solo repertoire remain an element of the lesson, though orchestral works (in contrast to excerpts) should become the focus of repertoire study. Violin skills should still be taught, utilizing the standard etudes and some solo repertoire, but orchestral performance skills should be emphasized. These skills include technical issues of tremolo, col legno, pizzicato, pianissimo and a wide range of spiccato bowings. Instruction on adaptability could also be taught in the studio,
such as teaching fingering strategies for sight-reading, adapting tempi and rubati to follow the conductor, and learning to execute a passage with a variety of bowings - even those that are bad! There are also printed resources which have further developed the concepts mentioned here (Sharp, Whear, Carol). Another aspect is that of endurance and injury. While teachers will normally be concerned about the ease and fluidity of their student’s playing technique, special care should be paid to potential orchestra violinist’s technique so as to prepare them to survive long, demanding hours of work without succumbing to injury.

In addition to the solo repertoire necessary for auditions, the orchestral specialist would be required to learn orchestral repertoire, continuing from those works learned in the general phase and proceeding into more of the standard audition works. Utilizing my own compilation of requirements from twenty orchestra audition lists and comparing it with two other sources (Akos & Burlingame & Wellbaum, Griffing), the following list appears to contain the most commonly expected on “the audition trail”:

1) Strauss - Don Juan
2) Schumann - Symphony No. 2 (Scherzo)
3) Mozart - Symphony No. 39
4) Brahms - Symphony No. 4
5) Beethoven - Symphony No. 3
6) Mendelssohn - Midsummer Night’s Dream
   Brahms Symphony No. 1
8) Beethoven - Symphony No. 9
   Brahms - Symphony No. 2
   Mozart - Symphony No. 35
   Shostakovich - Symphony No. 5
   Prokofiev - Classical Symphony
13) Mendelssohn - Symphony No. 4
14) Mozart - Overture to the Marriage of Figaro
   Prokofiev - Symphony No. 5
Five of these works will have been covered in the student’s core curriculum, but during the two years of the Orchestra undergraduate track, the student should cover as many of the remaining pieces as possible. In addition to acquiring the notes, the aspiring orchestral violinist should be focusing on the most prominent qualities needed to succeed in an orchestral audition - consistent tempo, accurate rhythm, perfect intonation, beautiful tone, awareness of the greater whole of the work and subtle expression of the composer’s particular style.

Aside from audition repertoire requirements, a teacher should also teach some of the standard orchestral works that will be a part of the student’s future. For instance, at some point, every violinist will likely play the Tchaikovsky Nutcracker Suite, Beethoven’s 5th Symphony, Scheherazade by Rimsky-Korsakov, Pictures at an Exhibition by Mussorgsky-Ravel, Handel’s Messiah and Dvorak’s New World Symphony, to name just a few.

Repertoire is only one element of a successful orchestra musician’s training, however. Audition material and standard repertoire can be learned in the practice room and the studio, but orchestral etiquette and practice cannot. As mentioned earlier, seating auditions, mock auditions and playing in the school orchestra can provide this education to a degree, but the proposed career forum would more systematically address these types of issues.

Another proposal for educating a student in their undergraduate specialty track would be an Orchestral methods and techniques course. Chamber music would be required for students in the orchestra track (orchestral music in miniature, just as Sonatas
provide chamber music in miniature), yet it could be worthwhile to combine the elements of chamber and orchestral music further. For instance, if a string quintet were joined with a woodwind quintet and a conductor, they could work together on strategically chosen repertoire that allows them to learn to listen and respond to the other members of the group while also keeping a visual reference to the conductor. One of the major challenges and benefits to a violinist would be the prominence of his or her line and the sole responsibility to perform it accurately with no large section to hide behind! Other aspects of orchestral practice could also be addressed, including the philosophy of orchestra bowing technique, page turning, roles of the principal and the section, visual triangulation between conductor, section leader and soloist (if applicable), relationship of two players on one music stand and methods of blending in a section. The faculty member should also assist students in resolving issues around their soloistic roots and the anonymous, corporate nature of playing in a section.

Orchestral musicians are nearly required to have dual personalities - an extroverted audition side that thrives alone on stage as well as an introverted side that enjoys the anonymity of the section. Skill development may be more necessary to each student in one area or the other, but coursework should be available for both - performance psychology for the former and interpersonal communication and group dynamics for the latter. Regarding another area peculiar to the orchestral musician, one fellow violinist remarked that to succeed on the audition trail, a person should ideally be able to commit at least six uninterrupted months to preparation while another expressed that a string player should expect to take an average of 50 auditions before winning their
first. Since most people do not have the luxury of unlimited time and resources, an aspiring orchestral musician must learn to strategize and make efficient use of time in order to be able to survive, financially and emotionally.

*Specialization Module - Chamber Track*

The chamber music specialist perhaps has the most to gain from extra-musical coursework of any performance specialty. The same entrepreneurial skills and resources mentioned for the soloist also apply here. The relational and communication skills that are involved in the orchestral musician’s line of work are even greater for the chamber musician. And then there are the career forums to tie all of these courses together, as well as the practical applications of them - the requirements of ensembles to produce and promote their own performances and the various conflicts inherent in rehearsals. While this kind of training cannot eradicate the dysfunctions of chamber music ensembles, it would be a significant step forward in addressing inherent conflicts.

In the studio, the chamber musician would continue developing their core skills on solo material along with a strong emphasis on the chamber music repertoire. Even the ensemble aspect may be addressed in the lesson, with either the teacher or another student violinist (ideally, from the same quartet) also participating, in order to work on the frequent octaves and parallel patterns between the two violin parts.

As for the repertoire for applied study, I researched the recordings of prominent quartets, examined audition requirements for quartet competitions and surveyed members of quartets to determine which quartets form the core of the quartet repertoire, and made the following list:
While the chamber music represented in the core curriculum includes a variety of ensembles, the most common path in the chamber music specialty track would likely be the string quartet. For such a group, some of this repertoire list will have already been studied (Haydn, Beethoven, Impressionist - Ravel or Debussy, and Modern - Bartok or Shostakovich were included in the core) and the rest should be the focus of the remainder of their undergraduate studies. As for other types of ensembles (though to further discuss the non-quartet repertoire would be outside the scope of this present document, as is the professional viability of various combinations of instruments), the repertoire requirements for the Florence International Chamber Music Competition may be of some guidance:

Category A - Violin and Piano Duo  
Preliminary Round - Two Works, one by Mozart (25 minutes)  
Second Round - One work by Beethoven and one from the 1900’s (40 minutes)  
Final Round - A program of one hour  
Category D - Groups without Piano: String Trio, (String Quartet)  
Preliminary Round - Two works of the groups choice  
Second Round - One work by Beethoven and one from the 1900’s  
Final Round - A program of one hour (must include Mozart Divertimento K. 63)  
Category E - Groups with Piano: String Trio, Piano Trio, Piano Quartet, String Quintet, Piano Quintet
Preliminary Round - Two works, one by Mozart (Schumann Quintet Op. 44 for Piano Quintet)
Second Round - Trio (One work by Beethoven and one from the 1900’s), Quartet (One work by Brahms and a work from the 1900’s), Quintet (Two works, one from the 1900’s)
Final Round - A program of one hour (quintet must include Brahms Quintet Op. 34)

As for the music core courses, the chamber musician must be nearly as knowledgeable about the construction and context of the music they play as the soloist, so advanced work in theory and history would be important. Because residencies are such a part of the chamber music scene, it would also be useful to have extra courses in pedagogy, both in terms of teaching lessons at the collegiate level as well as developing skills in coaching student chamber ensembles.

_Occupational Minor_

The vocational minor aspect of the program should leave a student with the BM degree in a situation where they have a reasonable chance to support themselves after graduation until they succeed in gaining full time employment in their performing field and to have a vocational foundation in place should they either fail in music or choose to not make performance their career after all. The essential elements of this program would include vocational counseling, relevant coursework and, ideally, an internship so as to have some experience listed on a resume. How this is implemented would depend in part on the discipline/vocation chosen by the student. For instance, if a student chose public school music teaching as a minor, they would not be expected to have acquired their teaching certificate (then they would be in the BME program, anyhow), but should demonstrate a good start toward the requirements necessary for certification. If the
medical field were the back-up plan, the student would need to have the academic
success necessary to be considered for medical school. If this were not the case, the
adviser should recommend a different choice or require proof that the present choice is
still attainable.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

What I have attempted to describe in this document is the current status of collegiate schools of music, their relevance to the violin performance professions and to propose a curriculum of violin study that more adequately prepares a student for the realities of the professional world. Much good is embedded in the traditions which currently dominate the landscape of universities and conservatories, but if there is truth in the saying “an unexamined life is not worth living,” then the academic equivalent might be “an unexamined curriculum is not worth teaching.” One demonstration of this reality came in the form of an anonymous interview, in which a reputable orchestral musician and university teacher relayed an incident with a junior high violin student. The student was in need of help with an orchestra part (Beethoven’s 3rd Symphony) and asked the teacher for assistance, but said apologetically “I’m sorry to have wasted the lesson time.” When asked where this child had acquired the view that orchestra music was a waste of lesson time, the teacher mused “I don’t think her previous teacher…would have passed on any bias particularly, nor have I, so it just is sort of in the air…and it certainly has nothing to do with the economic reality of what most people are going to end up doing” (interview with author). If there is a underlying purpose to this document, it may be to
expose what is “in the air” in order that it might be examined and debated. In the end, I hope for a balanced credo which is to respect what has gone before, adapt to the needs and realities of what now is, and pass on a high-yet-real view of music and education to the future.
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