EXPERTISE DEVELOPMENT IN MUSICIANS:
THE ROLES OF DELIBERATE PLAY AND DELIBERATE PRACTICE

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THE ROLES OF DELIBERATE PLAY AND DELIBERATE PRACTICE

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Dr. Judith Mabary
Dedicated to my grandparents and Malachi.
Without them, none of this would have been possible.
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Thank you to my family and friends, for their tireless efforts to support me through this process. I truly appreciate each of you and would not have completed this without you.

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EXPERTISE DEVELOPMENT IN MUSICIANS: THE ROLES OF DELIBERATE
PLAY AND DELIBERATE PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation comprises three projects designed to investigate whether the Developmental Model of Sport Participation is applicable to help explain the development of music expertise. One investigation is a review of literature pertaining to expertise development and deliberate play, a concept from sport psychology that can add insight to the understanding of music learning. A phenomenological qualitative study using retrospective interview techniques determined that Cote’s Developmental Model of Sport Participation and the concept of deliberate play could be applied to expert musicians, but that a new aspect termed awareness should be added to the model for musicians. The third investigation is an experimental quantitative study. Middle school student participants in the treatment group replaced traditional scale practice in band warm-ups with researcher-designed deliberate play scale games. Participants’ weekly scale performance scores were compared during and after treatment, and a practice behavior and motivation questionnaire were used as pre/post assessments. There were no differences found between control and experimental groups during the short study. Synthesis of the findings from the three projects indicate that deliberate play is relevant to musicians’ development, and that school-age students can learn through music deliberate play.
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Merriam-Webster defines an expert as “one with the special skill or knowledge representing mastery of a particular subject” or as “having, involving, or displaying special skill or knowledge derived from training or experience” ("expert," n.d.). For over forty years, researchers have been investigating how people develop into experts in their domain. The prevailing theory psychologists have used to comprehend expertise development is deliberate practice, i.e., an intense, targeted form of practice (Ericsson, 1996). While the theory of deliberate practice has been used effectively to clarify expertise in musicians, chess players and medical students (Ericsson, 2008), this theory does not fully explain athletic expertise (Starkes, Deakin, Allard, Hodges, & Hayes, 1996). Some athletes were able to rapidly regain expert status after changing sports with considerably less than predicted amounts of deliberate practice, and yet, initially sport psychologists were not able to explain why this occurred. By identifying and including deliberate play activities in a new category relevant to development, these sport psychologists developed a more comprehensive model to explain athletic expertise: the Developmental Model of Sport Participation (DMSP) (Côté, Baker, & Abernethy, 2007). My research is designed to contribute to the profession’s understanding of the similar development of expertise in musicians by investigating the applicability of these theories of deliberate practice and deliberate play.
Background of the Problem

Deliberate practice

Deliberate practice is characterized by activities that are described as intense, mentally exhausting, and not enjoyable (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Romer, 1993). Experts generally engage in deliberate practice in a solitary setting. These activities create a feedback loop, a process in which experts identify a problem, select a strategy to fix the problem, attempt the task, receive internal or external feedback, and adjust future attempts according to the feedback (Zimmerman, 1990). The original theory of deliberate practice was developed through investigation of different levels of violinists (Ericsson et al., 1993). All of the components of deliberate practice have subsequently been investigated with musicians of varying experience. Through this research, many effective practice strategies have been identified, and as a result many researchers consider deliberate practice to provide the primary explanation for the development of music expertise. See (Miksza, 2011) for a review of music practice related research.

Deliberate practice also has been shown to explain differences between intermediate and advanced chess players and medical students (Charness, Krampe, & Mayr, 1996; Moulaert, Verwijnen, Rikers, & Scherpbier, 2004). Sport psychologists created an alternate definition for deliberate practice in sports: intense practice activities that require physical or mental effort and multiple attempts to form a feedback loop (Ford, Ward, Hodges, & Williams, 2009). However, unlike deliberate practice in other domains, deliberate practice in sport is usually not solitary, and is enjoyable (Starkes et al., 1996). This sport-specific definition of deliberate practice has been found to be an
appropriate fit with athletes specializing in ice hockey (Soberlak & Côté, 2003), figure skating, and wrestling (Starkes et al., 1996).

**Deliberate play**

Because the theory of deliberate practice does not fully explain expertise in sports (Côté, 1999), sport psychologists investigated other developmental activities of athletes. In addition to overall physical fitness that is a result of an active lifestyle, young athletes gained skills through activities that were neither play nor deliberate practice. These activities were categorized as deliberate play (Côté, 1999). Deliberate play activities are enjoyable, process-oriented, and usually not supervised by others such as coaches or teachers, but they do require superior skills for greater success (Côté et al., 2007). This is the research that led sport psychologists to establish DMSP (Côté et al., 2007). DMSP includes deliberate practice as a large factor of learning; however, DMSP also includes skills gained through deliberate play. By incorporating deliberate play into the model, DMSP is able to more clearly explain how some athletes are able to attain expert status after a relatively short period of intense deliberate practice. As sports and music are both domains that require extensive physical practice to refine the skills required to advance and be successful, and if deliberate practice does not fully account for expertise development in athletes, it is likely that it does not fully account for the development of music expertise either.

**Motivation issues of athletes who specialize early.** Further research into DMSP has identified “early specializers,” such as expert figure skaters or gymnasts, who dedicate significant resources and time to the chosen sport at a very young age—as opposed to most expert athletes who sample a variety of sports early in their careers.
These early specialization sports have some of the highest burnout and dropout rates when compared to other sports (Côté, Lidor, & Hackfort, 2009). Some sports psychologists have argued that early, intense, deliberate practice is detrimental to motivation for some athletes (Baker & Horton, 2004; Côté et al., 2009). Because athletes are able to gain considerable skills, agility and overall physical fitness through deliberate play, which, by definition, is enjoyable, these activities may increase motivation by requiring skill improvements for even more enjoyment—leading to correct the attribution of increased effort to success (O’Neill & McPherson, 2002). Many musicians also begin their study at an early age, so it is likely that similar ideas would apply to their experiences as well.

**Problem and Purpose**

Music study requires a great deal of time and effort to develop and improve. If we agree that music study is valuable, and we want to keep people involved, researchers and educators must work together to find ways to help students gain skills while maintaining motivation. DMSP has clarified how expertise is developed in athletes, particularly by accounting for the skills gained before intense, deliberate practice becomes a priority. Research has shown that musicians gain skills through deliberate practice; however, deliberate play activities have not been considered in a music setting. Similar to the experiences of athletes, musicians may be able to learn and maintain motivation through deliberate play activities. Given recent advances in research related to the development of expertise in athletes, the purpose of this dissertation was to apply these theories to the development of expertise in musicians.
Research Question

The following primary research question guided my work: To what extent can the current understanding of the development of music expertise be advanced by the application of the Developmental Model of Sport Participation? Because deliberate play is the primary new aspect included in this model, I also wished to explore if and how musicians participate in deliberate play activities, and whether deliberate play activities might impact performance and motivation.

Research Plan

In order to answer the research questions, I surveyed the existing bodies of literature related to deliberate practice in music and sports, DMSP, and play in a music context, including free play. By synthesizing the theories and conclusions from existing literature, I identified ways to clarify the understanding of expertise development in music. Then, in two separate studies, I explored how the new understanding could be applied to the development of young musicians, and also analyzed the careers of expert musicians. Thus, this dissertation comprises three investigations designed to study whether, and if so, how, DMSP might be applied to explain the development of expertise in musicians.

The first investigation is a review of literature pertaining to expertise development, music expertise, and DMSP. Current research on expertise development in music focuses on how musicians learn through various types of deliberate practice. Given the recent developments that have clarified sport psychologists’ understanding of athletic expertise, it seemed reasonable to investigate whether the theories and concepts may transfer, and thus illuminate our understanding of music expertise. This review and
The synthesis of the literature was designed to identify applications for music teachers, as well as suggest new lines of research related to music expertise.

The second investigation is a phenomenological qualitative study using retrospective interview techniques to determine if the Developmental Model of Sport Participation (Côté et al., 2007) and the concept of deliberate play (Côté, 1999) could be applied to expert and elite musicians. DMSP and deliberate play have been used to describe the skills athletes gain outside of deliberate practice. An investigation with musicians was necessary to determine the type, if any, of deliberate play activities that may have occurred during their development. I also analyzed the activities from early development through expert or elite status to determine if musicians’ careers follow the stages of DMSP, in order to better understand musical development.

The third investigation is an experimental quantitative study involving middle school students. This study was needed in order to determine whether young musicians might be able to gain performance skills through musical deliberate play activities. In addition, a questionnaire pertaining to the students’ practice habits and motivation was used to probe the possible connections between deliberate play activities and motivation. Through this study, I sought to determine whether deliberate play activities can be used effectively in a classroom setting.

The final chapter of this dissertation provides a summary and synthesis of findings and implications for teaching and future research. Results and findings will be connected in new ways to contribute to the understanding of the development of expertise in music and provide suggestions for classroom applications.
Importance of the Study

These investigations will contribute to the body of knowledge about how musicians develop throughout their lives. Specifically, these investigations build on our understanding of how musicians learn and expand those ideas beyond the theories of deliberate practice to add the theory of deliberate play. These investigations also result in suggestions for new ways for younger students to learn while maintaining high levels of motivation. Ideally, teachers will use this information to more effectively motivate and teach their students. More effective motivation and instruction could lead to better performance, lower drop-out rates, and stronger music programs (Davidson, 1999).

Glossary

deliberate practice: activities that are intense, mentally exhausting, and not enjoyable; these activities usually occur alone and include a feedback loop

deliberate play: activities that are enjoyable, process-oriented, and usually not supervised by others such as coaches or teachers, but they do require skills for greater success

Developmental Model of Sport Participation (DMSP): model depicting how young athletes develop athletic expertise

domain: field of study; e.g., music, chess, sports

feedback loop: process by which an individual identifies a problem, selects strategy to fix the problem, attempts strategy, receives internal or external feedback about attempt, adjusts goals for future attempts based on feedback

free play: process-based, creative, explorative activities
CHAPTER TWO

The Development of Music Expertise:

Applications of the Theories of Deliberate Practice and Deliberate Play

How do individuals become experts in any domain? Although long considered to be a direct function of the amount of time spent, the development of expertise is currently considered to be a complex process that is more closely related to the combination of amount and type of time spent actively engaged in the domain (Ericsson, 2003; Ericsson & Towne, 2010). Research in the development of expertise has identified several additional aspects of this process, including self-regulation, metacognition, contextual interference, and deliberate practice. Most of these aspects have been investigated in multiple domains, including music. Deliberate practice is one of the prevailing expertise development theories for music and other domains. In music, most research into skill development falls under the umbrella of deliberate practice; although, results from a few studies with very young children indicate music skills can be gained through play. Therefore, while deliberate practice currently remains the underlying premise for understanding how skills are gained in music, it does not adequately explain expertise development in all domains.

Deliberate practice has been studied extensively with respect to sport (Starkes et al., 1996), but it does not account for all expertise development in athletes. Recent research in sport psychology has identified a specific category of play-like activities that are instrumental to skill development for most expert and elite athletes. Sport psychologists now consider multiple types of activities in order to explain skill acquisition. Given that both musicians and athletes spend large amounts of time engaged in practice, studying the theories that sport psychologists use to explain athletic expertise
may also clarify our understanding of music expertise. Thus, in this chapter, I explain important issues in the development of expertise, including possible applications of theories derived from sport psychology to the development of expertise in music performance.

Expertise Development

The development of expertise is a multifaceted process that researchers have been investigating for a number of years. Early theories were that an individual could become an expert only after having spent considerable lengths of time engaged in a particular domain, such as the average of 10,000 hours\(^1\) first suggested by Simon and Chase (1973). Although time engaged in the domain is generally considered a required part of expertise development (Ericsson et al., 1993), such theories did not account for differences between the accomplishments of individuals who may have spent either the same or different amounts of time engaged in the domain. For example, why could a younger doctor with less experience be just as good a diagnostician as a highly experienced one? Or, why do some individuals progress to become elites in their field, while others stop developing regardless of amount of time spent? Although the answer to those questions is immensely complex, researchers have identified a set of stages of expertise development that may begin to provide some clarity.

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\(^1\) The “10,000 hour rule” was made popular by Malcolm Gladwell’s book *Outliers* (2008). Gladwell’s book was based on research by Simon & Chase (1973) and Ericsson (1993); both studies included averages of time devoted to practice before participants gained expert status. Ericsson (1993) developed the theory of deliberate practice to account for skill level differences between amateur and expert violinists who logged close to the same number of total practice hours; the expert violinists logged significantly more hours of deliberate practice than the amateur violinists. Gladwell’s original book does not fully explain Ericsson’s essential characteristic of deliberate practice as one main component to the complex issue of expertise development; although, later articles and blog posts by Gladwell do include the qualifier of approximately 10,000 hours of deliberate practice to master any skill.
Expertise development involving deliberate practice

Bloom’s model identifies three primary stages during expertise development: early, middle, and late (Bloom, 1985a). Bloom and other researchers interviewed experts in various fields and their parents, coaches, and teachers over the course of four years in order to determine how people developed into experts (Bloom, 1985b). Based on a cross-analysis of the data from multiple domains, they determined certain common characteristics by stages. During the early years, children are introduced to the domain in playful, fun ways, generally by a parent or close family friend. In the middle years, usually two to three years after the first introduction, three characteristics are apparent: individuals are spending more time in the domain, a teacher or coach is working with the individual, and the parent or family friend is primarily motivating practice efforts. In the late years, individuals and their families devote large amounts of financial resources and time to the pursuit of this field, the individual seeks out a master teacher, and the parent or family friend is no longer a primary motivator or additional teacher (Bloom, 1985a). Other researchers have confirmed these stages, and some have argued for a fourth “elite” stage where individuals have learned everything their teachers can teach and begin to seek personal solutions to the issues of the domain (Ericsson, 1996). Further research into expertise development, especially as it is informed by the activities of this new fourth stage, has identified deliberate practice as one of the primary factors in how new skills and knowledge are acquired and applied during development.

Deliberate practice, a concept originally established over 20 years ago, refers to intense, mentally taxing practice that is typically not enjoyable, but is designed to improve performance of a specified task (Ericsson et al., 1993). The initial research by K.
A. Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Romer (1993) focused primarily on musicians. The researchers interviewed groups of violinists and pianists matched by their ability levels, ages, and professions about their music careers, practice habits, and other daily activities. Most musicians reported feeling mentally drained after an effective practice session, while some also reported physical exhaustion and/or fatigue after practice, and normally rated their practice time as not particularly enjoyable. These two characteristics—not enjoyable and mentally taxing—formed the basis for the developing theory of deliberate practice.

In the domain of chess, researchers have determined deliberate practice to be an important influence on expertise development. Charness and Krampe (1996) investigated the correlations between skill ranking and various other variables among 136 internationally-ranked chess players from Germany, Russia, and Canada. Comparable to the findings of the original study of musicians, these chess players spent considerable amounts of time each week in deliberate practice. Similar to the musicians, the highest ranked chess players, those who had reached Grand Master status, had accumulated a considerable number of hours of practice alone, which the authors considered to be deliberate practice. For all of the chess players, practice alone included learning new game-play strategies, practicing end game techniques, and reading chess books focusing on technique; all of these activities were rated as mentally taxing, not particularly enjoyable, and focused on improving a specific aspect of performance. Unlike the musicians, only some of the chess players used a coach to achieve international ranking. The use of a chess coach was not correlated to skill ranking, but was correlated to country: thus it seemed likely that the use of coaches was determined by culture. The
researchers also compared practice alone to tournament play or other potentially social opportunities for expertise development. None of these other practice activities were as effective at predicting international ranking as practice alone, however (Charness et al., 1996). Practice alone may allow people the opportunity to focus their efforts on a specified task, rather than being concerned about issues of beating an opponent or winning a tournament. Regardless, the definition of deliberate practice was clarified to be mentally taxing, not enjoyable individual practice that was designed to improve a specific task.

Medicine is another domain that requires high levels of expertise for success, and much research has been completed on study habits to see which methods are more effective. Similar to the studies in music and chess, the most effective methods were those that involved high levels of mental effort and were generally rated as relevant to the profession, but not enjoyable (Ericsson, 2003; Moulaert et al., 2004). Specifically, the students who studied alone and chose techniques to improve a specific aspect of medicine consistently scored higher on exams. These studies supported Ericsson’s definition of deliberate practice.

Subsequent studies into multiple domains revealed a series of steps required for deliberate practice: individuals must be attempting to improve a specific aspect of a well-defined task, and they must have detailed feedback for their multiple attempts at improvement on the same or similar tasks (Ericsson, Nandagopal, & Roring, 2009; Ford et al., 2009; Ward, Hodges, Starkes, & Williams, 2007). The detailed feedback and multiple attempts are called a feedback loop—identifying a specific aspect of performance that needs improvement, attempting some strategy to improve performance,
receiving feedback on the attempt, and repeating the cycle with the new information (Zimmerman, 1990). Zimmerman elaborated:

This loop entails a cyclic process in which students monitor the effectiveness of their learning methods or strategies and react to this feedback in a variety of ways, ranging from covert changes in self-perception to overt changes in behavior such as altering the use of a learning strategy. (1990, p. 5)

It is important to note that participants were generally only able to maintain deliberate practice for a maximum of one hour before breaks, due to the required level of mental concentration (Ericsson, 2005; Ericsson et al., 1993; Ericsson et al., 2009; Moulaert et al., 2004). Thus, the operational definition of deliberate practice that will be used for this chapter is practice that is mentally taxing, not enjoyable, usually occurs alone and aims to improve a skill through a feedback loop.

**Deliberate practice in music**

For numerous years, researchers have applied the theory of deliberate practice and its facets to music practice. As expected, these researchers have determined that deliberate practice typically occurs individually, or occasionally with an instructor (Byo & Cassidy, 2008; Chaffin & Imreh, 2001; Duke, 2007). During one observational study, middle school participants recorded their practice sessions at home and then gave the videos to researchers (Christensen, 2010). The analysis of the various practice behaviors indicated that the most successful young musicians habitually repeated short sections of the piece with the goal of increasing tempo or accuracy. These young students were engaged in deliberate practice: they had specific goals and they used strategies to create a feedback loop.
Instead of observing what happens during practice sessions, other researchers have investigated particular aspects of deliberate practice. Some have focused on improving the feedback loop with younger students. Providing junior high school students with a model during the self-evaluation portion of deliberate practice was particularly helpful, but, in fact, all students performed better with a model, regardless of whether self-evaluation was required (Hewitt, 2001). However, the use of exemplary models did not improve self-evaluation skills (Hewitt, 2002). While using a model demonstrated to students what they should sound like, it was no guarantee that they would be any better at recognizing what they were currently doing. Self-evaluation scores of high school students were more accurate than those of middle school students when compared to experts’ ratings of individual performance (Hewitt, 2005); thus, the more advanced students were better at a necessary step of the feedback loop cycle.

Researchers particularly interested in how the brain processes information have looked at how deliberate practice functions over time. Consolidation refers to the concept that basic motor skill learning improves during sleep (Duke, 2007). In one study, participants learned a piano melody and then returned 12 or 24 hours later to test retention of the melody; participants who slept before the retention test outscored those who did not on temporal evenness, but not speed (Simmons, 2006). In a later study, researchers manipulated the timing or lack of an extended break during the participants’ initial learning of a short piano melody; those who had an extended break early in the process were most accurate when they performed the next day after sleep. Participants with the later break were more accurate than those who did not have an extended break (Cash, 2009). Thus, the mentally intense practice was more effective when participants
took frequent breaks and rested between practice sessions, similar to the presence of mental exhaustion and resulting naps described in other deliberate practice research (for example, see Ericsson, 1993).

The music learning and deliberate practice research reviewed here supports the notion that music learning happens through deliberate practice. As expected, the amount of deliberate practice increases over the course of a typical career. Many of the studies reviewed included adolescent or adult musicians. Thus, these studies are evidence of activities during Bloom’s later developmental stages, when the learner invests more time and resources in his career.

**Deliberate practice in sport**

While deliberate practice has been used effectively to describe expertise development in music, chess, and medicine, it is not as well suited to explaining athletic expertise. In a two-part study designed to investigate how deliberate practice functions in athletes compared to other domains, Starkes et al. (1996) surveyed 42 current and retired wrestlers of international and club levels, with similar numbers in each group. Wrestlers rated various practice and leisure activities on effort, enjoyment, and relevance to expertise development, and also estimated hours per week spent in each of the activities. Several off-mat activities were rated as physically or mentally effortful and relevant to development, but sparring was the only activity ranked as both physically and mentally effortful, and highly relevant to the development of expertise. Thus, sparring was identified as a deliberate practice activity for wrestlers. However, unlike deliberate practice in other domains, sparring is not a solitary activity and was rated as highly enjoyable. It is also important to note that sparring is designed to be comparable to actual
competition, so perhaps some of the reaction skills required for wrestling are best practiced in realistic scenarios. Unlike other domains, athletes rated deliberate practice activities as highly enjoyable; some of this difference may be explained by the structure of the questions. In the previous study using musicians, participants were asked to rate activities based on their enjoyment during the activity itself, and not on any perceived benefits of the activity (Ericsson et al., 1993). The athletes, however, were asked to rate enjoyment of the activity, without the request to ignore perceived benefits (Starkes et al., 1996).

In the second part of the study, Starkes et al. (1996) interviewed international level figure skaters and skating coaches from Canada, using comparable questions about practice and leisure activities. Similar to the wrestlers, several non-competition practice activities were rated as effortful or relevant, but only individual lessons and on-ice practice were rated physically and mentally effortful, and highly relevant for expertise development. Although figure skaters did rate individual practice in a way that matched most of the characteristics for deliberate practice, these activities were also rated as highly enjoyable. Thus, it seems that there are deliberate practice activities for elite and expert athletes where specific performance tasks are being addressed and improved, but the level of enjoyment is higher than in other domains (Starkes et al., 1996). Further research into deliberate practice in sport has supported the sport-specific qualification that deliberate practice may be enjoyable (Baker & Horton, 2004; Ford et al., 2009; Starkes et al., 1996; Ward et al., 2007).

Similar to expertise research in music, researchers have investigated how the feedback loop can function for athletes. Sport psychologists surveyed 150 athletes from a
variety of sports and of different skill levels in order to create a broader view of how imagery, or cognitive recreations of experiences, functioned as deliberate practice (Nordin, Cumming, Vincent, & McGrory, 2006). Based on ratings of mental concentration, enjoyment, relevance, frequency, and effort, several non-physical activities, such as imagining a skill or studying game strategies, were characterized as deliberate practice. Thus, elite athletes were found to engage in some solitary deliberate practice, similar to experts in music and other domains.

Deliberate practice in many sports requires mental concentration, may be enjoyable, and aims to improve specific aspects of necessary skills. The two primary differences between deliberate practice in sports and other domains are the enjoyment of the practice activities and the presence of other people. This rather broad definition seems to fit most elite or expert athletes; however, unlike many other domains, some athletes are able to rapidly attain elite status in a second sport, or to start their career much later than competitors. Although there are common skills and overall physical fitness required for most sports, deliberate practice alone does not adequately explain development for multi-sport and late-start elite athletes (Côté et al., 2007). Because the sport-specific definition of deliberate practice only describes expertise development among certain athletes, researchers constructed the Developmental Model of Sport Participation, which is described in the following section.

**Developmental Model of Sport Participation**

In an effort to illuminate how practice functions during athletic development, sport psychologists determined deliberate practice does exist for athletes; however, the careers of athletes who switched sports late in their career, or who rapidly gained skills
after beginning training much later than the average athlete, do not fit the predictions of deliberate practice (Baker & Horton, 2004; Ericsson, 2008; Ford et al., 2009; Memmert, Baker, & Bertsch, 2010). Côté (1999) suggested the Developmental Model of Sport Participation (DMSP) as an alternative explanation for athletes. DMSP includes deliberate practice as a large component of expertise development, as well as similar stages of development as those developed by Bloom and his colleagues. As previously noted, expertise development in areas other than sport follows three to four stages—early/introduction, middle/moderate amounts of time invested with teachers, late/large amounts of time and resources invested with outstanding teachers, and elite/mastery of skills and independent exploration of new possibilities—with increasing amounts of deliberate practice during each stage (Bloom, 1985a; Ericsson, 1996). DMSP, however, takes other non-deliberate practice activities into consideration, such as deliberate play. Deliberate play is the term used to describe activities that involve some aspects of play and some aspects of practice: those activities are enjoyable, process-oriented, flexible, and rarely supervised by adults, but have specific tasks required for success and may borrow rules from organized games or activities (Côté et al., 2007). Free play is also enjoyable, process-oriented, flexible, and not supervised by adults; however, free play is ever changing and does not require specific tasks for any level of success (Soccio, 2013). In sports, deliberate play activities could be shooting baskets with friends from the neighborhood, or playing tag—both of which could result in improved physical fitness, increased agility, and spatial awareness (Côté et al., 2007). Running and climbing around a playground in an unorganized manner would be considered free play, where individuals with better agility and spatial awareness would not be at any distinct advantage.
While DMSP includes both deliberate play and deliberate practice to explain the development of expertise, it also uses stages of development similar to Bloom’s model. During the *sampling* stage (ages 6-12), athletes are introduced to several activities that may or may not be related to their primary sport for a variety of lengths of time. Next is the *specialization* stage (ages 13-15), when athletes will choose one or a few sports as their primary commitment, typically ending their participation in many other activities. The final stage is *investment* (age 16+), when athletes commit considerable amounts of time, energy, and money into their specific sport (Côté et al., 2007).

Researchers have investigated the career development of ice hockey players through the lens of DMSP (Soberlak & Côté, 2003). Using a retrospective interview technique, researchers spoke with four elite ice hockey players, each with a National Hockey League contract, and with parents of three of the players, to create a timeline of sports and sports-related activities for each participant. All four of the elite ice hockey players were found to have followed the sampling, specialization, and investment stages of DMSP. All of the athletes reported engaging in the most deliberate play and the least deliberate practice during the sampling years, while deliberate play was replaced by deliberate practice sometime shortly after the beginning of the specialization years (Soberlak & Côté, 2003). Researchers also have found similar stages of development and progression from deliberate play to deliberate practice in triathletes (Baker, Côté, & Deakin, 2006), young soccer players (Ford et al., 2009), and players of several other team sports (Baker & Horton, 2004).

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Although the stages and amounts of deliberate practice and deliberate play used by athletes are accurately accounted for by DMSP for most team sports, some athletes have a drastically shortened sampling stage. Some chose to specialize in a sport early for personal reasons (Ford et al., 2009), while others specialized early because of the expectations of the sport, e.g., gymnastics or figure skating (Côté et al., 2007). Some researchers even consider early specialization in any sport to be detrimental to motivation, as substantiated by the significantly higher drop-out rates, and have recommended more deliberate play and sampling activities for younger athletes (Côté et al., 2009; Memmert et al., 2010).

DMSP incorporates both deliberate play and deliberate practice activities to explain the development of athletes. Similar to previous theories, DMSP includes three stages of development, with increasing amounts of dedication and deliberate practice as the career progresses. Unlike the theory of deliberate practice used most commonly with music research on expertise development, DMSP considers the skills gained through deliberate play as part of the development process.

**Play in Music**

Play has been identified as a method of learning, especially for young children (Anthony D. Pellegrini, 2009). Definitions of play are varied, but most include descriptions of free choice, enjoyment, and some component of exploration, imagination, or creativity (Lew & Campbell, 2005). Pellegrini and Smith explained that “play behavior is enjoyable, and that players, typically children or juveniles, are concerned with means over ends, and that the activity appears to be ‘purposeless,’ or to occur for its own sake” (1998). In music, researchers define music play as “activities that allow children to
explore, improvise, and create with sound” (Tarnowski, 1999, p. 27). These activities are enjoyable and process-oriented, like non-music play, but with sounds functioning as part of the activity (Soccio, 2013). This exploration-based definition is in contrast with non-musical sounds, where an instrument or sound has no musical meaning, such as using a guitar as a gun instead of creating sounds with it. Combining these definitions, I will operationally define the term music play to describe activities that use music sounds and include free choice, enjoyment, and exploration.

Music play can function differently for individuals or groups. In addition to playing by oneself, children may learn from watching others play, from playing in the same manner as another person, or interacting with another person (Tarnowski, 1999). Researchers have completed case studies of preschool children interacting with each other and with adults in play settings; one notable investigation focused on interactions within an early childhood music classroom (Berger & Cooper, 2003) and another included video and descriptions of play interactions at home as well as in the classroom (Koops, 2012b). Children observed for both of these studies exhibited playing in various groupings, with and without adults. Both studies’ researchers described examples of situations where a child’s play was either reinforced or interrupted during interactions with adults. The situations where children retained as much control over the music play process as possible were categorized as reinforcing, because the adult interaction extended or enhanced the play. Interruptions occurred when adults would join music play and alter rules, or somehow constrict creativity, whether intentionally or not. Koops (2012b) recommended “For teachers, being aware of adult involvement that promotes
children’s music expression and encouraging adults to preserve children’s control” (p. 25) may help create reinforcing music play activities.

Researchers have investigated what skills children learn through music play. Over the course of three years, Whiteman (2009) studied transcriptions of 443 songs of eight preschoolers engaged in music play. The songs were analyzed for uneven or even phrase length, existence of a pitch center, and use of known melodies/fragments or original compositions for melodic material. Over time, the children’s songs progressed from less sophisticated to more advanced in each category. Children also have been found to learn cultural norms through music play, as they establish their own individual culture, such as a child with a preference for orchestral music or a teenager with a dedication to punk rock that is likely different from those choices of their parents (Berger & Cooper, 2003; Covington-Ward, 2006). However, not all music play experiences are successful. Countryman (2014) analyzed the failed attempts at music play she observed on several elementary school playgrounds. Some of the interactions failed because of poor communication between leader(s) and followers, while many of them failed as a result of lack of some music skill, such as rhythmic timing. When considered together, these results indicate that children do learn through music play, and music skills are required for more advanced music play to be successful.

Music play has been described as a way to help develop creativity and expression in young children (Campbell, 2000; Lew & Campbell, 2005). The children of the Whiteman (2009) study sang songs using more original material as they aged—evidence of increased creativity. Other writers have considered the importance of imagination as a
method for exploring both the known and unknown. For a thorough explanation of the
various types of imagination, see Reichling (1997).

Music play is enjoyable, process-oriented, and involves a component of
exploration or imagination. Children gain various skills through music play. Most of the
research described supports Bloom’s early stage of development: children are exposed to
the domain through fun, playful activities, while still learning. Thus far, the presented
research has supported music learning through deliberate practice and music play, which
is further evidence for Bloom’s early and late stages of development. However, this
research does not fully account for the activities in the middle stage of development.
Recent research on expertise development by sport psychologists includes deliberate play
activities in this stage. The next section addresses implications for future research and
applications for the music teacher.

Applications and Implications

Expertise is developed in many domains through deliberate practice, which is
deﬁned as mentally taxing practice that is usually not enjoyable and is designed to
improve a speciﬁc aspect of performance. Research into many aspects of music practice
has shown that musicians’ performances and skills do improve through deliberate
practice. Like many other experts, athletes engage in deliberate practice as well; however,
deliberate practice alone does not adequately explain how many elite athletes develop.
The Developmental Model of Sport Participation has been used successfully to explain
expertise development in various sports by taking into consideration the numerous skills
and physical attributes gained during deliberate play as well as deliberate practice
activities. While children do seem to gain music skills through music play, the definition
of music play, which includes creativity and the process-oriented characteristics of free play, is not compatible with definitions of deliberate play in sport, which requires the feedback loop and some structure from deliberate practice that is not found in music play. By including skills gained through deliberate play, sport psychologists have been able to more accurately account for athletes who successfully switch sports late in their career and athletes who seem to progress rapidly from sampling many sports to expert status once they specialize. Because the inclusion of deliberate play as part of expertise development has been helpful to sport psychologists in determining how athletes reach an expert or elite status, it seems reasonable to consider the possibility that deliberate practice and music play may not be the only components of the effective development of music skills.

Researchers should investigate whether the development of music expertise follows stages similar to those of Bloom’s model as well as DMSP. Following these models, one would expect the beginning stage to involve exploration and several different music activities. As development progresses, musicians would begin to dedicate more time and resources to their music training, such as traveling to, or moving near, an advanced teacher. Parents would become gradually less central to decision making; instead the teacher would begin to take on a mentor role for the budding musician. For example, future music majors will select a college based on input from many sources, but they tend to listen most to the specialized advice that only their teacher can provide. Investigators should also consider what activities are reduced or replaced as intensive training becomes a higher priority. Do students give up sports or other non-music
activities? Do they reduce the number of music activities and focus on a specific music activity?

By examining the development of expert and elite musicians, researchers can clarify how the many types of music activities function as the types of play and practice. If deliberate play activities exist for musicians, what do they look like? Could the student in the practice room playing seemingly random notes actually be learning the physical aspects of playing throughout the instrument’s range? Perhaps the spoken challenge of, “I can play higher/faster than you!” serves to encourage students to increase their range.

Students getting together to play their assigned lines from the etude book have to work out how to start together, how to synchronize while playing, and how to end together. All of these scenarios fit the characteristics of deliberate play: process-oriented, student led, enjoyable, and success tied to skill level. If these scenarios are deliberate play, research should be conducted to determine how performance is altered as a result of the activities.

DMSP and other sports research has shown that dropout rates are much lower in sports where specialization occurs later after sufficient sampling has taken place. Côté et al. (2009) posited that early specialization could actually be detrimental to the motivation and development of young athletes. They argued that athletes who skip or severely shorten the sampling stage are more likely to experience “burn-out” and may fail to gain the variety of athletic skills learned through multiple sport participation. Furthermore, athletes who wait to specialize in one sport are more likely to continue to participate in recreational sports during adulthood (Côté et al., 2009). Researchers need to investigate the question of whether a variety of deliberate play activities have a similar impact on motivation and retention of music students. Will students be more motivated to gain skills
learned through deliberate play than deliberate practice activities? Since deliberate play activities are enjoyable, would students who experience more deliberate play be more likely to continue participating in music at a recreational level after leaving school?

Further research into these areas should clarify our comprehension of music learning and expertise development, specifically filling the gap of explaining the middle stage of development. If we can better grasp how experts develop during this middle stage, this understanding could potentially lead to ways that music deliberate play could be utilized in the classroom and practice room for the benefit of our students. Perhaps we can increase motivation through new ways to challenge our students with deliberate play activities. Rather than endure frustration that our students spend so little time practicing effectively, we could encourage them to play games that gradually require more music skills much like video games are designed to teach you skills through increasing difficulty. If more of our students enjoy learning and performing music, then more of them may transform into lifelong music participants. We may even be able to teach our students how to enjoy learning in general and derive pleasure from the challenges of life.
CHAPTER THREE

Practice Activities of Experts
A Retrospective of the Development of Expertise

How do elite musicians arrive at the pinnacle of their profession? Although many musicians, educators, and researchers have sought the answer to that question, there is still much to learn about the process. Ericsson’s theory of deliberate practice has been one of the prevailing theories describing expertise development since its introduction over twenty years ago. According to the theory, expertise is developed through practice that is intense, usually unpleasant, cognitively exhausting, and often solitary (Ericsson, 2008). Originally developed with musicians (Ericsson et al., 1993), the theory of deliberate practice has also been used successfully to track expertise development in chess (Charness et al., 1996) and medicine (Moulaert et al., 2004).

Sport psychologists have attempted to apply the theory of deliberate practice to athletic expertise development; however, even with sport-specific modifications, deliberate practice only partially explains the development of athletes (Côté et al., 2007). Elite athletes, especially in team sports, considered many parts of their practice to include mental and physical effort, two aspects of deliberate practice (Starkes et al., 1996). However, they would often rate the activity as enjoyable, contrary to the descriptions of deliberate practice in other domains. While attempting to determine how enjoyment functioned during deliberate practice for athletes, Côté (1999) looked beyond the activities typically associated with deliberate practice to understand expertise. He created the Developmental Model of Sport Participation (DMSP) as he considered how to account for all the activities involved with expertise development (Côté et al., 2007). As the name suggests, DMSP predicts different activities and levels of commitment.
dependent on other developmental factors—for example, age. Most young athletes are involved in several activities throughout the year during a stage labeled *sampling*. As the athlete stops participating in many other activities and begins to focus on a primary sport, they have progressed into the *specializing* phase. Finally, the athlete is considered *invested* when nearly all activities not related to their primary sport are given up, and they begin to commit large amounts of time, energy, and, often, money to their primary sport (Côté et al., 2007).

Although DMSP uses the three stages to describe the athletes’ commitment to their primary sport, proponents of this model also take into account the impact of all activities, whether organized, sport-related or neither of the two. Deliberate practice, deliberate play, and free play all have been found to contribute to expertise development in sport (Ford et al., 2009). Sport psychologists and psychologists studying expertise in non-sport fields such as chess, music or medicine, use the same definition for deliberate practice: an activity that is mentally taxing, requires physical and mental effort, is concentrated, and usually solitary (Ericsson, 2008). Free play is defined in terms similar to the way cognitive developmental psychologists use the word: uninhibited activities that are driven by an enjoyment of the process, rather than a specific outcome (Anthony D. Pellegrini, 2009). The operational definition of deliberate play involves multiple activities and includes aspects of both free play and deliberate practice: the activities often take rules from organized activities (deliberate practice), but are normally not supervised by adults (free play); they are enjoyable and process-oriented (free play), but also require increased skill for greater success (deliberate practice) (Côté et al., 2007).
In sports, deliberate play activities could include stick ball, shooting hoops, or tag, for example, all of which use some rules of an organized sport, but rarely have adult supervision. For athletes, these activities can contribute to social development, coordination, overall physical fitness, and agility. These deliberate play activities are rated as enjoyable, yet the pleasure is increased as additional effort leads to better performance. Thus, the repetition of these activities tends to lead to improved performance, a typical result of deliberate practice.

If the consideration of all relevant activities, not only those that are organized or supervised, can help explain expertise development in elite athletes, can the same be said for musicians? Musical practice has been a topic of research for quite some time. Aspects researchers have investigated include practice habits with regard to time (Byo & Cassidy, 2008), techniques used (Duke, Simmons, & Cash, 2009), inclusion of a model (Hewitt, 2001), and self-evaluation training (Hewitt, 2002), for example. Researchers have investigated the learning process as it happens, specifically studying short breaks (Cash, 2009) and sleep (Simmons, 2006) between blocks of repetitions to determine when learning and consolidation of memories occur. Stambaugh (2010) studied the impact of exact or varied repetition to see whether concepts of motor skill acquisition can be applied to music practice. The considerable body of research on music practice has led researchers to identify several ways music skills are gained through deliberate practice.³

Researchers have also investigated music play extensively (Soccio, 2013). Music play is defined in terms similar to free play: activities that are enjoyable, process-oriented, and without a specific purpose or goal (Lew & Campbell, 2005). Some

researchers have differentiated between play that involves musical instruments, such as using drum-sticks as swords, and music play, where music is an active part of the play experience (Koops, 2012b). Music play is often considered as a mechanism whereby young children can learn to develop creativity and expression (Campbell, 2000). Koops (2012a) considered how music play functioned between parent-child, teacher-child, and child-child interactions, still with a focus on the creative aspects of play. However, I have found no research that focuses on particular skills other than creativity that could be gained through various types of music play, or how music play can function for older children or adults.

Thus far, research into the development of musical expertise has investigated varying aspects of deliberate practice with instrumentalists, and music free play with younger children, but not deliberate play. If sport psychologists are able to explain athletic development more clearly by including skills gained through deliberate play, then music researchers should be able to utilize categories of deliberate play to explain music development, as musicians and athletes develop in similar stages. For these reasons, this research study will seek to answer the following questions to see if DMSP can be applied to musicians:

- Do elite musicians follow the sampling, specialization, and investment patterns that characterize athletic development?
- To what extent did elite musicians participate in a variety of musical activities during one or more stages of development?
- Did elite musicians participate in activities that might be considered musical deliberate play? If so, how did those activities function for those involved?
• What types of deliberate play activities do elite musicians use or recommend with their students?

Participants

Participants were selected using a purposeful sampling technique, or recruiting participants that match a desired population (Creswell, 2007). Expert musicians who played band or orchestral instruments were the desired population for this study. Because the vocal mechanisms mature later than other physical attributes required for instrumentalists, practice techniques and habits are noticeably different among developing vocalists and instrumentalists. Thus, vocalists were excluded from the current study to avoid potential interactions with chronological stage identification. Per IRB approved method, potential participants were invited via publicly available email addresses. I began with a search of major universities with well-known music programs ranked in the top 100 music programs in the United States by phds.org, because many of the faculty still perform and their email addresses are public information. Second, I searched for contact information on websites for renowned classically trained musicians with extensive traveling schedules who do not teach at a college or university. After a review of their publicly available biographies, I sent email invitations to musicians who met the initial screening requirements. In order to be considered, musicians were required to have at least two of the following three characteristics: at least one professionally recorded album of primarily solo literature, performance outside the United States on at least one major solo/chamber tour or three separate international solo/chamber conference events, and performance as a principal with a major orchestra for at least 3 seasons.
After the invitation email was sent, participants returned the consent form as well as an updated curriculum vitae, resume, or biography. After re-checking to make sure the participants met the initial screening requirements, I then scheduled the first interview with each participant. This recruitment process occurred simultaneously as the interviews and initial data analysis, allowing me to stop recruitment as I reached the point of saturation (Creswell, 2007). A total of 89 invitation emails were sent: 79 potential participants did not respond, 10 responded, but only five were able to participate (see Table 1 for description of each participant).
Table 1
Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Instrument Family</th>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Career Highlights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Woodwind</td>
<td>Originally from the East Coast Now lives in Midwest</td>
<td>Performed on several solo, chamber, and orchestral tours and recordings Primarily teaches in higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clara</td>
<td>Woodwind</td>
<td>Originally from Canada Now lives in Midwest</td>
<td>Performed on solo, and chamber tours Primarily teaches in higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>String</td>
<td>Originally from Russia Now lives in Midwest</td>
<td>International competitions, performed as soloist on tours Teaches in higher education only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave</td>
<td>Brass</td>
<td>Originally from Midwest Now lives in Midwest</td>
<td>Performed with orchestras and studio recordings Teaches in higher education only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Brass</td>
<td>Originally from Europe Based in Europe, significant travel</td>
<td>Performs internationally as soloist Multiple solo recordings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All names are pseudonyms. Instrument families are used, as the primary instrument might reveal the identity of the participants.
Method

Participants answered retrospective questions about musical and non-musical activities from elementary school through current habits. (See Appendix A for complete interview protocol.) I adapted the retrospective interview protocol developed by Côté, Ericsson, and Law (2005) as a basis for the questions used during each of these interviews by first replacing the sport-specific developmental activities and milestones with their equivalents in music. I piloted the adapted version of the protocol twice: first with an advanced musician who had completed graduate music training, and second with an expert musician who met one of the three criteria for consideration as an expert. The protocol was revised based on feedback from both sessions; however, as neither of the musicians met the minimum study requirements, those results were excluded. The original protocol was too long for one interview, therefore questions were prioritized for the initial interview; follow-up questions were developed based on research and feedback from piloting.

Retrospective interviews have been used for several years as a way to study the development of expertise (Baker et al., 2006; Bloom, 1985b; MacDonald et al., 2009). As retrospective techniques have not been found to be accurate when musicians were asked to estimate time spent in the practice room (Madsen, 2004), the questions used in this study primarily concerned the types of activities used and effort required rather than specific details about time. Questions regarding time spent in an activity have been shown to have a high rate of accuracy with athletes (MacDonald et al., 2009), but less so with musicians. Some of the difference in accuracy between athletes and musicians may be in the way athletes track improvement through statistics and other quantitative data,
while music success is often based on more subjective interpretations. Thus, the questions related to listing and describing the activities of development were considered a higher priority than the questions relating to time spent involved in any one activity.

I interviewed each participant using the retrospective interview protocol. Interviews for three of the participants were completed in two sessions in person or over video-conferencing software, and two participants were able to answer all questions in one session. Due to several schedule conflicts, there were typically at least two months between interviews. Because each session involved different questions, and I reviewed relevant text from the initial interview with the participant before discussing any follow-up questions, I did not consider this time length to be problematic. Interviews were audio and video recorded, and then transcribed by the author for a total of ninety-six single-spaced pages of text (See Appendix E for interview transcripts). Emails, biographies, CV/resumes, and research memos accounted for forty-seven additional pages of single-spaced text. Because I analyzed throughout the study, I wrote research memos to process my thoughts, enable me to accurately depict the lived experiences of each participant, and recognize when I had reached the point of saturation, when no new relevant information was collected (Creswell, 2007). After the initial interview with the fourth participant, I determined that I was at or near saturation. I recruited and interviewed a fifth and final participant to search for any new relevant information. Finding no new relevant information, I determined these five participants to be an appropriate sample size for this study.

Transcriptions and other documents were coded using open coding and codes from research: deliberate practice, deliberate play, free play, developmental stages, and
teacher-mentor relationships. Throughout this process, I consulted with a music education professor with experience in music practice research; these discussions served as my peer debriefing, or using a knowledgeable colleague to “provide a transparent way to show how data were collected and managed” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 221). The initial coding scheme resulted in 130 codes, which I used to develop 89 first themes. The first themes were then condensed into six major themes.

**Trustworthiness**

Before starting the interviews, I wrote a research memo (Appendix D) about my career development and teaching philosophy in order to identify and bracket personal bias to avoid allowing my experiences and understanding to overshadow that of the participants. Prior to the initial interview with each participant, I reviewed their CV and publicly available short biographies to look for patterns of involvement. After the interviews were completed, I compared the print material and the interview responses to verify these multiple sources of data. Due to the advanced career stage and age of most of the participants, interviewing the parents or former teachers of the participants, as has been done in some previous research of this nature (Bloom, 1985b; Côté, 1999; Soberlak & Côté, 2003; Sosniak, 1985), was not possible.

I shared the transcripts, research memos, and the primary codes with participants for verification after completion of the interview protocol. During the process of data analysis, I consulted with a fellow researcher with similar background in music practice research. I also consulted with Dr. Côté via email about the interview process and my findings, as he has considerable knowledge about practice and deliberate play.
Findings and Discussion

DMSP is a model that incorporates multiple types of activities and other influences to explain the development of athletes. This model divides development into three stages—sampling, specialization, and investment—with a different combination of activities and social influences. DMSP contains three main avenues of development for athletes depending on if, and when, the athlete specializes in one sport (Côté et al., 2007). The recreational athlete will sample multiple sports before and during adolescence, and will likely continue to participate in recreational sports as an adult, with a focus on physical fitness and enjoyment. Although the recreational athlete typically is active in sports for several years, they never enter the specialization or investment stages of development. The second path, elite through sampling, involves the athlete trying out multiple sports early in their career, and then specializing around age 12 and investing around age 15. For example, the professional hockey player who also played soccer, football and baseball early in their career would be an elite through sampling athlete. The final path to athletic expertise, early specialization, involves the athlete specializing in one sport by age six, usually after little to no sampling of sports. Gymnasts or figure skaters are common examples of early specialization. It is important to note that even though each of these paths reaches the stages at different times, age is not the determining factor for the stages. Instead, the combination of play, deliberate play, deliberate practice, and other social influences are the defining characteristics of each stage. As musicians tend to attain expert status in their thirties or forties (Ericsson et al., 1993), much later than most team-sport athletes (Côté et al., 2007), I used the activities and other social influences of DMSP as my a priori coding scheme, but not the age ranges.
The analysis of the interviews described previously revealed that all five participants had engaged in deliberate practice and deliberate play to various extents during their musical development. Although each developed musical skills at different ages and rates, all of their careers were consistent with the various characteristics of DMSP stages. These experts also discussed the importance of self-awareness to their musical development, and how this awareness changed throughout life. The following sections include descriptions of the activities and other influences that match the predictions of DMSP. The final section is an explanation of awareness, and how it functioned for these participants throughout the development process.

**Sampling Stage**

The main characteristics of the sampling stage are multiple activities, considerable time in free play, some deliberate play, and little, if any, deliberate practice. It is important to note that explanations of development often include activities that may not seem to be directly related to the eventual domain of expertise (Bloom, 1985a; Côté, 1999); however, some of these non-domain related activities lead to personality traits desirable for later stages—such as perseverance, dedication, and hard work. Describing her sampling years, Jane first listed several non-music activities including swimming, bike riding, and “just playing with my friends. . . there was a lot of time spent outdoors.” Clara also experienced social time outdoors: “there was a group of neighborhood kids, and we just sort of lived outside as a gang.” Dave grew up on a farm, and remembers completing numerous chores and spending a lot of time in the fields. Clara and John both described hiking alone and with friends. These social activities assisted each participant in developing the social skills they would require for their music career. Reading was a
popular activity among all of the participants—reinforcing the ability to engage in solitary activities, another requisite skill for advanced musicians.

The participants also described a few music activities during their sampling stage. Jane mentioned often attending concerts in the nearby city-center with her parents. Jane’s parents would nearly always have the radio playing the classical music station. Clara detailed the “amazing children’s programming” of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and coming home to listen to the radio most afternoons. Dave listened to the practice of his older siblings, who would eventually earn music education degrees. Dave credited his father for some of his early exposure to music:

[W]e had a record player and my dad had a kind of a strange eclectic music taste. It was everything from Doc [Severinson] to some orchestral recordings. And he belonged to probably the Columbia club, so it was a new record a month sort of thing. You know, modern jazz quartet.

Jane, Clara, George, and John all revealed taking some form of piano lessons by mid-elementary school, but Dave primarily experienced early music through school. George was the only participant who did not attend elementary music classes as part of school; the others described mostly music play activities, such as exploring sounds on various instruments, singing made-up songs, or other teacher-led music games. All of the participants started lessons on their primary instrument during the sampling stage. Thus, the participants had a variety of activities during sampling that included an introduction to music, as DMSP would predict.

In addition to variety, the types of activities also followed the expected pattern based on DMSP. Most of the activities were creative, flexible, and exploration based, which fit the categories of play. The music listening and concert attendance were all labeled as exciting and fun; Jane, in particular, talked about the anticipation before she
and her parents went into the city to attend a concert. It is unlikely that all children would consider concert attendance as play, perhaps due to the expectations of concert etiquette. Concert attendance is categorized as play for these participants because of the manner in which they describe the activity: Concerts were fun, enjoyable, and a chance to explore different styles of music. There were a few deliberate play activities, mostly non-music activities like playing versions of tag, ball, soccer, and other sports. However, many of the participants reported music play activities during elementary music classes. Private lessons, practicing, and homework were the only activities listed as deliberate practice. All of the participants mentioned working hard while at school and practicing at home; however, each participant emphasized they were only meeting expectations of effort. Thus, the activities of the sampling period fit the predictions of DMSP: mostly play, some deliberate play, and a little deliberate practice.

One characteristic of DMSP and Bloom’s model of development (1985a) is the influence of adults over time, beginning with the sampling or early stage. Parents are expected to be the most influential, and the teachers to be enjoyable, gregarious, but knowledgeable. Jane described her parents as “supportive,” and her first piano teacher as “fun.” George also described his first music and piano lessons as “fun.” George’s parents invited a tutor to their home to work with his older brother, but George showed considerably more interest in the lessons. George described that he loved it so much that his parents decided that he should enter the neighborhood music school in the afternoons. Clara, however, began taking music lessons for a different reason. Due to stress from the high expectations of her parents, Clara needed an activity that would be strictly fun. Clara’s parents worked with the teacher to ensure that piano lessons would be enjoyable,
with no exams and very little pressure. Clara would often select her own music for
lessons, and she took as long as was necessary to learn the music. In each of these
scenarios, the parents introduced the participant to music through a fun, energetic teacher,
similar to how athletes’ parents have been found to introduce the future elite athlete to
their chosen sport (Soberlak & Côté, 2003). Thus, the parents were the greatest influence
on the participants during the sampling stage.

**Specialization Stage**

The next stage, specialization, is when students begin to spend more time in their
chosen domain, and play activities begin to be replaced by more time in deliberate play
and practice. Jane, Clara, and Dave all specialized during high school or college, similar
to the typical age of specialization suggested by Bloom (1985a). Jane and Clara both
listed several music activities during high school—such as band, orchestra, community
groups, and private lessons—but less social time with friends than during the sampling
stage. Dave was involved in a few sports and worked at a local restaurant during high
school, but spent the majority of his free time playing or listening to music.

The other two cases did not follow the average timeline of specialization, but did
follow the other characteristics of increased time and resources. George specialized much
earlier than the other participants, after a very brief sampling stage. He started attending a
neighborhood music school two afternoons each week by age six. In addition to lessons
on his primary instrument, he attended classes on music literature, piano, and theory. By
age seven he was attending class at the neighborhood music school “at least four nights a
week.” George reported only participating in music activities, school work, and reading
during this time. John, on the other hand, had an extended sampling period and shortened
specialization period. John began to learn an instrument in elementary school, but then quit band after about one year. At age 15, John began playing his primary instrument for the first time, and was performing with professional groups within fewer than three years. Thus, John traversed from sampling through specialization in fewer than three years.

Each of the participants reported engaging in more deliberate practice during specialization than they had during the sampling stage. They described spending more time on practicing with much more focus and effort. George described the change this way: “I actually remember spending an hour on three notes for the first time in my life—seriously trying to get something on my own.” Many of them mentioned increased routines to their practicing, with the clear intention of developing fundamental technique. The participants also described much more active listening during this period. They were listening to and watching excellent, professional quality performances to establish a good sound in their mind, as well as reinforce fundamental technique and musicality. Some of this active listening was assigned by teachers, but most came from a desire to constantly hear outstanding music.

Most of the experts still participated in some form of deliberate play during specialization. George, the early specializer, described the least amount of deliberate play, as “the culture was just not there.” He did improvise at the piano, following the rules of voice-leading and harmony. These improvisation sessions were “child-directed, unpredictable, and flexibly governed,” yet they encouraged improved technical abilities, similar to more recent descriptions of deliberate play (Côté, Ericsson, & Abernethy, 2013, p. 17). However, he described it as not really relevant to his development—it was just something he did. By early elementary school, George had also learned to listen to
operas while watching a score. His father, an opera singer, would bring him opera recordings and scores. As he described it, “I would just lie in bed and listen to full operas with the score. It was a favorite pastime when I was sick, besides reading.” George’s activities, although not necessarily typical for an average American child, served as deliberate play for him and his family.

Jane and Clara both described sight-reading duets with friends. These reading sessions were not assigned by a teacher, fitting the student-led and fun characteristics of deliberate play. Jane portrayed the reading sessions as fun with her best friend, but also revealed how they both learned to synchronize and adjust to each other in order to keep the duets going. Jane and Clara also performed with various community groups, describing early attempts at improvising and fun interactions with the intergenerational groups. Deliberate play for Jane and Clara involved the social learning described in more recent writings about deliberate play in sports (Côté et al., 2013).

John’s deliberate play was initiated by an adult, but then taken over by John himself. He described his teacher “betting” John that he could not play a certain technique exercise at the next faster metronome setting before his next lesson. If John could beat the challenge, then his teacher gave him the equivalent of $15 (USD). John describes then taking those challenges on himself, and setting a goal of playing all the exercises in Arban’s Complete Method as fast as physically possible. John’s teacher also played a recording of an expert musician who had performed all four parts of a quartet, recording each part onto a track. John decided that he wanted to do that, so he found the recording and started working. He transcribed the original recording, and then repeatedly recorded himself playing the parts of the quartet until it sounded as good as the original.
John credits that process of recording, analyzing, then fixing as central to his learning, and thanks his teacher for giving him a challenge that would motivate him to go beyond what his teacher intended.

Dave described several activities of deliberate play, but two were the most salient: family marching band music time and a progressive rock band. Dave’s mother was the only member of his family who had not learned to play an instrument growing up. Dave, his brother, sister, and father would get together and play from a set of marching and swing band books, but his mother felt left out. As he explained:

So she taught herself to play alto saxophone. And what we did a lot of nights was just, we all—for some reason this ended up happening almost all the time in my brother’s bedroom—we would get together and play out of the marching band books. All five of us. And it was great. And my mom was terrible. . .But nobody ever gave her any grief at all about this saxophone thing. I think we all thought this was pretty damn cool that she had done this.

These impromptu reading sessions were often filled with laughter and became a family bonding time with music. The family continued to play through similar marching and swing band books each summer during the family vacations, even after Dave and his siblings were well into adulthood. Dave smiled as he described these times with his family and the friends he had recruited to take the place of deceased family members. Dave also performed with a local, professional progressive rock band during high school. The band leader would organize and write out parts to many popular hits by groups such as Chicago and Blood, Sweat, and Tears, and other rock bands that featured instruments. Dave “had about three or four hours of music memorized, because nobody told us we weren’t supposed to be doing that.” He described a lot of fun times, numerous gigs, and a great exposure to the reality of the music business through his times with that group.
rehearsals were primarily run-throughs, with repeats for any major catastrophes, which Dave described as “not really rehearsing or practicing.” Dave did describe the actual gigs and tours as “incredibly enjoyable,” and yet they certainly required improved skill for better performance. Thus, I categorize Dave’s time with the band as deliberate play because they meet the definition by being enjoyable, requiring improved skill, and not mentally taxing at the same level as deliberate practice.

As predicted by DMSP and Bloom’s model, the parents became less influential during specialization as the participants began to develop mentor relationships with their teachers. All of the participants elaborated on the idea of a teacher becoming like a mentor during their career. For Clara and George, their main teacher during specialization was not a good teacher-student match. Although they did consider their teacher to be more influential than their parents, they did not build a mentor relationship until their investment period. Jane talked about her mentor-teacher during the specialization stage with an ever-present smile: “he was completely unorthodox. And sometimes very difficult, but I loved him a lot—we all did. He was the greatest.” Dave portrayed his mentor-teacher as “one of the great [Primary Instrument] teachers in the world, and one of the nicest people in the world. He’s just unbelievable.” John described his mentor-teacher as a perfect match to his own personality, because the teacher quickly figured out that the student was motivated very well by challenges. Like many others, John described his mentor-teacher relationship as “a whole experience. It was not just about [Primary Instrument], it was about reading old Donald Duck magazines, looking at different instrument models, talking about technical things like computers, that you know cross both of our paths of interest. So, it was really not just playing, you could say.”
The mentor-teacher at this stage introduced the student to a whole new way of viewing the world, emphasizing musical and real-world values to expose the students to aspects of music and life they would never have known otherwise. In these ways, the mentor-teacher became a strong influence on the developing expert.

Investment Stage

The final stage of DMSP and Bloom’s models is the investment stage. Future experts become invested when significant amounts of time are dedicated to music by removing most other activities. Many will relocate or dedicate significant financial resources to study with a master teacher. Because so much time is devoted to deliberate practice activities, most deliberate play ends by the investment stage, as was the case with these participants. All of the participants described a time when most of their other activities gave way to make room for more practice, performance, and listening. As Jane described, “And, then when I got serious, I practiced a heck of a lot.” Jane, Clara, and Dave all reached investment at the end of their undergraduate degrees, or the beginning of their graduate degree. John and George reached investment by the end of their teenage years: John after a shortened specialization period and George after a long, but early, specialization.

Participants also depicted their approach to practice undergoing a major change during this stage. Descriptions of earlier practice included numerous routines and repetitions, but minimal self-analysis. George underwent the greatest transformation in his practice, describing his time between the specialization and investment period as incredibly frustrating. “When I left I realized that I had no idea how to practice at all because there was no system. . . . And each night I was basically reinventing the wheel.”
After what he described as “a complete technique collapse,” George began studying with his mentor-teacher, who rebuilt his technique from the “absolute beginning.” Dave described his mentor-teacher as “shining a light” on all the weaknesses in his playing, effectively ending his habit of primarily practicing what he could already do well. John’s experience regarding practice was more dramatic. John credits spending one year practicing eight hours every day as the primary contributing factor to his gain in musical skills. He did not answer the phone or take jobs during his intensely regimented practice time. He would actively practice with the instrument for 20 minutes, rest for 10, and then repeat the cycle from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with a 30-minute break for lunch. He set up this schedule specifically to allow his brain a break, “because you really can’t concentrate much longer than 20 minutes if you are actually practicing.” Taking frequent breaks to avoid mental exhaustion is a characteristic of the experts studied in deliberate practice research (Charness et al., 1996; Ericsson et al., 1993).

Many of the participants also relocated at the beginning or middle of the investment stage to study with a new teacher. Clara, Dave, and John all moved across their countries to study with a new teacher. George switched to a new and better teacher in the same major metropolitan area as his family. Jane decided against entering law school, as was her and her father’s plan at the time. Instead, Jane stayed at her undergraduate institution to enter the graduate music program. Thus, all of the participants made a major financial commitment and/or relocated to pursue their area of developing expertise, a major characteristic of investment.
Awareness

In addition to careers that developed following the predicted stages and characteristics of DMSP, awareness emerged as a major issue during the ongoing coding and analysis of the interviews. Awareness in this study refers to music knowledge, self-knowledge, and career knowledge. Each of these types of knowledge led to various degrees of awareness. This awareness was a major factor in each part of the participants’ careers as performers and as teachers. Awareness as a theme first presented after Clara’s interview, and then all three of the male participants brought up the issue of awareness during responses to other questions. Follow-up questions in the same or next interview were used to better understand how awareness functioned for these participants. After completing all the interviews, I returned to the transcriptions to look for awareness again. All of the participants mentioned awareness or codes directly related to awareness, e.g., “knowing how to practice,” career aspirations, priority shifts. Thus, I considered awareness to be salient to the participants’ lived experience. Previous research on expertise utilized the moment when an individual realized they could become a professional or expert in their domain as a marker of development (Côté, 1999; Côté et al., 2005) and recognized the changes in the influence of adults, as previously mentioned (Bloom, 1985a; Sosniak, 1985); however, general awareness over the course of an expert’s development was not directly addressed.

Music knowledge during the sampling stage. Awareness in the earliest stages of learning an instrument was most often portrayed as being minimal. Jane, Clara, and Dave all described having no idea how bad they sounded as beginners, because they had no concept of an excellent, characteristic tone quality for their instrument. John took it one
step further: “I clearly remember an episode in the orchestra where the conductor told us to play the sharp second finger, ‘cause we were playing the first finger—because we didn’t care about the sharps, right? And I clearly remember that we were looking at each other, me and the other guy. ‘Who cares? First? Second? I mean. . .’” John would later develop into an internationally renowned brass player, with exceptional technical ability and musicality. However, at the beginning, he did not care, because, as John said, “we were not able to hear that we were wrong.” Music knowledge awareness is related to research on error detection and self-assessment with musicians. In general, researchers use the term error detection to describe a musician’s ability to recognize incorrect notes, rhythms, or other aspects of music performance. For example, researchers have investigated music education students’ ability to correctly identify errors in a single section or full ensemble (Waggoner, 2011). Self-assessment among musicians has been investigated in terms of overall accuracy (Hewitt, 2005), the influence of teaching level and primary instrument (Hewitt & Smith, 2004), and the impact of self-recording and time (Silveira & Gavin, 2015). Logically, music knowledge would be less early in a musician’s development; however, this finding is specific to awareness of one’s lack of knowledge.

The participants also mentioned this minimum level of awareness when discussing young students. Similar to John’s story about the sharp, beginning students were generally portrayed as not understanding the quality of the sounds they produced. Dave candidly stated this about beginning students: “the worst thing about elementary school band is how awful they all sound.” Dave and George both emphasized beginners’ need to frequently listen to models of outstanding musicianship. John emphasized
listening to and playing with an outstanding teacher, “because as a kid you don’t know what a good sound is.” Interestingly, results of previous studies have indicated that models do help young band students improve (Hewitt, 2001). Many music educators would agree that beginning music students often lack music knowledge and thus, awareness.

**Self-knowledge during specialization and investment stages.** During the specialization and investment stages, the participants experienced increases in self-knowledge. For Jane, interactions with expert musicians, including her mentor-teachers were essential for self-knowledge. Jane attended a summer chamber music festival near the end of her undergraduate career. She explained:

> I played chamber music for the first time. It was the most beautiful estate that they had this festival at. . . . My teacher, my first chamber coach was a great, great musician. He was a composer who worked with Robert Bloom, and all these immensely, amazing musicians. And, I was hooked.

Jane smiled and continued to tell stories of great musical experiences and of the point at which she realized that her great passion was for music. Clara’s family and friends realized her passion for music before she did:

> What’s interesting about this is that I talked with people who knew me at the time, and they all knew that I was going to be a professional musician. I was the one who didn’t know that I was going to be a professional musician.

Clara cites the tragic loss of her close friend as a “catalyst” that caused her to evaluate her life. Clara acknowledged her love of music and desire for it as a career based on her new self-knowledge, in this case a shifting of priorities. John described his mentor-teacher as opening up doors for him, making John realize his potential as a professional musician,
and stated, “You know, for a guy fifteen years old to think that you can be better than
your teacher one day? That’s pretty huge.”

As teachers, the participants create environments where students are likely to gain
self-knowledge. When working with her studio each year, Jane puts all of the students
into random pairs to play duets. Occasionally, the pairs include a new freshman and an
advanced graduate student. In these situations, Jane encourages the pair to talk through
what they noticed about the other student’s playing afterward. Inevitably, the less
experienced student gained the self-knowledge part of awareness, as the more advanced
student shared music knowledge. Dave uses technology to compel students to increase
their self-knowledge. Like many brass teachers, he described repeatedly telling his
students to hold notes full value without letting the sound decay. In the year of this study,
Dave was having his students audio record performances and examine the wave patterns
while listening to the recording. He would tell his students:

Look right there. Do you see how that note goes and then it collapses right
there at the end? . . . I don’t think I’ve ever had anybody look at one of
those wavelength images and say anything other than, you know, pardon
me, but it’s always like “Oh, Shit!”

Dave believed his students could not ignore the visual representation of the auditory
problem; the students “have had their eyes and ears really sort of violently yanked open.”
According to Dave, the students’ music knowledge and self-knowledge both increased
significantly as a result of “indisputable evidence” of their problem. Dave noted that
these “Oh, Shit!” moments are critical, because they always lead to “nice arcs of growth”;
and once the student is aware of the issue, they work very hard to fix the problem.

**Career knowledge during specialization and investment stages.** Career
knowledge is an understanding of the numerous avenues to a music career and the many
forms a music career may take. As an undergraduate, Jane was planning a career in journalism when her band director asked her to participate in a summer festival. “I had never, you know, done anything like this before. It would be nice to earn some money. And, I went. And, that was it”; Jane had decided to be a professional musician. Jane experienced playing in a high quality chamber group as well as working in a music library—both positions were music career opportunities. Dave described his lack of career knowledge through a story about taking time off from school while pursuing his doctoral degree. “[A]bout halfway through the first semester, I was starving to death – really starving.” When Dave confessed his problem to his studio professor,

He said, “Why don’t you go home for a while. Put some money in the bank and just go home and practice.” I was like, “What? I can do that?” I really remember where I was sitting when he said this. It was just like, hit by a two-by-four.

In addition to the career knowledge Dave heard from his professor, he also discovered the life of an orchestral musician after returning home to play in an orchestra.

Perhaps because Dave’s career took many “weird twists and turns,” he specifically aimed to increase his students’ awareness through career knowledge. When freshmen would come to their first few lessons, they would often have the next 10 years of their life planned. He stated:

I used to just sort of shake my head, and kind of talk to myself about it. But now I say, “No you’re not. That’s not the way that this is going to go.” They’re like, “What?” “I know something will change, you’ll move to London and play in a ska band. You just never know.”

Dave elaborated and said that he felt it was his duty to open his students’ eyes to the many possibilities within the music business.
Conclusion

In order to apply recent advances in sport psychology to music, I interviewed five expert musicians about their activities during development. DMSP and established categories of deliberate practice, deliberate play, and free play were used a priori to understand the overall development. I adapted retrospective interview techniques used with athletes to understand the types of activities these musicians participated in while young. The careers of the elite and expert musicians who participated in this study followed the sampling, specialization, and investment stages of DMSP and Bloom’s model; however, these models do not include the issue of awareness identified in this study. The participants explored different types of activities, including an introduction to music during the sampling period. Most of their time was devoted to play and exploration. Next, they specialized in music, limiting their non-music activities. Deliberate play in music became more prevalent, as did preliminary deliberate practice. Finally, during the investment stage, a significant amount of time and resources were devoted to music-related activities. Participants described investment as “getting serious”—they spent considerably more time in deliberate practice, developed relationships with expert musicians, and relocated or switched to a master-teacher.

The participants did not necessarily follow the typical ages of DMSP, however. Perhaps the timing of the stages was substantially different because most of these musicians started their sampling in music about five to ten years after the average team-sport athlete began their involvement in sports. The age discrepancy could be attributable to the small sample size, which is a limitation of this study and precludes transfers to the general public. Three of the five participants did reach the specialization stage in about
the same amount of time as the expert concert pianists studied in the development of Bloom’s model (Sosniak, 1985) and the athletes in the Côté (1999) study of families of experts. Future research using similar retrospective techniques, or studying younger musicians whose parents and teachers are also available to participate, could be used to identify more generalizable ages for the sampling, specialization, and investment stages. Although generalizations about the average ages of each stage are not possible based on this study, educators should learn the characteristics of the different stages. If a student is still in the sampling stage, then this model predicts little, if any, deliberate practice. Thus, assignments that are primarily deliberate practice based may not always be the most developmentally appropriate or effective teaching tools for these students. However, learning effective ways to practice, such as deliberate practice, is an essential component of expertise development (Ericsson, 2008). Educators should consider using a combination of deliberate play and deliberate practice based on their knowledge of the student’s abilities and music developmental stage. Perhaps quiz-show style games (deliberate play) could be used to reinforce cognitive music knowledge (e.g., key signatures, fingerings, clefs, and note names). Rhythms, on the other hand, may be a skill best learned through analysis and repetition, which would more closely resemble deliberate practice.

As expected, each of the participants reported spending significant amounts of time and effort in deliberate practice and other analytical music activities. However, before they began focusing on deliberate practice, they all experienced deliberate play in music to varying extents. All of the deliberate play activities described were enjoyable, student-led, and process-oriented, yet they required improved skills for increased success.
Some of the deliberate play scenarios related by the participants included the social component that is common in scholarly discussions of free play and deliberate play. Educators could use deliberate play activities as a way for students to learn to navigate the issues of cooperative learning while reinforcing or gaining music skills. Researchers should consider completing observational studies involving children in the sampling and specialization stages, when the most deliberate play occurs, to clarify the social component of deliberate play in music.

The progression of activities and adult influences described above matches the predictions of DMSP and Bloom’s model. The models did not predict the importance of awareness, however, as found in this study. Awareness is understood through three main types of knowledge: music, self, and career. These three types of knowledge grew over the course of the participants’ careers, leading to increased awareness for each. Early in their careers, participants had very little self-knowledge and music knowledge, which led to ineffective practice. As they progressed, participants increased their self and music knowledge to lead to an awareness of new career possibilities. Participants also described how students were not able to progress without awareness of their “issues”; awareness led to “arcs of growth,” potentially due to frustration from realization of previous ignorance. Perhaps awareness as a major concept was not described in other models because it was viewed as a by-product of development and maturation. Music awareness, in particular, is important to educators, as individuals generally cannot solve problems they know nothing about. Future research should consider the possible connection between error detection and music knowledge viewed through awareness as a part of overall development.
Based on the findings of this study, it appears that DMSP is applicable to, and helps explain, the development of expert musicians. This model adds the component of deliberate play to previous explanations of the development of expertise. Thus, educators may wish to consider fostering situations for deliberate play. For example, quiz-show style games for facts, friendly competition on scale accuracy and speed, and allowing time for creative based, student-led chamber music. Researchers should investigate whether deliberate play activities are effective practice techniques, similar to how deliberate practice has been shown to be effective during music skill acquisition (Miksza, 2011). Given that deliberate play is characteristically enjoyable and skill-dependent, researchers need to investigate whether deliberate play activities are motivating for students who are beginning to learn instruments and could therefore provide useful pedagogical information. As Dave expressed, “practice is hard enough, you know, without making it boring, and pedantic, and stupid.” Perhaps teachers could utilize deliberate play activities in innovative ways to assist students with learning and improving their music performance skills.

This study adds to the growing body of research explaining the development of music expertise. DMSP and deliberate play are both useful concepts for understanding the various activities of development, but more research is needed before these concepts and the additional finding of awareness can be applied to general populations. Perhaps this research could lead to a more inclusive model of music expertise development that utilizes music play, deliberate play, and deliberate practice to explain the complex process of development.
CHAPTER FOUR

The Effects of Deliberate Play Activities on Middle School Student Motivation and Performance

People try new things and put forth extra effort for a variety of reasons. Most music educators would agree that success in music requires effort; the greater the success, the greater the effort required. Practice is an essential part of developing musical expertise. Scholars have investigated how music students have learned through practice since the mid-twentieth century. Now into the twenty-first century, scholars have established many ways that experts in various domains learn and improve skills through practice. However, recent advances in sport psychology have identified skills athletes also gain during play-like activities. These play-like activities are enjoyable in nature, and yet athletes gain and refine skills through these activities. Because these play-like activities are enjoyable and often challenging, they could lead to increased motivation. Prior to considering how these play-like activities could function in music, one must therefore review the issues surrounding practice, play, and motivation.

Practice activities considered to be deliberate practice are defined as mentally exhausting, often not enjoyable, aimed at improving specific tasks or skills through a feedback loop, and, for musicians, usually occurring alone (Ericsson et al., 1993). The best “practicers” are individuals who excel at the feedback loop, which has three steps: first, learners will attempt a specific task; second, they will receive internal or external feedback about the attempt; and third, they will set a new goal based on the feedback received (Miksza, 2011). During deliberate practice, musicians use strategies such as choosing a small segment of music to play at a slow or fast tempo, practicing the scale or
chord that is the basis for a pattern, or separating one aspect of playing on which to focus, such as fingerings or rhythms. A number of these strategies have been used for generations. More recently, researchers have investigated several of the strategies often used in deliberate practice. Listening to a recorded model (Hewitt, 2001), practicing in multiple ways (Stambaugh, 2010), and evaluating a self-recording (Hewitt, 2005), all forms of deliberate practice, have been found to lead to improved performance. Expert and developing musicians use varying lengths of practice time, with deliberate practice accounting for much of the difference between the groups (Ericsson et al., 1993; Miksza, Prichard, & Sorbo, 2012). Generally, students’ total deliberate practice per week increases over time as they develop more musical skills. Researchers conducting an observational study of middle school players found that the more successful players spent a greater amount of their practice time engaged in mindful activities (deliberate practice), rather than the mindless repetition that characterized the weaker players (Duke et al., 2009). Clearly, deliberate practice is a part of advanced skill development.

Before deliberate practice becomes the primary method of music skill acquisition, children gain skills through music play. Various concepts of play have been used to describe interactions among young children; I am operationally defining free play to be those activities that are enjoyable, process-oriented, and involve exploration or imagination. One example of free play is children chasing each other around a playground, where groups and roles change often. Early childhood music researchers have used a similar concept of free play to define music play: process-oriented, enjoyable, exploratory, and using musical sounds as a function of the play (Soccio, 2013). Whiteman observed preschool students for two years and categorized the songs
produced during music play; the students’ songs grew in length, complexity, balanced structure, and originality over the course of the study (2009). Children also learn from each other while engaged in musical play (Tarnowski, 1999). Results from these studies indicate that children gained skills through musical play; however, presently available music play research has focused on children under age 10. Based on the aforementioned research, young children learn through music play, while adolescents and adults learn through deliberate practice. However, are music play and deliberate practice the only ways musicians gain skills during development? Recent research in sport psychology may provide insights into the gap between music play and deliberate practice.

Deliberate practice has been shown to be an effective tool for athletes, but it cannot account for all development, or for those expert and elite athletes who are able to transition to different sports later in their careers. After an investigation of families containing at least one expert athlete, Côté (1999) developed the concept of deliberate play to describe activities that were not deliberate practice or free play, but were a large part of skill development for the athletes. Deliberate play activities are enjoyable and process-oriented, like free play, but often have some form of rules, which may have been borrowed or adapted from organized activities. Similar to deliberate practice, deliberate play activities generally involve a feedback loop; although feedback during deliberate play comes not from a coach, as often occurs in deliberate practice, but from immediate success or failure at a necessary skill. For example: if a child learns to run faster or change directions more quickly than their opponents as a result of playing tag, then that child will be better at the game, without the need for an adult/coach to teach these evasive maneuvers. Researchers have argued that athletes gain many important skills, such as
agility, speed, coordination, and spacial awareness during deliberate play activities (Memmert et al., 2010).

Elite athletes in hockey, triathlons, and other sports have reported participating in various deliberate play activities during their development, typically spending the most time in deliberate play in the early and middle stages of their careers (Côté et al., 2007). Experts in other sports such as figure skating and gymnastics, however, often specialize early, by age eight. Early specialization sports have a higher rate of burnout and lack of motivation (Côté et al., 2009). Some have argued that the large amount of deliberate practice and lack of deliberate play required at such a young age could be one reason for the drop-out issues in these early specialization sports; even going so far as to argue against early specialization for most young athletes.

Despite dynamic teachers and coaches, the issues of motivation and perseverance are complex for any domain. There are several theories about how motivation functions for individuals and groups. Particularly relevant to the issues of deliberate play and deliberate practice is attribution theory. Attribution, when related to motivation, refers to the perceived cause of success or failure (O'Neill & McPherson, 2002). Individuals with attribution problems will often cite talent, luck, or some other innate characteristic as the cause of another person’s success, while disregarding or not recognizing the effort that led to the success. These same individuals also will look at any personal success as a result of luck or circumstances rather than effort. The result is a continually frustrating, demotivating cycle. Attribution can function as a source of motivation, however, if the correct combination of causes is viewed as the reason for success or failure. For example, failure that is perceived as a lack of preparation can inspire individuals to work harder for
the next opportunity. Likewise, success viewed as a result of effort can inspire continued or increased effort. Because one of the primary characteristics of deliberate practice is repeated attempts, correct attribution may aid in continued motivation; whereas incorrect attribution would lead to less motivation and effort. Similarly, deliberate play includes feedback on performance attempts, albeit less formal sources of feedback than deliberate practice. Given that deliberate play is enjoyable, a correct attribution linking additional effort and multiple attempts with improved performance could be an essential source of motivation. Conversely, few people would reasonably consider a series of frustrating events as enjoyable—thus, they are unlikely to continue participating in the events causing the frustration. Thus, deliberate play activities should encourage correct attribution and high levels of motivation; unfortunately, I was not able to find any research examining motivation and deliberate play. Multiple models of motivation in sport do link extended free play during an athlete’s early years to high levels of intrinsic motivation (Vallerand & Rousseau, 2001); however, these writings only consider the unstructured activities of free play, not deliberate play.

As described previously, deliberate practice is an important element of expertise development for musicians; although results from studies involving young children have indicated that skills were gained during music play as well. Present explanations using deliberate practice and music play do not account for any skills musicians gain through other activities, i.e., activities that are too structured to be considered free play, and are too enjoyable and flexible to be categorized as deliberate practice. For example, sightreading chamber music for entertainment purposes with friends requires the structure of synchronization and relatively accurate notes or rhythms, and yet allows the freedom
to restart, and adjust as necessary. Unlike in music research, sport psychology results indicate that skills are gained and refined through both deliberate play and deliberate practice. Research is needed to identify whether music skills can be acquired through deliberate play. Research into early specializers has revealed motivation and burnout problems, potentially from early intense practice and considerably fewer hours of deliberate play. While deliberate play should lead to more correct attribution and higher motivation, I was not able to find research connecting these issues. I designed this study, therefore, to investigate two main areas where research is lacking: the application of deliberate play activities to music and the probable connection between attribution theory, motivation, and deliberate play.

Specifically:

- Do students’ performance ratings increase as a result of deliberate play activities?
- Do students rate their motivation to practice differently after deliberate play activities?
- Do students report spending more time practicing after engaging in deliberate play activities?

**Method**

Because athletes engage in the most deliberate play activities during the early and middle stages of their careers, the desired music population to test deliberate play activities would also be in the early or middle part of their careers. Middle school students have enough musical background to participate in deliberate play activities, but are still early enough in their development to be similar to athletes when they experience deliberate play. Middle school students also have the emotional knowledge to understand
and express their feelings on motivation. Participants in my investigation were middle school band students who had played their instruments for at least five months prior to the beginning of the study. The students were all members of four intact classes taught in two different schools by two different music teachers. There were 46 participants who began the study, but only those students who completed all aspects of the study were included in the results (N=37). Prior to selecting the schools, I compared demographic data. Racial/ethnic make-up was well matched between the schools, although the two schools had a higher percentage of White students than the state average. Free/Reduced lunch rates were also comparable between the two schools (50% and 49.3%). Thus, the schools were considered as close a match as possible based on demographic data.

Most practice activities are designed to develop consistent technique through deliberate practice. Scales are generally not exciting or fun to practice; however, they are a foundational component of most band programs. Therefore, scales would likely already be a normal classroom activity for any participating band. Because of their simplicity, scales can be reproduced in many different combinations, making them a flexible medium for alteration. Thus, I selected scale practice as the activity to manipulate for this study. Each class used the scale they were already assigned for the week, thereby following the natural progression of each classroom as closely as possible.

In order to simulate deliberate play in a music setting, I gave each director a set of researcher-designed deliberate play activities to replace the normal scale practice during warm-up sessions (see Appendix C for list and description of activities). Each of the activities was based on a popular children’s game; the activities were designed to be fun and to require the skill of note accuracy for higher success, just as athletic deliberate play
activities require greater skill for success. For example, the game, “Red light, Green light” was transformed into “Stop, Go,” which required the students to play up and then down the scale only when the “Go” sign was displayed. The director introduced the new activities to the class and then let the students choose an activity for at least the first two weeks. By the beginning of week three the students were choosing and leading the scale activities each day. The leadership of the activities was shifted from teacher to student in order to better simulate the child-led deliberate play of young athletes.

I constructed and utilized a questionnaire (see Appendix B) to determine reported practice behaviors, sources of motivation, and correct or incorrect attribution. The first section included questions about demographics; the results were used to identify any students with either more or less band experience than the level determined for the study parameters. The questions in the second section were about practice behaviors such as frequency of practice, scale practice outside of class, and variability of practice. The final section included statements designed to check for correct attribution, linking effort to success, and to identify potential sources of motivation for band participation. These reasons for participation were selected based on previous research about why students choose to play in band (O'Neill & McPherson, 2002). Participants filled out the questionnaire about practice habits and motivation at the beginning and end of the study.

Because the schools were considered as equivalent, the treatment and control groups were divided between the schools. Each teacher taught one class with normal scale repetitions during warm-ups (control) and one class with deliberate play activities during warm-ups (treatment). The students were evenly distributed between deliberate play (n=18) and no change to scale activities (n=19), making comparisons between
groups appropriate for this study. The control groups completed typical scale practice during warm-up sessions of approximately the same time length and number of repetitions as the deliberate play groups.

Each participant performed a scale during their weekly playing assignment; these performances were audio recorded creating a total of 168 recordings. Recordings were rated for overall quality on a scale of 1-10 by two music teachers with over 10 years of experience teaching middle school instrumentalists. Each teacher rated 32 recordings (approximately 20% of the total number of recordings) and ratings were compared showing an inter-rater reliability level of .95, which was considered acceptable. Each teacher then finished the remaining recordings from their half. Averaged scores were used for the 32 recordings that were judged twice; all other recordings used the score of the assigned teacher.

**Results**

The scale performance data were analyzed to compare the effects of deliberate play activities on the performance scores over time (each week, 1 through 4) for the treatment and control conditions. To ensure that the different teachers and schools were not confounding factors, performance data were analyzed between schools using a two-way repeated measures ANOVA. There was no significant main effect for schools, $F(1, 3) = 2.71, p > .05$, nor a significant interaction between schools over time, $F(1,3) = 1.74, p > .05$, reaffirming the decision to treat the schools as equal.

Next, I completed a two-way repeated measures ANOVA to compare the performance scores by experimental condition over time. Table 2 reports the means and standard deviations of condition over time. There was a significant effect of time, $F(1, 3)$
Students performed the scales significantly better at the end of the study than the beginning. However, there was no significant difference in performance scores between treatment and control conditions, $F(1,3) = 2.63, p > .05$. Students who practiced with the deliberate play activities improved at a similar rate to those who practiced with traditional methods. There were no significant interactions between time and treatment condition.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Performance Scores Over Time by Treatment Condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Deliberate Play</th>
<th>Deliberate Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>7.74</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaire data were analyzed to investigate any changes in practice behavior, potential sources of motivation, or attribution. Table 3 reports the means and standard deviations by grade level. I used a repeated measures ANOVA to compare means by grade level to check for potential confounding factors of age differences. Each question was treated individually, because the questions were designed to identify students’ viewpoints on different aspects of learning an instrument and motivation (see Table 4). There was only one question about practice behavior on which sixth graders responded significantly higher than the seventh/eighth graders: some individuals are
naturally better at music performance \( (p < .05) \). The means for all other questions on potential sources of motivation and attribution were not significantly different between grade levels, there were no significant differences across time, and no significant grade level by time interactions \( (p > .05) \).
Table 3

Questionnaire Pre- and Post-treatment Means and Standard Deviations by Grade Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Sixth Grade</th>
<th>Seventh/Eighth Grade</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-treatment Mean</td>
<td>Post-treatment Mean</td>
<td>Pre-treatment Mean</td>
<td>Post-treatment Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Frequency</td>
<td>3.57 .76</td>
<td>3.50 .85</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scales at Home</td>
<td>3.00 1.30</td>
<td>3.00 1.52</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Ways to Practice</td>
<td>2.57 1.45</td>
<td>2.57 1.09</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like Playing</td>
<td>1.57 .76</td>
<td>1.43 .51</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Player</td>
<td>1.57 .64</td>
<td>1.57 .65</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Skills</td>
<td>1.79 .58</td>
<td>1.57 .51</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best of Ability</td>
<td>1.29 .47</td>
<td>1.50 .52</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Regularly</td>
<td>1.64 .63</td>
<td>1.93 .83</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturally Better</td>
<td>2.57 1.45</td>
<td>2.21 .70</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love Music</td>
<td>1.79 .97</td>
<td>1.79 .97</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3.14 1.35</td>
<td>3.14 1.41</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2.46 1.13</td>
<td>2.79 1.41</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>3.43 1.40</td>
<td>3.29 1.20</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>4.00 1.47</td>
<td>3.71 1.44</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

Results of Repeated-Measures ANOVAs for each Questionnaire Item
Comparing Mean Responses by Grade Level from Pre- to Post-treatment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Question</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice Frequency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>.240</td>
<td>.324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scales at Home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Ways to Practice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like Playing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>.780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Player</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.258</td>
<td>.779</td>
<td>.383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.290</td>
<td>1.402</td>
<td>.244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best of Ability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.770</td>
<td>3.970</td>
<td>.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Regularly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.366</td>
<td>1.009</td>
<td>.322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturally Better</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.308</td>
<td>5.513</td>
<td>.024*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love Music</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.352</td>
<td>.839</td>
<td>.366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.459</td>
<td>.862</td>
<td>.359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>.782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>.801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td>.311</td>
<td>.581</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
The questionnaire data from each question were analyzed using a repeated measures ANOVA to compare the effects of deliberate play versus traditional scale practice on questionnaire responses pre- and post-treatment. Means and standard deviations for pre- and post-treatment by condition are listed in Table 5. There were no significant differences in the questionnaire responses between groups, from pre-treatment to post-treatment, and no significant time by group interactions (p > .05; see Table 6). Student responses did not change after treatment.
Table 5

*Questionnaire Pre- and Post-treatment Means and Standard Deviations by Treatment Condition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Deliberate Play</th>
<th>Deliberate Practice</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-treatment</td>
<td>Post-treatment</td>
<td>Pre-treatment</td>
<td>Post-treatment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Frequency</td>
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<td>1.26</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scales at Home</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Ways to Practice</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like Playing</td>
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<td>.67</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>.51</td>
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<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Player</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Skills</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best of Ability</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Regularly</td>
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<td>.63</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturally Better</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love Music</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>.91</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

Results of Repeated Measures ANOVAs for each Questionnaire Item Comparing Mean Pre-treatment versus Post-treatment Responses for the Experimental and Control Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Question</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice Frequency</td>
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<td>1.050</td>
<td>.901</td>
<td>.349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scales at Home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Ways to Practice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like Playing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>.324</td>
<td>.573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Player</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.329</td>
<td>.763</td>
<td>.388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>.306</td>
<td>.583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best of Ability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.842</td>
<td>1.623</td>
<td>.211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Regularly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>.263</td>
<td>.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturally Better</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.579</td>
<td>2.657</td>
<td>.112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love Music</td>
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<td>.474</td>
<td>.333</td>
<td>.567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
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<td>1.316</td>
<td>.754</td>
<td>.391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.474</td>
<td>.445</td>
<td>.509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>.108</td>
<td>.745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.411</td>
<td>.590</td>
<td>.448</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of deliberate play activities on middle school students’ scale performance, self-reported practice behaviors, and attribution. Two classes practiced scales as part of their normal warm-up routine, while the remaining two classes replaced the normal scale activities with deliberate play scale games. As expected, students’ performance scores increased over time, similar to
many other studies where performance scores were found to improve with practice (Cash, 2009; Miksza et al., 2012; Simmons, 2006). Interestingly, there was no significant difference in performance scores between treatment and control groups—indicating students learned during the deliberate play scale games. Perhaps the deliberate play students learned in part due to the repetitions required as part of the games; similar to the way the control group learned the scales through the more traditional repetition-based deliberate practice. Alternately, the scale games could have created a contextual interference (CI) scenario. CI occurs when motor skills are refined during the adjustments required by different practice scenarios (Brady, 1998; Wu et al., 2011), just as some learning to ride a bike will overcorrect as they learn to balance at different speeds and on different surfaces. Because the students were repeating the scales in a slightly different manner each time, the games required many adjustments to different practice settings. Thus, the games should have set up a CI scenario. Further research should be completed over a longer period of time to see if students exhibit the expected rapid gain in skills later in the practice sessions that is associated with CI.

In addition to the weekly scale tests, students filled out a questionnaire on practice behavior, sources of motivation, and attribution at the beginning and end of the study. Other research into issues of independence and motivation has indicated that students who are more independent often report higher levels of motivation for basic tasks (Côté, 1999; Ericsson et al., 2009; Schatt, 2011). The deliberate play scale games were designed to encourage student independence by turning into student-led activities. The games also encouraged students to watch and react quickly to the leader, two essential skills for musical independence. Thus, the deliberate play scale games should have increased
student independence, which would have resulted in higher levels of motivation. Unfortunately, there were no significant differences in sources of motivation or attribution statements after treatment. As the games were designed to incorporate several new ways of playing scales and increase enjoyment, I expected to see changes in self-reported practice behavior. However, the timeline of the study may not have been long enough to see behavioral changes. Future research into this area might use interview and/or observational techniques and a longer time frame to see if behavior changes were present before students become cognizant of the change.

**Limitations**

Due to limited time and resources, this study had a smaller number of participants than originally planned. This study was also limited by a four-week time length. Ideally, each participant would be measured under both treatment and control conditions, which means the participants would only have two weeks for each scenario. Since two weeks would likely not be long enough to see a difference in behavior, each group remained under the same treatment or control condition for the entire study. Thus, these results should not be generalized to a larger population before further research can be completed with a more representative group over a longer period of time. However, teachers from similarly sized schools and/or programs may find the information useful for their students.

**Conclusion**

Because there were no significant differences between treatment and control groups, the students who played the scale games did gain skills at a rate similar to those observed with traditional practice. One of the teachers did indicate that the students
enjoyed the games, and they might continue to use the games in the future. Although there were no significant differences on the questionnaires completed at the beginning and end of the experiment, the study was probably not long enough to detect changes in behavior or attitude. Researchers could use observational investigations to determine how student-teacher interactions and student independence is impacted by the scale games. If students can enjoy learning scales, then they should be more willing to practice them. Improved scale performance would enable performance of new types of music for individuals and large ensembles, which could foster an individual passion for music. Because passion for music has been identified as a motivation source for students and experts, educators should consider including scale games or other deliberate play activities as a valid way for students to learn and develop their passion for music.
CHAPTER FIVE

Summary and Conclusions

Introduction

People acquire skills throughout their lifetime, but not everyone advances at the same rate. For many years, researchers have been investigating why people gain capabilities at different speeds, as well as why some people continue to improve their skills beyond the abilities of their peers. Why does one child learn faster than another? And, why do some students develop into experts, while others stop at amateur level? Expertise development is complex, involving many factors over an extended period of time.

One traditional theory is that people gain skills through a combination of deliberate practice and time. Deliberate practice, a term initially coined after a study of the practice habits and performance abilities of violinists (Ericsson et al., 1993), refers to mentally taxing, intense practice that includes a feedback loop. During a feedback loop, the individual first attempts a specific task, then receives feedback on that attempt, and finally uses that feedback to refine the subsequent task attempts. This type of goal oriented, intense practice has been found to be an essential component in explanations of the development of expertise for medical students (Moulaert et al., 2004), chess players (Charness et al., 1996), and musicians (Ericsson et al., 1993). However, deliberate practice alone is not as effective at illuminating skill acquisition in sports (Starkes et al., 1996).

Some of the differences between deliberate practice in sports and other domains are likely explained by the team nature of many sports. Furthermore, the theory of deliberate practice does not explain how some athletes are able to change sports and
rapidly attain expert status in the new sport. While investigating the development of elite athletes in the family setting, Côté (1999) determined that in addition to deliberate practice, they were gaining skills through deliberate play. Deliberate play activities share characteristics of both free play and deliberate practice: they are process-oriented and enjoyable, like free play; and they include a feedback loop, like deliberate practice; but, unlike free play or deliberate practice, increased skill will lead to increased success and enjoyment during deliberate play activities (Côté et al., 2013). Using the additional category of deliberate play, sports psychologists created the Developmental Model of Sport Participation (DMSP) to clarify how sports skills are gained (Côté et al., 2007). The existence of the deliberate play category furthers understanding of expertise development; however, deliberate play has been studied primarily with athletes. Thus, I investigated whether the concept of deliberate play would improve the understanding of music expertise.

**Research Questions and Method**

The purpose of this dissertation was to apply the theories of DMSP, including deliberate play and deliberate practice, to the development of music expertise. I used one primary research question to guide this investigation: To what extent can the current understanding of the development of music expertise be advanced by the application of the Developmental Model of Sport Participation? In order to answer the primary research question and sub-questions, I completed a comprehensive review of literature (Chapter 2), a qualitative study involving expert musicians (Chapter 3), and an experimental study involving middle school students (Chapter 4). The following sections highlight major findings from each of the investigations.
Major Findings

Literature Review

Research on expertise development has identified deliberate practice as one of the major differences between experts and non-experts in several domains (Ericsson, 1996). Researchers studying the overall development in musicians and other experts identified three main stages: early, middle, and late (Bloom, 1985a). Likewise, sport psychologists labeled three stages of athletic development (Côté et al., 2007). Both models define the stages using similar characteristics, including the types of play and practice activities. Unlike other models, the athletic model includes the additional category of deliberate play.

Music researchers have established that musicians gain skills through deliberate practice (Duke et al., 2009; Ericsson et al., 1993; Hewitt, 2001; Miksza, 2007) and music play (Koops, 2012a, 2012b; Whiteman, 2009). Through these studies, we have a clearer understanding of how musicians gain skills during the early and late stages of their development; however, no studies were found that investigated any type of play during the middle stage. I concluded that further research was needed to examine if musicians participate in deliberate play and if they gain skills through deliberate play.

Qualitative Study

In order to investigate the development of expertise from the perspective of advanced musicians, I interviewed expert musicians from the United States and Europe about their development. As anticipated, each of the musicians reported activities and other family and personal characteristics matching the three stages of development identified by Bloom (1985a). The experts all reported a time when deliberate practice
became a daily habit involving significant amounts of time. All of the experts participated in some form of deliberate music play (e.g., sight-reading chamber music, solitary improvising, recording chamber music one track at a time, and playing contests with a teacher). While most of the deliberate play was social in nature—similar to reports of athletic deliberate play—one of the participants engaged only in solitary deliberate play. In general, music deliberate play was enjoyable and process-oriented, yet required a minimum skill level for successful play sessions. Also, the experts reported gaining skills through their music deliberate play activities.

In addition to music deliberate play activities, each of the participants described the issue of awareness throughout his or her development. For these participants, awareness was gained in three main categories: music knowledge, self-knowledge, and career knowledge. Logically, music knowledge is minimal in the earliest stages of development, because the student has little experience with music. However, all of these participants reported being unaware of their lack of music knowledge in the early stages. One participant’s story begins with a band director reminding a young player to use the correct fingering to play F# instead of an F. The story ends with the player looking at the student next to him and shrugging because he did not understand the importance of the difference between the two pitches.

Self-knowledge was gained primarily during the later stages of development, as the participants devoted more time and resources to music. Interactions with expert musicians, usually mentor-teachers, were the most common experiences for the acquisition of self-knowledge. Participants reported that they could recall being told or realizing they had the potential for a music career. This is also the type of awareness
where developing musicians recognize their love and passion for music—whether from a particularly outstanding musical experience, a life-changing situation, or another powerful scenario.

The final component of awareness, career knowledge, is an understanding that there are multiple forms and pathways a music career may take. Some participants obtained this knowledge by observing and talking with expert musicians. Others became aware of different music careers through their own experiences and those of their students. Awareness played an important role in the development of these expert musicians.

**Quantitative Study**

I investigated the effect of deliberate play activities on performance level. Two comparable groups of middle school students participated in this experiment. One group completed normal warm-ups, including scale practice, at the beginning of each class. The experimental group replaced scale practice with researcher-designed scale games designed to foster a deliberate play situation. All of the students recorded their scales weekly in a playing test. These weekly playing tests were scored by music teachers, and the scores were compared to investigate changes in scale skills. There were no significant differences between the groups; however, both of the groups’ performances improved over time. Thus, the students who completed the scale games gained or refined skills to a similar degree as the students who practiced scales in the more traditional, repetition based manner.

I also wanted to determine whether attitudes might differ as a result of the use of the scale games. Thus, in an attempt to detect the possible impact of deliberate play
activities on practice behavior and motivation, I administered a questionnaire at the beginning and end of the experiment. There were no significant differences in the questionnaire responses by group; however, the experiment may not have been long enough to reflect possible changes in motivation or practice behavior. There were some anecdotal reports of the students enjoying the games, which may have created a more positive environment. Future research is needed to determine if there may be a link between deliberate play and motivation.

Discussion

Applying DMSP to music

Developmental stages. The DMSP includes three main stages for expertise development: sampling, specialization, and investment (Côté et al., 2007). Results of the qualitative study indicate that these musicians did follow the patterns of sampling, specialization and investment. The participants were involved with a variety of primarily free-play activities during sampling. The literature review further supported the concept of primarily free-play activities during engagement with music, as young children were found to be active in music play, a type of free play (Berger & Cooper, 2003; Koops, 2012b) and physical activity based free-play (A. D. Pellegrini, 1998; Anthony D. Pellegrini, 2009). Music deliberate play activities increased during specialization for the musicians interviewed, as non-music activities decreased. By the final stage, investment, participants were primarily engaging in deliberate practice music activities and non-music activities were very limited.

Awareness. For the participants, awareness was viewed through music knowledge, self-knowledge, and career knowledge. Two participants described young
students as not being able to produce or recognize a characteristic tone quality for their instrument, which is an example of poor music knowledge and lack of awareness. Most of the participants described a moment or series of moments when they realized they had the potential to become professional musicians—a combination of self and career knowledge. DMSP (2007) and Bloom’s (1985a) model of expertise do not include awareness as a labeled component of development; however, both include descriptions of experts deciding to pursue their domain at a high level. Perhaps the participants (Chapter 3) were more cognizant of the issues of awareness due to their teaching responsibilities. Future research with more participants should investigate these issues of awareness along with the three types of knowledge in expert musicians.

**Deliberate Play**

*Types of music deliberate play.* Each of the expert musician participants in the qualitative study had engaged in different forms and amounts of deliberate play. Most of the participants reported deliberate play activities that were social in nature, such as reading chamber music for fun. This finding is similar to other reports of socially based athletic deliberate play (Côté et al., 2013). Unlike athletic deliberate play, however, two of the participants reported solitary deliberate play music activities: recording and combining each part of a quartet, listening to operas with the score, and improvising at the piano while still following some of the guidelines of voice-leading and harmonization. The solitary activities were described as highly enjoyable and process-oriented, consistent with the definition of deliberate play as opposed to deliberate practice (which by definition is not enjoyable or process-oriented). These solitary music activities also require increased skill for greater success; for example, greater finger control would
lead to more melodic and harmonic possibilities while improvising at the piano. In athletic deliberate play activities, children playing 2 x 2 basketball will score higher when they can shoot with more accuracy. Free play activities, however, do not require increased skill for greater success; typically the rules and goals of free play activities are flexible to match the skills and desires of the children playing. Thus, I categorized these solitary music activities as deliberate play, although they are unlike athletic deliberate play, which is primarily social in nature. Studies that combine observation and interviews could help researchers determine if the difference between music and athletic deliberate play with respect to social structure is a result of personality differences between musicians and athletes, some component that is essential to how music is produced, or some other as yet unknown cause.

**Control in music deliberate play.** The initiator of deliberate play, adult or child, is another characteristic where musicians may be different from athletes. The socially based chamber music activities described by participants were typically initiated by children, similar to early descriptions of how deliberate play functioned for athletes (Côté et al., 2007). On the other hand, the solitary deliberate play music activities had been initiated by adults, but the child musician involved took control over rules, design, and frequency of the activities soon after. At the same time, research includes some descriptions of athletic deliberate play activities that also include situations of adult-initiated play that is subsequently transformed into child-led play (Memmert et al., 2010; Soberlak & Côté, 2003). These transformed athletic activities often occurred within a practice or other setting where an adult would still be supervising, however, similar to the manner in which deliberate play activities functioned for the middle school students.
The participants in Chapter 3 described child-led deliberate play music activities that were completely independent and were not under the supervision of an adult.

Further complicating the issue of control is research into music play that has indicated adult interaction can either disrupt or enhance child-led music play (Koops, 2012a). Future research should investigate how power and control are handled during social and solitary music deliberate play, perhaps through similar observational techniques that have been utilized to study music free play (Countryman, 2014). Given that the qualitative study (Chapter 3) was limited to five participants, future research should be conducted with larger sample sizes before generalizations about deliberate play in music can be made.

**Motivation and music deliberate play.** Motivation is a complex issue, which I considered in conjunction with deliberate play. Deliberate play activities require more and/or improved skills for continued success. One could alternatively describe this as continued effort that leads to success. Success that is correctly attributed to effort is considered motivating, as opposed to success that is incorrectly attributed to luck or innate talent (O'Neil & McPherson, 2002). Logically, deliberate play activities should be motivating because they set up scenarios where children experience success as a result of effort. Enjoyment is another consideration of motivation, as people generally are not motivated to continue activities that are not fun. Deliberate play activities are, by their very definition, enjoyable. Thus, deliberate play activities should lead to higher reported levels of motivation. Athletes who specialize early, and experience the least deliberate play, have been found to have the highest burnout and dropout rates of any sport (Côté et
—another indicator of the potential link between motivation and deliberate play. Although the middle school students from the experimental investigation did improve their performance through deliberate play activities (although not significantly more than the group that did not use these activities), there was no difference in reported motivation levels. The limited timeline of the study may not have been long enough for differences to register on the survey used, however. Researchers should consider investigating how skills are gained through deliberate play that is led by adults compared with those led by children. Observational research techniques should also be used to consider the issues of power and self-efficacy during deliberate play activities, similar to how observation has been used successfully with young children and their parents engaging in music play (Koops, 2012a).

**Summary**

This dissertation has clarified how music expertise is developed by demonstrating that music skills are gained through deliberate play as well as deliberate practice. The middle school students’ scale performance scores increased over time (Chapter 4), whether they were engaging in the traditional deliberate practice or the researcher-designed scale games that set up deliberate play. The expert musicians (Chapter 3) described the intense, analytical form of practicing similar to that discovered in research about deliberate practice (Ericsson et al., 1993). These same advanced musicians also described learning synchronization, ear training, dictation, music expression, and listening skills through deliberate play activities. Therefore, music skills were gained through both deliberate play and deliberate practice. Future research is needed to investigate how deliberate play functions for musicians, as the social versus solitary
contexts, and the initiator of deliberate play, were different for the musicians studied than previous researchers found with athletes.

These studies also reinforce the similarities between the developmental stages of DMSP (Côté et al., 2007) and Bloom’s model (Bloom, 1985a). The expert musicians (Chapter 3) all described their development through activities that match the characteristics of the three stages of both models. Previous research about music expertise development has focused on deliberate practice activities in the final developmental stage or music play in the earliest developmental stage. These studies can be used to further understand the activities involved in the middle stages of development; a stage where musicians are involved in primarily deliberate and free play, with an introduction to deliberate practice. Researchers should consider a large-scale investigation of the practice and play activities of musicians in the middle stage to see if the differences identified in this study are replicated elsewhere. By better understanding the various ways musicians learn during the middle stage, educators could structure their lessons to use additional pathways of skill acquisition. Perhaps by identifying the activities and motivational aspects of the middle stage more accurately, teachers might be able to find ways to keep more students interested in music.

**Suggestions for Educators**

Educators should consider including deliberate play activities for their students because children gain skills and think creatively when they participate in deliberate play. Athletes gain agility, physical fitness, coordination, and speed through deliberate play activities (Baker et al., 2006; Soberlak & Côté, 2003), as well as often maintaining higher motivation levels. The middle school students discussed in Chapter 4 did improve their
scale performance scores through deliberate play activities. Thus, deliberate play activities may be another way for students to gain skills, in addition to the traditional, deliberate practice based activities.

Deliberate play also has been linked to creativity, an essential skill in team sports (Memmert et al., 2010). Athletes with more deliberate play experience show more variation and novel strategies during actual competition, two characteristics of creativity. While creativity in music has been linked to music play (Reichling, 1997), there is no research linking deliberate play and creativity in music. Logically, the flexibility of student-run deliberate play activities should allow students to select or develop new strategies during the activity. It may be hypothesized that students who reach higher levels of success with new strategies would be more likely to continue to seek new ideas. Thus, students who engage in music deliberate play activities should be more creative, although additional research is needed to see if the link between deliberate play and creativity found in athletes is also true with musicians. Deliberate play in athletes is often considered in terms of finding solutions to social problems inherent in the activities: such as who starts, who leads, what rules will be followed, or how/when the activity will end. These problems often have multiple solutions in any domain, and participants must choose between the options or create new solutions. The previous scenario is another reason why music deliberate play activities should encourage students to think creatively.

Deliberate play activities should be considered alongside motivation. Because deliberate play activities set up correct attributions, and given that athletes who engage in very little deliberate play have higher drop-out levels, it seems reasonable to conclude that deliberate play activities should be motivating. However, no research was found
connecting motivation and deliberate play. Although no difference in motivation levels was found in the study reported in Chapter 4, future research with a longer implementation period potentially could identify a link between deliberate play activities and motivation. Since deliberate play activities are enjoyable, they may at least be motivating in situations where the element of fun is a critical factor for young students. For example, intermediate students may not enjoy practicing and memorizing scales. Scale games can be an effective, yet fun, way for students to learn their scales.

Educators could use chamber music to set up students for deliberate play by allowing them to select music and practice strategies, and to create their own arrangements or manners of performance. Karaoke, instrumental or vocal, could be another way to incorporate deliberate play, as students can select the medium, the music, and the rules. Games can be used to teach music fundamentals, such as fingerings, notation, and music history. Allowing students the opportunity to design their own projects to present material could result in student-led deliberate play. Challenging beginning band students to create and play different rhythm or pitch patterns or call and response phrases could lead to solitary deliberate play at home, or even socially based deliberate play at school as students challenge each other with newly created patterns or phrases. The framework of deliberate play may help teachers, and even parents, understand how the young student “noodling” or “fooling around” in the practice room may actually be learning and acquiring or refining skills.

**Conclusion**

This dissertation was designed to investigate the possibility of applying advances in sport psychology to our current understanding of music expertise development. Based
on the data collected, musicians were found to have participated in and acquired skills through deliberate play. Furthermore, the progression of participants’ music activities, from free play and deliberate play to deliberate practice, matched the models of DMSP and Bloom. However, the current models do not include the issue of awareness, a central element to the development of the expert musicians, described in Chapter 4. Further research to clarify how musicians gain skills during the middle stage of development seems warranted, as does additional research to determine how music deliberate play differs from athletic deliberate play. The results of the studies reported here also indicate that deliberate play could be used as a viable way for younger students to learn within the context of group music study. The more that music educators know about the development of expertise in music, the better they will be able to assist their students to learn and develop as musicians.
References


http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/expert


Appendix A

Interview Protocol – Music Activities

Background Information

To be sent via email prior to initial interview

1) Describe your musical career for me, past and present. (instrument, groups, performing vs. teaching ratio, etc.)

1. Early Activities (10-15 minutes)

We will first focus on all activities you participated in while you were young. Please list any activities outside of mandatory school activities, for example sports, dance, drama, or other domains of activity. I am also interested in your early music participation. Looking back over your entire life, please tell me of any type of activity that you engaged in on a regular basis before you decided to specialize in music. Please list all of these activities, such as sports, dance, drawing, academic clubs, etc.

Interviewer will use this information to complete Chart 1 and 2.

1) **Any musical activity?**

   If YES: How old were you when you first got started? How long have you kept up the involvement? Please tell me about any periods when your involvement was stopped.

2) **Any sport activity?**

   If YES: How old were you when you first got started? How long have you kept up the involvement? Please tell me about any periods when your involvement was stopped.

3) **Any artistic activity such as drawing or sculpting?**

   If YES: How old were you when you first got started? How long have you kept up the involvement? Please tell me about any periods when your involvement was stopped.

4) **Any dance or other movement based non-sport activity?**

   If YES: How old were you when you first got started? How long have you kept up the involvement? Please tell me about any periods when your involvement was stopped.
5) Any other activity that consumed a large amount of your time (e.g., watching TV, playing computer games, working)

If YES: How old were you when you first got started? How long have you kept up the involvement? Please tell me about any periods when your involvement was stopped.

2. Developmental Chart for Maturation and Performance

In this section of the interview, I am particularly interested in your development as an instrumentalist. We will try to get a sense of your development in band/orchestra by assessing different factors that may have contributed to your achievement.

Development as a musician (5-10 minutes)

Before we can discuss your musical development, I would like to ask a few biographical questions to establish a frame of reference for our conversation.

What is your date of birth? ________________________________

How old were you when you participated for the first time in the following activities on a regular basis?

___ years old for first regular involvement on your primary instrument as a child or adolescent

___ years old for first involvement in supervised training/instruction by an adult on your primary instrument

___ years old for first regular involvement in training not supervised by an adult

___ years old for first time setting your own personal practice/performance goals
Performance Career (10 minutes)

How old were you when you first participated in any of the following festivals or competitions?

Middle/High School Level

__ Section Leader
__ First chair (of more than 2)
__ Chamber group

District/Regional Level

__ All-District Honorable Mention Band
__ All-District Band
__ All-State Honorable Mention Band
__ All-State Band
__ Solo in All-District Band
__ Solo in All-State Band

Multi-State Level

__ Select summer camp. List camp name: __________
__ Invitation-only masterclasses. With: ______________
__ Touring groups with members from at least 2 states. Group: _______________
__ Elite group (non-touring) with members from at least 2 states. Group: _______________
__ Other: ______________________

College Level

__ Concerto Competition
__ Featured soloist with band/orchestra
__ Other institution level performance based award

Multi-State Level

__ Other multi-state level competition or award. Name: __________________

National/International

__ MTNA National Level
__ Instrument-specific competition (ITG, ITA, IHS, ITEA, IDRS, etc.)
__ Other national or international competition or award. Name: _______________

State/Regional

__ Music Teachers’ National Association Competition. Level finished: ________
__ Regional instrument-specific competition (ITG, ITA, IHS, ITEA, IDRS, etc.)
Other/Professional

__ Professional CD – chamber music
__ Professional CD – solo music
__ Tour with professional ensemble as member
__ Tour with professional ensemble as featured soloist
__ Performed with regional+ professional ensemble
__ Section leader with regional+ professional ensemble
__ Featured soloist with regional+ professional ensemble
__ Toured/Performed as a professional soloist

**Developmental Milestones (5 minutes)**

___ years old when idea for becoming a professional musician first emerged
___ years old when first engaged in the regular training of an ensemble
___ years old when decision was made to become a professional musician
___ years old when all available leisure time began being spent on your musical training
___ years old for first extra-curricular music camp/program not affiliated with school.
___ years old when you first moved (relocated) to attend regular training in music
___ years old when you first established a close and extended relation with a teacher
___ years old when you think that you will reach (or have already reached) your maximum potential in your music career
___ years old when you think that you will retire from public performance

**Music specific milestones (5 minutes)**

___ years old when you first started playing an instrument
___ years old when you first played in an ensemble
___ years old when you first began instrument specific training regularly (private lessons)

___ years old when first began non-instrument specific training (music history or theory classes, secondary instrument lessons, etc.)

Interviewer fills out Developmental Chart for Maturation and Performance in Music – Chart 3

Break for interviewee

Summary and Stages (15 minutes)

I would like to summarize the information on the development of your performance in music. Some of it is related to the information that you gave earlier on your level of performance. Let’s start with the first stage of engagement and proceed by column.

You were X years old when you first got involved in training for music. For each age please indicate the level at which you participated.

<Fill in level >

For each age please provide the age of the peers you trained and performed with.

<Fill in Age of Peers>

For each year, can you provide the highest accomplishment your group achieved as well as any personal accomplishments you may have attained?

We need to come up with individual and group performance measure that would give us an indication of their performance at each age.

<Fill in group and individual accomplishment>

When people engage in practice, their concentration and physical effort differs from time to time and from day to day. Can you recall when your level of intensity was maximal? Can you briefly describe that and what it felt like? I want you to think of that as 100%. At the opposite extreme one can engage in practice and take it easy. I want you to think of that as 0%. I now would like you to go through each stage and rate the average or typical level of intensity for your practice. I would like you to give a rating for every stage that you engaged in regular training. You will compare the intensity of that stage to the time in which you demonstrated 100% maximal effort.

<Fill in Intensity >

Whether individuals do or do not take advantage of teachers’ instructions and training resources, the availability of such resources for instruction and training might limit the
speed and quality of development of highly motivated individuals. Disregard for the moment whether you used all or even most of the available resources for your development and rate for each stage the quality of training resources that would have been accessible to a successful and motivated musician in the same environment. Use a rating of 100% to correspond to the best possible environment in the world for the development of world-class musicians. A rating of 0% indicates a complete lack of resources. Consider that these environments may differ significantly as a function of the age of the musician so identify the best environment for each age or age-group as your reference point for your ratings. Resources can be defined as the money that was put forth by parents or self, the quality of the training facilities and equipment and quality of instruction and social support.

Have you ever sustained an injury or other situation that disrupted your activity involvement? If so, please describe this injury. Have you suffered from more than one injury? If so, please describe these. How were these injuries incurred? If you have never had an injury, rate health at 100%. If you have been injured try to rate the percentage of full health (i.e. completely unable to practice and compete would receive a rating of 0, missing half the season would receive a rating of 50%).

For each of the stages listed in the chart can you provide the number of hours per week and number of months per year that you were involved in music? This includes competitive events and specific training activities for your instrument (organized practice, competitions/performances, self-initiated practice, and individualized instruction).

I would like to take a moment and look at the charts we have just developed together. I would like you to regroup the years for which your training remained consistent and identify specific years at which your training has changed in terms of quality and quantity. Please do not force any categorization; regroup years only if it makes sense to you. This will allow identification of major periods in your development as a musician. These periods will be used as a frame of reference for the rest of the interview.

<Musician categorizes years into stages>
3. Development of Relevant Practice Activities in Music (15-20 minutes)

The following section includes: the related practice activities you engaged in, the number of hours spent practicing per week, the intensity of practice, and the number of months per year you were training for each of the relevant practice activities. This will be done for each of the stages you previously identified.

<Interviewer produces Chart 4 - Development of Practice -

<Interviewer completes the age and stage columns in accordance to information given in chart 3>

Please list all of the activities related to music during each of the developmental stages.

<Fill in Activities>

Now that you have listed all of the activities you participated in at that stage, we would like you, if possible, to categorize these activities in accordance to the following list.

___ 1. Indirect involvement: e.g. going to concerts, watching TV/video coverage of music, reading books about music and/or your instrument

___ 2. Organized music production with rules supervised by self and peers: e.g. playing duets with friends, jam sessions, playing by ear, sight-reading for fun, etc.

___ 3. Organized music production with rules supervised by teachers: e.g. playing duets, jam sessions, playing by ear, sight-reading for fun, etc.

___ 4. Listening to music actively or passively that was assigned by teachers.

___ 5. Individualized instruction: e.g. private lessons or masterclasses

___ 6. By your own choice, listening to music passively: e.g., background noise, not paying attention

___ 7. By your own choice, listening to music actively: e.g., paying attention to style, structure, or other musical element, comparing performers, etc.

___ 8. Self-initiated practice: e.g., practicing because you wanted to, not because a teacher and/or parent instructed you to do so.

___ 9. Setting your own performance goals: e.g., selecting literature, learning a new style or technique, etc.

___ 10. Regular performance (at least 2-3 times per year) with an ensemble.

<Fill in Category>
<If they have not talked about all of the categories then the following questions should be asked about the categories they did not mention. These should then be added to the chart>

- Is there any time that you were indirectly involved in music? If so, what were these activities?
- Is there any time that you participated in organized activities that were supervised by self or peers? If so, what were these activities?
- Is there any time when you participated in events supervised by a teacher or adult? If so, what were these activities?
- Is there any time that you participated in organized practice in a group supervised by a teacher or adult? If so, what were these activities?
- Is there any time that you participated in individualized instruction with a teacher? Is so, what were the activities?
- Is there any time when you participated in self-initiated practice? If so, what were these activities?

Please indicate how many hours per week you were participating in this particular activity.

<Fill in # hrs per week>

Please indicate the number of months per year that you engaging in each activity.

<Fill in Months per year>

When people engage in training, their physical effort differs from time to time and from day to day. Can you recall being engaged in an activity when your level of physical effort was maximal? Can you briefly describe that and what it felt like? I want you to think of that as 100%. At the opposite extreme one can engage in training activities and take it easy. I want you to think of that as 0%. I now would like you to go through each activity and rate the average or typical level of physical effort. I would like you to give a rating for every activity. You will compare the physical effort of that activity to the activity in which you demonstrated 100% maximal effort.

<Fill in Physical effort>

When people engage in training, their mental concentration differs from time to time and from day to day. Can you recall being engaged in an activity when your level of concentration was maximal? Can you briefly describe that and what it felt like? I want you to think of that as 100%. At the opposite extreme one can engage in training activities and not being mentally focused. I want you to think of that as 0%. I now would like you to go through each activity and rate the average or typical level of concentration. I would like you to give a rating for every activity. You will compare the
concentration of that activity to the activity in which you demonstrated 100% concentration.

<Fill in Mental concentration>

Next, I would like you to think of types of activities that were the most fun at the corresponding ages, such as watching your favorite program on TV or playing games with friends. We can all recall participating in activities that were so fun we did not want them to end. Please describe the activity that you would consider most fun for each of the stages you previously identified. These activities do not have to be music related. Let us set each of these activities as 100% fun. Using these activities as references now go back and give a separate rating for fun in each activity within the stages. Compare each training activity to the activity that you identified as being 100% fun at that stage.

<Fill in Fun>

This completes the interview procedure. Thank you very much for your time and patience in filling out each of the charts.
Potential Follow-up Questions

1) Please describe your family musical background for me. Do your parents or other significant family members or friends sing or play an instrument?

2) Was music a part of your family life as a child? If so, how? (singing in the car/religious service, performing together, musical play, etc.)

3) What do you think contributed most to your musical development?

4) If you teach, do you include any of the activities we have discussed today with your students? If so, what age of students and what activities?

5) Is there anything else that you would like to add to this conversation?
#Appendix B

##Musical Instrument Practice Questionnaire

Please circle one answer to the following questions.

1) How long have you been playing your band/orchestra instrument?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less than 1 year</th>
<th>1 year</th>
<th>2 years</th>
<th>3 or more years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2) Do you play any other instruments?

| No | Yes, I play the ____________________ |

3) Do you sing in a choir?

| Yes | No |

*These questions only refer to the instrument you play in band/orchestra. Please circle answers for what you do on your band/orchestra instrument, even if you play another instrument.*

4) How often do you practice?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely (less than 1 time per week)</th>
<th>Sometimes (1-2 times per week)</th>
<th>Often (4-5 times per week)</th>
<th>All the time (5 or more times per week)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5) Do you take private lessons?

| Yes | No | I used to for ___ months or ____ years |

6) Do you play scales outside of class?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely (less than 1 time per week)</th>
<th>Sometimes (1-2 times per week)</th>
<th>Often (4-5 times per week)</th>
<th>All the time (5 or more times per week)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

7) Do you try new ways to practice?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely (less than 1 time per week)</th>
<th>Sometimes (1-2 times per week)</th>
<th>Often (4-5 times per week)</th>
<th>All the time (5 or more times per week)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Read each sentence. Circle your answer to indicate how well it describes you.**

8) I like playing my instrument
9) Practice helps me become a better player.
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

10) I improve my musical skills through practice.
    Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

11) I play my instrument to the best of my ability.
    Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

12) I play my best when I practice regularly.
    Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

13) Some people are just naturally better at playing instruments than others.
    Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

14) I play in band/orchestra because I love music.
    Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

15) I play in band/orchestra because I like to be with my friends.
    Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

16) I play in band/orchestra because I like my teacher.
    Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree
17) I play in band/orchestra because people expect that of me.

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

18) I play in band/orchestra because my parents make me.

Strongly Agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree
Appendix C

Scale Games

With a metronome playing for the group, the goal is to play the scale up and back down without a mistake. But, you have to watch your leader!

Stop & Go – You can only play when the “GO” sign is up. To make the group stop, flip the sign to the “STOP” side. Optional: have people stop playing when they make a mistake, to see who can last the longest.

Pick a Number – Similar to “Simon Says,” you play up the scale to the scale degree being held up and stop. Keep going when the leader gives you permission (thumbs up).

Skipping Steps – Play the scale, but skip (mime) the scale degree that the leader holds up. Optional: hold up multiple numbers so students have to mime more than one scale degree for each scale.

Pick a rhythm/articulation – Draw a rhythm/articulation card from the stack. The group plays the scale with that rhythm/articulation.

Play & Mime – When the “PLAY” sign is up, play the notes. When the leader switches to the “MIME” sign, pretend to play your instrument. Optional: have people stop playing when they make a mistake, to see who can last the longest.
Appendix D

Researcher Journal

Musical Development

I started singing with my family at home and in church very young. My mother has reminded me many times that my first solo in church was before age 4, so I grew up around music. My family would often sing in church – usually dividing into parts on the traditional hymns. Early on, I sang in choirs, played handbells and other small percussion in church groups. I remember that I had music classes in preschool, as well as elementary school. I had two great elementary music teachers – both were well versed in Kodaly and Orff, and used them regularly in classes. I had at least one music class per week in Elementary school, and I can remember getting excited for “music day” every time. I loved nearly every aspect of the music classes, and I loved my teachers. As soon as I was old enough, I joined the after-school choir for 4th-6th graders. Around that same time, my family had switched to a new church where my mother was the director of worship ministries. This church had a more contemporary style of music, so I got to watch (and listen to) the praise band practice in my living room. I remember thinking it was interesting to see how a group functioned with such a different structure.

The following year, I was in the all-town honor choir that also met after school, and I started playing euphonium. I remember taking lessons in school and after school, so I would have two private lessons each week from very early on. With one of those teachers, I started playing duets at each lesson by year 2 of lessons. Shortly after I started playing euphonium in band (about 3-4 months after I started lessons), I added tuba lessons. I switched completely to tuba after a little less than a year of playing in band. I joined the all-town honor band, and I remember getting to demonstrate my instrument for all of the younger kids at the elementary schools. I vividly remember the moment when the director would say, “And, last, but not least, the tuba!” I would have to stand first, before I could lift the instrument high enough for people to see it.

The following year, I kept singing in choir and playing in band as I switched to a new school. I was still singing in the church choir – occasionally solos – and taking private lessons each week on tuba. Since the new school had a jazz band, I picked up trombone and added another lesson to my schedule each week. I would play in jazz band for all 3 years of junior high, and then not touch the trombone for quite a while. I started voice lessons during junior high as well, and really enjoyed singing in choir. Unfortunately, a bad experience at a festival combined with a botched audition for high school choir led me to quit singing in high school.

While in high school, I played tuba in the musical pit orchestra, the marching band, top wind ensemble, and various chamber groups. This was also the first time I started taking lessons from a new person, after my old teacher told my mother that I needed to go to someone who could teach me more. After a few introductory lessons where people sent
me on to someone else, I started taking lessons from a trombone professor. Around this same time, I spent my summer away at a highly competitive music camp. I remember many things about this camp – it was my first experience around other serious tuba players, it was my first time to be near so many dedicated artists and learning artists, and it was my first time taking lessons with a tuba player. That summer was also the first time I really had to deal with homesickness – all of my times away from home had been with family prior to this trip. After I came back from that trip, I really wanted to take lessons from an excellent tuba player, so I ended up driving about 45 minutes away to the next town to take lessons. This new teacher pushed me considerably more than any of my previous teachers, and exposed me to many new ways of playing tuba – new artists to listen to, and new music to enjoy. He was the one who insisted that I learn to sight-read, recover from mistakes and keep playing, and that I learn the beginnings of how to improvise on tuba. It was also while I was taking lessons with him that I made the All-State band, and thoroughly enjoyed my time at that annual event. This teacher was the one who helped me find the right college, and encouraged me to give a senior recital while still in high school. A very few other “band geeks” were doing similar things, but most of my friends were nowhere near as dedicated as we were – certainly none of the other low-brass students.

College was yet again a new experience for me. I had only a few experiences playing in chamber groups in high school, and here it was expected for all music majors in the studio. I was also surrounded by lots of tuba and euphonium students – some were very dedicated, and some were not. While I was there, I did a half or full recital each semester – rarely with duplicated music – and considered that normal for an undergraduate music major. (Because most of the top students in the studio were doing the same things at the time…) I learned about tuba-euphonium ensembles, to the point where we did two professional recordings and a trip to Carnegie Hall. That trip to Carnegie also taught me a great deal about fundraising, grant applications, and how to motivate crowds of people. In lessons and in practice, most of what I did was individual – I rarely played duets anymore, but I did play in a chamber group often. After my junior year of college, I spent the summer with a traveling brass and percussion group. That was the time that I figured out I didn’t want to travel and perform for the rest of my life. I missed my family entirely too much, and I didn’t enjoy travelling enough. I did learn to enjoy performing a great deal more, but it was my first real experience of a huge work-life imbalance interrupting my development. I didn’t improve much as a player during that time – possibly because I was so busy that I was miserable.

Graduate school was wonderful, because I had so much time to dedicate to my playing. I practiced much more regularly, and I developed practice routines to use daily. It was also frustrating, because I started learning about applying research to practice during my last semester. Applying the research made my playing incredibly more consistent, and I was very frustrated that I hadn’t learned it earlier. Why didn’t I learn to play things multiple ways? I’m still not certain. I think my teachers tried to get me to do things multiple ways, but I don’t think I tried. Graduate school was another time when my work-life balance
was incredibly lopsided, so my development was slowed considerably as well. Graduate school was also the only time when I regularly played duets with a peer, but rarely with a teacher.
Appendix E

Interview Transcripts

Participant 1 Transcription

Interview via videoconferencing, Sept. 22nd, 2014

Me: Is this your first time really using Skype?
1: Well, I had a really old computer at home, and I used it 2 or 3 years ago. But, I’ve never used it on this computer.
Me: Oh, okay. So this will be fun.
1: Nice to meet you!
Me: Nice to meet you too! This is exciting. Alright. Shall we go ahead and get started?
Me: I disappeared?
1: Yeah, well, you’re very tiny now. How do get you back to big screen?
Me: If you click on the Skype window, I should get big again.
1: There you are. (laughter) Sorry, I’m a little Luddite when it comes to technology.
Me: That’s quite alright. It takes some getting used to. Alright, we will start out focusing on the activities you participated in when you were very young. I’m going to have you list off those activities. So, that could be sports, dance, drama, music, chess, you know, whatever it happens to be that you may or may not have been interested in – anything you may have been a part of.
1: Ok, and very young meaning?
Me: Meaning elementary school aged and up.
1: Ok, through high school then, maybe.
Me: Yes.
1: Ok, um…
Me: Start with whatever you remember.
1: I grew up in the time where kids were not so overscheduled like they are now. So, um. I started piano lessons, I think in 3rd grade and (instrument) in 4th grade, and had private
lessons and school activities with those. You know, band and orchestra. I played (secondary instrument) in the school jazz band, from 6th grade to 12th grade. And, um, in the summer time, I loved swimming. I grew up right near the water, so that was kind of a natural thing.

Me: Of course. (smiling)

1: We went into New York a lot, and my parents always took me to concerts and ballets and theatre and stuff like that. Let’s see, I did a little bit of community theatre, playing in a pit band, umm… I spent my junior year of high school in Paris, because my mom was a French teacher and she was studying there. So I went with her, and studied (instrument) there with a wonderful teacher, but still, never with any intention of going into it professionally.

Me: Interesting.

1: Oh, I know. I was.. it was the last thing I ever expected to do with my life. Um, let’s see. What else did I do as a kid. Well, I was a good student, I guess. I spent a lot of time on homework and stuff like that. Reading. I loved to read. Let’s see. Yeah, it was the more relaxed time than kids have today.

Me: (laughing) I am all for that. I am trying to keep my son to that relaxed time. Sometimes it works and it sometimes doesn’t.

1: I didn’t do any sports that I remember, except for swimming in the summer, and you know, riding my bicycle around time.

Me: Ok. But, were either of those competitive, or was it just for fun?

1: No, it was just… well, actually, at our little beach, we did have races. Competitive is really overstating it, but I was the float champion when I was about 9. You know, I won metals, but really, for about 5 or 6 years, but it was just a little beach. None of us were really great athletes or anything.

Me: Yeah. Let’s see, you talked about playing in the pit at theatre. Did you do any…

1: Community theatre. It started when I was a senior in high school or so, I guess. And a couple of musicals – I played in the pit band and that was fun.

Me: Did you ever do anything on stage, or was it primarily…?

1: When I was very, young, I had a role in a musical. In a little opera actually. It was called the lowland sea. I’m not sure, it was an English composer. It was at the high school
where my mom taught. And it was terrifying, and I… (waves hand in front of face, and
grabs a drink of water)

Me: You didn’t want to do it again, huh?

1: Not really.

Me: I understand that. Ok. Let’s see, we talked how you did a fair bit of reading and
spent a lot of time on your homework. Was there anything besides the reading and
homework and music activities that consumed kind-of a large part of your time?

1: Uh… well, it was actually.. No, I think just playing with my friends. We had a lot of,
you know, nice social time. Not getting into any trouble or anything, but there was a lot
of time spent outdoors. I didn’t have a television growing up. My parents were very
against that, so.

Me: Ok

1: I didn’t spend a lot of time doing that. Till, maybe I think sophomore year or junior
year in high school… I think it was sophomore year in high school.

Me: Ok. I can understand that.

1: In retrospect, I’m very grateful. At the time I wasn’t very happy. Now I see the
wisdom of my parents’ position.

Me: I can understand. So, let’s see. We started um… I just want to make sure I have ages
accurate for this. So you started piano in 3rd grade.

1: Yeah, I think it was 3rd – it was before (instrument).

Me: Ok.

1: Yeah, because (instrument) started in 4th.

Me: Ok. And, when did you stop, or are you still taking lessons on piano?

1: I regrettably stopped in… gosh, I think I took lessons through freshman or sophomore
year of high school and, I should have followed my mom’s advice and continued, but I
didn’t.

Me: (laughing) We see a lot of that, you know?

1: Yes, we do. (laughing)

Me: Ok, and, the swimming that you did? Did you start that basically as early as you
could get out into the water, or were you, later, took swimming lessons and then started
to learn or?
1: No, I was in the water practically on the way home from the hospital when I was born. I grew up in the same little town that my mom had grown up in, and she was a real beach person, so I was in the water very early.
Me: Ok, and that was… would you say almost every summer you were playing...
1: Absolutely. Every summer.
Me: Sounds like a great way to grow up!
1: It was. (chuckling)
Me: And you said, the couple of times there were those local sort of competitions, only at your beach? You said lasted for 6 years?.. (trailing off)
1: (interrupting) It was really… competition is really overstating it. I mean, there were swimming lessons, and they had little races on the weekends. But, honestly, they weren’t very far, and, you know, I did do it for about 5-6 years – just because I was at the beach, and that was what one did. But it was not competitive… They gave us little medals, I think.
Me: Okay. Do you happen to remember which 5 or 6 years that was?
1: Well, uh…
Me: Were you elementary school? middle school?..
1: I would say… before high school, so probably elementary school and junior high. Let’s see, I can count the years… probably 5 years.
Me: Okay… Excellent. So, we’re going to move on to the next section. See how easy this is? So, this next section. I’m particularly interested in your development as an instrumentalist. So, I’m going to ask you several kind of yes or no questions.
1: And, I do remember one other thing – if it’s at all relevant. (coughing)
Me: Sure!
1: Um, every summer after, gosh, maybe after junior high, I played in our community band during the summer.
Me: Ok.
1: That was great fun. I forgot about that.
(pause for coughing)
1: Sorry about that.
Me: and, let’s see. How old were you, when you participated for the first time in these activities on a regular basis? So the first time you had regular involvement on (instrument)
1: It was right from when it started in 4th grade. So, I guess… what is that? 9 years old?
Me: Yes.
1: Sorry, I’m just going to chug some water here.
Me: Sure.
1: Ok
Me: And, then, how old were you the first time you had supervised training or instruction by an adult… on your primary instrument.
1: Other than my band director at school? Or, including him?
Me: including him.
1: So, it was right from the beginning. We had two of them and they started us off with the lessons and stuff.
Me: let’s see, and. How old were you when you had your first regular involvement in some kind of training that was not supervised by an adult? So, I know, that can be a tough one. Especially for musicians. So when was it that you had regular practice goals or regular practice sessions that were not supervised by an adult?
1: Well… I mean that was kind of built in to it right from the start. Yeah, I remember filling out our little practice charts in the Rubank.
Me: I remember those… Ok. So how old do you think you were, when you started setting your own personal practice goals?
1: Wow… (5 seconds of silence) Uh… Well, I mean I started studying with a very good teacher in 5th or 6th grade, so I assume I must have been doing some form of independently motivated practice, but, um, again, there was no thought of competing or um, you know… I did, uh, I did – what do they call it out here – solo, state solo contest. So, I guess I was doing that, yeah, maybe from 6th grade on.
Me: So, 12?
1: I don’t know, I guess, 11 or 12.
Me: Okay. Let’s see. The next little section. In middle school or high school. How old were you when you first did these sorts of things: middle school or high school, I’m thinking section leader first chair of a section, or doing an extra chamber group.
1: Well, I think I was probably always at the top of the section.
Me: Ok.
1: I don’t recall that we had to compete for that, but I’m pretty sure that – well, my best friend and I both played (instrument) and we were sort of (raises one hand above the other to indicate higher levels than everyone else). I mean, we were the only ones studying privately. So, I mean, that was not something I had to work very hard at.
Me: (laughing)
1: Um.. I didn’t do chamber music that I recall… I was in the orchestra, and the band, and the jazz band, and, of course, stage band we called it. (clears throat) Yeah, that was like, from 6th grade one.
Me: Ok. And what about, did you do anything like, here we call it All-District band, or All-State?
1: (interrupting) Yeah, I think I did… I think we had All-County band, and I remember being absolutely traumatized at the audition. It was the seating audition. And nobody, and you know how today everybody talks to you about how to audition. I mean, I had none of that. And, I was terrified and it’s an experience that stayed with me for a very long time. I think I ended up, oh, I don’t know, like 39th (instrument) or something. It was just traumatic…Um…That was All-County, I think it was sophomore year? Or so. I don’t really remember.
Me: Ok.
1: And then I remember… uh… yeah, they, uh – I don’t remember how things worked in terms between the relationship between All-County and All-State. I do know that I could have gone to All-State, I think. Our school could only send 1 (instrument) player, and my best friend, uh, who was this other really good (instrument) player. Her dad had just died suddenly, so we decided she should be the one to go to All-State.
Me: Ok.
1: She was very good – deserved it.
Me: Okay. Then let’s see…
1: Junior year, I was in Paris, so all I did was take lessons and (unintelligible) that year.
Me: Gotcha. (laughing) I’m sure there were other things in Paris to keep you busy.
1: Yes, (laughing, smiling).
Me: Umm. Let’s see. Did you do anything, either middle or high school, like go to a music summer camp or maybe a master class.
1: Um, not a master class, because those were just unheard of back then.
Me: Okay.
1: I did go to, uh, what was it a summer band camp, I guess, at [blurred].
University. I forget which summer it was… maybe, I don’t know, 8th 9th 10th grade – something like that. And, that was great fun. A wonderful band director.
Me: Ummm. Let’s see. Did you do anything else, um, I know there weren’t that many of these, around about when you would have been in high school, but things like, touring groups where they have now, where you have members from at least 3 states. Or some other maybe elite group that was just not touring?
1: No, that was just not even on our radar back then. (laughing)
Me (laughing) Okay. Competition is a whole other thing now, it feels like.
1: Right, right… I was very lucky in that my teacher from what I started studying all the way through high school, was the teacher at (prestigious music school), but she lived in the next town. So, I didn’t have to schlep all the way into New York for lessons. Or, deal with (prestigious music school). I just took lessons from her. She was lovely – truly wonderful person.
Me: That is an impressive sort of thing… that’s a great opportunity right there!
1: And, she wanted me to go to Interlochen. Even then, I just thought – ugh! I can never do that. No, I just wasn’t going to do that. (smiling)
Me: (laughing) It’s not for everybody, it’s really not.
1: Right!
Me: So moving on to your college years, um. Did you do anything like a concerto competition, or be a featured soloist, or any other kind of performance based award?
1: No, I wasn’t even a music major. I, uh, I had no intention of going into this field. I kept studying privately my freshman year, when I went off to college. I was at a liberal arts school in [blurred]. And, uh, I had a very nice teacher there, and I took a music
course, I think, but... still, it was just for fun. And, then, that was the year [School] went co-ed. I missed uh.. Actually the reason I applied to [School] was, the reasons... one was uh, boys, and the other was that I missed music activities, like band and stuff like that. Still with absolutely no intention of getting serious about this. And, by some miracle, I did get into [School], and um, so I went there as of my sophomore year. And, it was a time when [School] was in a wonderful transition from having been a, you know, very preppy, legacy type of school, to they had a very enlightened Admissions director who was accepting a lot of, um, public school kids, and musicians, and artists, and creative people. And, music was just, absolutely exploding there. The interesting thing is that at [School], um, they don’t have an undergraduate performance major. There’s the department of music, which has the undergrad music theory and music history courses, and the graduate department of music, which has the PhD program in music history and theory. And then there’s the School of Music which is a graduate school only, and has the performance training and composition as well – at least that’s the way it was at the time – and conducting. So, um, I was doing um, a lot of playing there, and... I, was so incredibly, incredibly lucky, that, I remember that I auditioned for the [School] band, and the wonderful conductor, um, took me as one of the students who would study with the great (instrument) teacher who taught at the School of Music. He only took a limited number of undergrads, and I have no idea how they accepted me, because I didn’t think I was very good. But, he was... he was a genius. It, I was just so lucky. And, he put up with me for 3 years, even though I was not serious about it, and I was no practicing. But I sure was involved in a lot of music. The [School] Symphony, the [School] Band, the [School] Bach society... um, and my friends – I started to have friends who were musicians. The musical climate there was the equivalent to any Conservatory. And it was exciting, and it was very, um. The [School] Symphony concerts were the highlight of the university year – everybody went to those. It was a big deal. And then, uh, junior year... the end of the – I was a, uh, political – oh, what did I major in? Well, I started out as an Italian major at Wellesley, then when I went to [School] I went through about 110 majors. I ended up as an American Studies major. That spring, the end of junior year, the [School] Symphony went to France on a 10 day tour. And, I had never, you know, been
around musicians, and, you know, touring as a musician. And, I thought, “Wow! This is really fun!” And, it was quite wonderful.

Me: (laughter)

I: But, I was still thinking I was going to be – I was at the time thinking I was going to be a television new journalist – you know, a reporter. And, I applied for all these summer internships, and I didn’t get any of them. And, at the end of the Spring, the [School] band director, whom I owe so much to,  he was also the Professor of Clarinet and Assistant Dean of the Music School – Associate Dean and Chair of winds. He said, “Do you still not have anything to do this summer?” And I said, “No, I don’t.” And he said, “You know we have this summer music festival – the [X] festival in northwestern CT. And, we really have a really long waiting list of (instrumentalist)s, but we never get to it. So, we didn’t have a waiting list this year, and all our (instrumentalist)s canceled. Would you like to come?” And I said, “Well, sure.” And, he said, “Well you could either, um, have there were 2 and a half (instrumentalist)s.” There were two full time positions and a half time position of (instrument) and working in the music library for $100 – which was big money back then. He said, “You could have one of the full time positions or the part-time one.” And, I said, “Well, I’ll take the part-time one.” Because, I had never, you know, done anything like this before. It would be nice to earn some money. And, I went… and, I just… that was it. I played chamber music for the first time. It was the most beautiful estate that they had this festival at. And, I just (percussion sounds) oops. My phone is ringing. And I’m not going to answer it, but there’s going to be a funny noise for a while (percussion sounds continue). My teacher, my first chamber coach was a great, great musician. He was a composer, who worked with Robert Bloom, and all these immensely, amazing musicians. (hand gestures to emphasize the highest quality musicians) And, I was hooked, and I thought. Oh, my gosh. I love this! And I realized, that for my first three years of college, I’d been looking for something I loved doing 24 hours a day, (miming (instrument) playing) and that was right here the whole time. And, I applied to the Music School that fall for graduate student… and, (exhale) never thought I’d get in, but I did. (smiles) I never looked back.

Me: Ok, so that is wonderful! Were you just kind of led into, one of my next sections. Which is kind of my development milestones. Um, so. Let’s see. Was that junior year
that you were talking about, after you went to the [X] festival… was that when you first had the idea of really seriously considering being a professional musician.

1: Yeah, really, it was, well, I – something ignited in me on that tour to France. Uh, maybe it was that we had 3 concerts in 10 days, and the rest of the time was wine, men, and song. (joint laughter) We had some wine and great food, and France, I mean, my gosh. And, being surrounded by musicians. I had never experienced that, and, uh, then, uh, the [X] festival. Yeah, that was… yeah. And, I think the stage was really set, because I’d been so involved in the [School] music scene for the two years prior to that. And that was so exciting too.

Me: Ok. And, so would you say, um, did you make the decision to become a professional musician after that [X] festival, or was it when you got accepted to the Graduate program at [School], or was it at some other point?

1: Well, I guess… I probably, uh, something made me apply to graduate school, so it must have been. But, the idea of doing this for a living, um, I think I just wanted to, to get better, and keep doing it. I mean, I’m not sure if I had ideas about a particular career at that point. I don’t know if I knew enough to have an idea of the career ahead. I just loved what I was doing. And, I think psychologically, um, it sort of coincided with the time my senior year in college, when my parents got divorced. And, [School], uh, the Music School is very small, and very personal, and it was sort of like a family in a way. And, I think that timing helped.

Me: Ok.

1: Yeah.

Me: So, let’s see. How, or was there a point, and if so, at what age, when basically all of your available leisure time, or most of it, you began spending on your musical training.

1: I would say graduate school, day 1. (laughing) And, um, yeah.

Me: That sounds pretty … Pretty typical, to most people when they start graduate school.

1: Yeah, things get serious.

Me: They do get serious. Let’s see. How old were you when you did your first, um, either extra-curricular music camp or program, which was not affiliated with school? Was it that summer camp you brought up earlier at…?

Me: And, let’s see. What was the first time you moved or relocated to attend regular training in music?

1: Well, I was already at [School] as an undergraduate before I went to graduate school, so I never really went anywhere except for when I went away to college in the first place.

Me: Okay. Hmm, that’s a hard one to kind of answer for you – since you went for something else, then you kind of…

1: Yeah.

Me: But, I guess after, uh, if you hadn’t been doing music after you finished undergrad, would you have stayed at [School]?

1: God, I don’t know what I would have done. I, I do remember that I … oh, yeah, you know. When I came back from that French tour at the end of Spring Break of junior year… that’s right! I was gonna go to law school! God, I forgot about that! And we got in late on a Friday night, having consumed, I think half the wine in France (both laugh), the next morning at the crack of dawn I had the law boards.

Me: Oh…

1: I just… Oh, I just knew. Lots of small print and the questions were infuriating. And, my dad was a lawyer. He thought I would have been a very good lawyer. I always thought I would have been a terrible lawyer, but, I thought, well you know. It’s what one does, one goes to law school, and then there are lots of other things you can do. But, I just sort of sat there knowing… this was probably not gonna pan out. I didn’t do that badly on them, but I didn’t do spectacularly well either. I probably could have gotten in somewhere… that just sort of happened…

Me: Okay. I understand. (laughing)

1: Yeah, I was more interested in law and politics and stuff like that, but… yeah.

Me: Let’s see…And, how old were you when you first established a close or extended relationship with a teacher, as in, you had them more often than…

1: (Nodding)

Me: cause in music this sort of thing happens really often… over time you develop that bond with that private lesson teacher you’ve had for a long time – they become kind of a mentor to you… that sort of a thing that I’m looking at.
1: Well, you know, I think I had the same teacher from 6th to 12th grade, but I was still, you know my mom took me to lessons, I don’t think I had any kind of… I loved her, but I don’t think I had any kind of independent relationship with her. My teacher at [School], T, was, ah, was someone I was very, very close to. Cause, you know, I studied with him throughout college and graduate school, and afterwards. Um, he … I mean I studied with other people too, and had great relationships with them, but T was…(sighs) T was the center of … yeah. 

Me: I think every musician I talk to has that one person that was just, it all started and ended with them. 

1: Right, yeah (nodding). And he was completely unorthodox. And, sometimes very difficult, but I loved him a lot – we all did. He was the greatest. 

Me: So let’s see. How old were you, or do you think you will be when you either reach or have you already reached your maximum potential in your music career? 

1: Woah! What a question…It’s interesting. I’m think I’m always improving as a teacher, you know. I feel like every few years I feel as though I should do a recall of all my previous students and say, “No! Come back, we should have done it this way.” Um, but, I guess… I have kind of an unusual situation because I haven’t been able to play for a number of years because of an injury to my hand… um, so that’s frustrating. Um… but I did some playing that I, I guess I’m proud of. Um, I guess some of that happened out here in this job, cause I had a lot of opportunities. Um, and I also had an orchestra job in the New York area. Um, and I think, uh, yeah. I don’t think I’m there yet. I do a lot of chamber coaching and I love that. And, it’s always an education. You know, I can’t. I think it would be really boring to teach or play if you feel that you had reached your potential, because then why not just pack it in? (smiling) 

Me: Okay. (chuckling) 

1: I could say, maybe, a little bit. Maybe just a little bit, I feel as though I’m may be hitting my stride, but, reaching my potential. No, I don’t think so… You know, I try hard, but I’d like to think I’ll be better next year. (smiling) 

Me: (smiling) I love that! Then, do you think there is an age where you will retire from public performance.
1: Well, I already have, from this injury. Not anything that I did on purpose. And, I’m uh grateful that my school has allowed me… ah, there’s typically a certain ratio of creative activity and teaching and service…and when it became clear that I wasn’t going to be able to continue performing, they allowed me to bulk up on some teaching and coaching and administrative work, and stuff like that.

Me: That’s excellent. In my opinion, that’s a sign of a great job and a great job. And, I know it was because of the injury, but when did you stop playing?

1: Well, let’s see… Um, I think it was, um, man, the last big performances were in 2008 or 2009. Um, I was able to demonstrate a little bit after that, but then with this neck accident – I broke my neck in November of this past year – it’s been a little hard to hold a (instrument).

Me: Yeah, that’s gotta be difficult.

1: You know, I’m gonna keep trying. I’d be very happy to be demonstrating and, you know stuff like that. I’m really lucky. I have students who were doing really, really terrific playing, so if this did have to happen to me – past, you know recent years, when I hadn’t been able to play, which I hadn’t foreseen, you know, at all – I’m very lucky that this coincided with a time when my students were great, so they’re doing very meaningful work.

Me: That’s the best thing that you could hope for.

1: Yes!

Me: I mean, really honestly, given the situation. Let’s see, and one last kind of music specific question. How old were you when you began your first kind of non-instrument specific music training? So that would be like a music history, music theory, secondary instrument – might be a difficult question since you started piano before (instrument), so…

1: Yeah, piano, (secondary instrument)… uh, piano was in like 2nd or 3rd grade… (secondary instrument) was 6th grade… When I was in high school… um, I mentioned that community theatre pit band that I played in. The conductor – he was a really neat guy, and he was a jazz musician, and he gave me, um, sort of theory lessons – more piano oriented, definitely, than (instrument). But, that’s where I first heard about tonic and
dominant, and chords... And, I guess I took lessons with him, for, gosh, maybe a year or so.

Me: Okay. Now, I have some charts to fill in. Let's take a break, and I'll call you back in about 5 minutes.

1: Sure.

Me: Okay, I'll call you in about 5 minutes.

BREAK

Me: Alright, now that I have my charts all filled in... So, we're going to summarize some of the information on the development of your ability in music. Some of this is based on the information you gave me earlier on, kind of, your levels of music. And, then we will continue from there. So, let's see. When you first started playing (instrument), and you said you were 9. Did you have... were your peers all your same age? Or, were you kind of thrown in with 4th-6th grade...

1: It was all 4th grade. I guess they came in and demonstrated... it was either the end of 3rd grade or the beginning of 4th grade. And, I was actually supposed to play the (other instrument). Um, cause my mom liked the (other instrument). And I thought, fine I'll play the (other instrument). And then -- the one that I had practically perfect attendance for 8 years, and one of the few times I was absent was the day they handed the instruments out, and when I came back, they didn't have any left. They only had (instrument)s, so.

Me: We all have our interesting stories of why we ended up on our instruments.

1: And am I ever glad...

Me: what about when you were playing (secondary instrument)? Were you mostly with people that were your same age or grade?

1: yeah, basically.

Me: And, when you were doing the swimming sorts of things, was that pretty well, um, people your own age again.

1: Yeah, it was pretty much by age group... I think... yeah.
Me: Okay…Let’s see, and when, those couple of summers you said, you played in the community band in high school: were there mostly high school students or was it more of a traditional community band?
1: No, they were a whole range of adults and older students and, you know, kids from college, I guess…. Actually, I guess the guy – I’m just remembering – he’s now the conductor, who was the father of my best friend, who was the really great (instrument) player, and he was the one who died really suddenly. I guess I got into it through her… through him… and then stuck with it.
Me: And, let’s see. The year that you did the All-County Band.
1: Just one year. (laughing)
Me: And that was, let’s see – you told me. I think it was your sophomore year?
1: I think it was sophomore year. I’m not really sure… it could have been senior year. I don’t think it was freshman year. And then, junior year, I was in Paris, so… I did solo contest every year from 5th or 6th on… on both (instrument) and piano. Oh, and I did a piano duet… yeah, no it’s uh..
Me: Okay. And… When you….
1: Uh, I do remember this… I don’t know if this is relevant to any of your questions. But, even though I started piano early, earlier than (instrument). I’ve never been a super comfortable performer, but I was much more comfortable on (instrument) than piano. I remember these recitals that my piano teacher used to make us play in. And, they were just torture for me. (laughter) It’s funny how a different instrument can make you feel completely different about the performance process.
Me: Yeah, I, I, even though I used to be a singer, and I still do sing.
1: Oh! Great!
Me: Yeah, I was never comfortable singing – at all – until I got completely away from classically trained singers.
1: Ahhh.. Interesting.
Me: And, I was always comfortable performing on brass instruments… Always… from the very beginning.
1: Interesting.
Me: Yeah, so I’ll ask other people about that. See if that becomes a trend, because it’s certainly the case for me too.

1: Yeah, and it wasn’t the matter of having nasty piano teachers. They were all really good and really nice, so I don’t know what it was.

Me: Let’s see. That [X] festival that you went to… can you tell me a little bit more about that? Were there mostly college age students there?

1: Yeah, it’s one of the most… hardest to get into festivals to get into in the country. It’s the [School] summer school of music and art. It’s on a beautiful estate in Richfield county in Connecticut. And, you live with people in the town, um… there’s also an art school, so you’re in the same building, um some of the same buildings as artists – and partying with them as well, which is great, because they have some of the greatest parties. And, the faculty live in little cabins on the grounds of the estate. Um, there’s the most beautiful concert hall on the planet. The most beautiful acoustics…. Gorgeous concerts. It’s really, today, it’s a little different from when I went there. There was an orchestra there, but when I went there it was mostly all about chamber music.

Me: Okay.

1: And, very, you know very small festival. As I said, there were 2 and a half (instrumentalists) when I was there.

Me: Were the other two (instrumentalists) that were there, since you had the part time position. The other two that were there, were they college students as well, or graduate students, or…?

1: Um, let’s see. They were, I think grad students. But, is this confidential?

Me: Yes.

1: Well, I was better than they were. And, I never say that, except that it was true. And, that’s why I got tons of opportunities. And, I wasn’t very good, but I was better than they were. So, that’s why I got lots of opportunities, and that’s what set the whole thing off.

Me: Okay. And, let’s see. That tour of France that you took with the Band.

1: Pardon? Oh, yeah it was with the orchestra – the [School] Symphony.

Me: Sorry. Were, and I remember you talking about the band, being one of the few undergrads in the band. Were there other, uh, undergrads in the orchestra as well or was that primarily graduate students?
1: Actually, no, the band was all undergraduates, and the orchestra was all undergrad. There is a separate orchestra for the Graduate school, and there’s no graduate band. There’s no band at the graduate level at [School] – as far as I know. Maybe they do now, but I don’t know.

Me: What?... Now this is where the questions can get a little bit more… hairy…

1: (laughing)

Me: So, for each one of these.. um, we’re going to see if we can list, maybe a highest accomplishment – either you as an individual, or as a group achieved. And, then we’re going to do some descriptions of how much mental effort and physical effort the practice took. So, before we start that going, um. Think back to when you in, we’ll say elementary school, because we’re going to start in early piano and (instrument) stuff. Can you think of something that was, uh, really difficult, sort of intense level of thinking and physical effort? That’s going to be your 100%. Think of, in elementary school, what would have required a lot of cognitive and physical effort.

1: In the music area or in general?

Me: In general.

1: In general… huh. (sighs and pauses to think)

Me: So, there’s the 100% which would be the difficult practice or something really hard, and then there’s the 0%, which is barely any effort involved. So, when you’re thinking about piano in elementary school, would you rate your effort 50%, 75%, 2%?

1: Oh, yeah… piano? Maybe, well knowing what I do know, I would say, uh…

Me: Well, just compare it to elementary school – not what you do now.

1: Oh, gosh. I mean, I put in my time, but I wasn’t very committed. I don’t know. I don’t do well with numbers, or quantifying things. I guess I’d be 40%.

Me: Okay, and what about (instrument)?

1: Again, I practiced regularly, but I wasn’t really… uh, I don’t know. 60-70%.

Me: Okay. And, what about (secondary instrument)? Can you think of...

1: I don’t remember practicing (secondary instrument).… That was just… I was sure I had to, but I don’t remember… I didn’t have lessons as far as I can remember. It was just play in the jazz band, and fingerings were kind of similar to (instrument). But, it was really good training.
Me: Okay. Let’s see. What about swimming?
1: Yeah, I didn’t practice swimming… I was in the water all day long, all summer. But it was just for fun. I wasn’t practicing swimming, although I was swimming all the time…. I didn’t think of it as practice.
Me: So, really low intensity level for that one.
1: Yeah, I would say so, it was, uh, all day at the beach, but just having fun and – you know – there’s a lot of exercise involved. It wasn’t so I could win the race, it was just so I could have fun.
Me: What about reading? Does that fit into another relaxing sort of category.
1: Yeah, relaxing. I remember our local library as a kid – you got a gold star every time you read a book. And, I guess you didn’t have to write a big report, you just filled out a kind of form. And, I loved those gold stars.
Me: (laughing) Whatever it takes to motivate you. Um, moving on to community band, can you rank the amount of effort?
1: I tried to do my best, but I don’t remember working very hard. You know, I practiced, but it was not a high stress situation.
Me: So… 30-20%?
1: Yeah, I mean, I think I did about as much as anybody did, and I probably did pretty well, but it wasn’t like I was spending 9 hours a day practicing for it.
Me: And, All-County band? I know it was a bad experience, the audition part…
1: Traumatic… Yeah, I… You know, I think all of this is because nobody really talked about how to practice. I think if I had known what I was supposed to be doing, maybe I would have done more. But, it was more, “Okay, put in your 30 minutes a day, kind of thing.” Well, I mean…
(Both laughing)
Me: Let’s see, and then, when you were at the [X] festival?
1: I practiced hard…
Me: So, would you say, 75%, 80, 90, 100
1: Yeah, that was 100%. I worked really hard.
Me: And then, either preparing for that tour of France, or while you were on that tour I know you were having fun. (both laugh)
1: I was playing 4th (instrument), so it wasn’t like I was having to play Afternoon of a faun in France or anything… I didn’t have to work very hard, so I probably didn’t. (both laugh)

Me: Okay, so we’ll put that one as a 30% okay?

1: Yeah, I mean, I worked as hard as I had to. But, I think I just didn’t know what was possible, because everything was geared to doing this as an amateur – not as a pre-professional.

Me: Yeah, I see that often. Okay, one of the other things we always try to consider, whether or not people take advantage of people and training resources, the availability of such resources might impact the speed of development even for highlight motivated individuals. So, disregard for the moment whether you used all or even most of the resources for your development at every stage of training, um. Rate for each stage the quality of the training resources that you had available – that would have been useful to developing into a successful motivated musician. So, 100% would be the best possible environment, and 0% would be a complete lack of resources.

1: Um, hm. (nodding)

Me: So, how would you rate the resources for piano?

1: Oh, I mean I assume it was 100%, I had good music to play, good method books, and my parents took me to a lot of concerts.

Me: Okay, would you say the same thing for (instrument)?

1: Yeah, absolutely. I had all the right stuff.

Me: And (secondary instrument)?

1: Well, I didn’t really approach that as, um, seriously… I mean, I think what I was able to do, to be able to function in a jazz band for 6 years. It must have been…I guess it was okay. It was not high pressure. Carrying the darn thing was the hardest. That’s why I gave it up, because it was so heavy.

Me: (laughter)

1: And, honestly, the only reason that I got into playing in a stage band, was that I had a crush on a guy in my 6th grade class named XXXX. And, he was going to audition for the jazz band. And I thought, “Well, this is my chance.” And, I got in. And, he got in. But, I got lead tenor, and he got 4th tenor. It was definitely over before it began, so.
Me: (laughter) Okay. Well, let’s see here. What about the swimming? I know it wasn’t competitive, but were there opportunities to do competitive sorts of things if you wanted to?

1: No, we did everything that was available, which was basically our little races at our little tiny beach. And, you know, we had swimming lessons.

Me: Okay. And would you say, reading you had lots of resources available?

1: Oh, absolutely. My parents were very, very… they had a huge book collection and were very big readers, both. Good library in our town…

Me: And, let’s see. Community band? Would that be another thing where you think you had all the resources you needed for that one?

1: Yeah.

Me: Let’s see. All-County band?

1: Oi…

Me: I’m expecting this one to maybe be a little bit lower.

1: You know, what can I say? I was just not prepared for – that was my first audition, and, you know, it just wasn’t talked about back then. So, I didn’t really know how to prepare. And, I hadn’t performed that much, so I was still kind of a nervous player.

Me: Okay, so would you, uh, since it wasn’t really talked about that much then, would you say that it was, ah, a little bit less than 100% of best opportunity?

1: Yeah, I would say so. Maybe 75%.

Me: I know these numbers are all completely subjective so. Let’s see, what about the [X] festival?

1: That was 100%.

Me: And that tour of France? That’s the last one we have.

1: Yeah, I mean, that was great. 100.

Me: Let’s see. And at any point… so for each one of these, I want you to tell me if you had an injury, and approximately how many hours per week you spent doing these various activities. And, then if you did it for less than 12 months a year. We’ll try to do 3 of these columns at once. So, for piano, did you have any injuries?

1: Nope.

Me: Okay. And, approximately how many hours per week did you spend.
1: Oh, god. Well, I think I only had lessons during the school year, I think. And, I forget how long my lessons were... they were once a week. I think probably... I don’t even remember if they were 30 or 60 minutes. And, I was supposed to practice every day, so...
You can do the math.
Me: So, I’m going to say about 3-4 hours, if it was 30 minutes – ish per day.
1: You mean per week?
Me: Yeah, 3-4 hours per week.
1: Yeah, probably. Counting the lesson – something like that. Maybe 5, I don’t remember.
Me: What about (instrument)?
1: More, but nothing off the charts. Um, yeah... more around... there was just more to do, because I had my lesson and school groups and stuff.
Me: And, did you have any injuries that prevented you from playing (instrument) up until...?
1: No, I never had any injuries from any kind of musical activity. The injury in my hand was totally not (instrument) related.
Me: Well, I’m glad to hear it wasn’t (instrument) related. I know too many musicians with injuries related to what they do.
1: Yeah, right. I have, thankfully, never had that experience.
Me: What about (secondary instrument)? No injury on that one?
1: No.
Me: And, hours per week?
1: Um, you mean of total involvement or practice?
Me: total involvement.
1: Total involvement, well, I don’t even remember. You know, the (instrument) hours were probably more because I was rehearsing a lot. So, we should probably bump up the (instrument) to... if I was playing in 2 groups, that rehearsed every day. Or, maybe, I can’t even remember if we rehearsed every day. It may have been only 3 days a week. I just have no memory of that... but I just know it was a lot of hours that I was playing. So, maybe. Let’s see. Maybe 6-10 hours a week of rehearsal on top of practicing.
Me: Okay, so probably, what 10-15ish?
1: Yeah, I have no idea.
Me: These are all estimates.
1: Let’s see, 10 or 12 would it. 15 is a little out there. Um, yeah, (secondary instrument)… hmmm. Just the playing in the ensemble would have been 5 hours a week or so.
Me: And, let’s see. How many months out of the year did you participate in swimming? Was that only the 3 months or so of summer?
1: Yeah, June, July and August.
Me: And, let’s see, how many hours per week did you think you spent swimming.
1: Every day that it didn’t rain, I was in the water all the time. Um, lots and lots…
Me: so, probably, what 50 hours a week?
1: Let’s say 25, because I’m sure there were rainy days, and days I went to visit my aunt and such.
Me: Okay. And did you have any injuries at any point that prevented you from swimming?
1: Nope.
Me: Okay. And, it’s really rare, but did you have an injury that prevented you from reading at any point.
1: Nope
Me: And, how many hours per week would you estimate you spent reading?
1: Huh… (long pause) Gosh, I know I read every night before I went to sleep, so…I don’t know, maybe 5-7… something like that.
Me: Okay. Let’s see. Community band was just during the summer?
1: Yep.
Me: So, just those same 3 months for that. And how many hours per week was that?
1: I have no idea – I think it was…maybe a couple of rehearsals – a couple of 2 hour rehearsals and a concert. And, I don’t remember how many concerts we gave.
Me: We’ll put it at 4. Does that sound about right?
1: Sure.
Me: Let’s see. All-County Band was probably a short experience – right?
1: It was extremely short, thank god. It was a quick audition and your basic day long thing of rehearsals and concert.

Me: And, the [X] festival? How long was that?
1: That was… gosh… about 6 weeks? 4 weeks? Something like that in the summer. I honestly can’t remember. It was all day, all the time.

Me: Okay.

1: Except for when I was swimming, which was a great aspect of that festival. There was a wonderful pond.

Me: So do you still swim every day?
1: I wish. I don’t – I probably should, though. I’m just not a big pool person. Actually, I found a wonderful place when an outdoor, double Olympic pool. So, I was doing that a couple of years ago. And, then this summer it was still a little iffy with my neck, but my neuro surgeon says I can swim.

Me: Yeah! That’s exciting.
1: Yeah.

Me: So, what about that tour of France – that’s our last one. How many hours per week or hours did you spendish on that really short tour.
1: Uh, it was 10 days… 3 concerts… probably one little rehearsal for each… And, not very much practicing.

(both laugh)

Me: So what, 4? 5?
1: Let’s see, concerts were about 2 hours long, so there’s 6 right there. Plus, we’ll say rehearsal… so 9… Yeah, the actual playing was maybe about 10 or 11. Something like that.

Me: Okay. In this last section, we want to try and figure out related practice activities that you engaged in. So, the number of hours per week, the intensity of practice, the number of months per year you spent… um, so it’s kind of similar to what we just did, with a few little differences. So, for this one, especially for the music activities… can you separate… I can copy over hours per week and months per year. But, can you separate the physical effort and the mental concentration.. and then a rating for fun. Those are going to be our 3 big ones.
1: Okay…
Me: So, it’s going to be again on that 0-100% sort of things. No effort to exhausting…
For piano, how would you rate the physical effort?
1: Oh, about 50%.
Me: and then mental concentration?
1: I don’t think I thought very much about it at all.
Me: Okay. So, I’m going to put that at 10, because I’m sure there was some form of mental activity.
1: (laughing) You flatter me.
Me: And, then, if you had to rank it on a scale of 1-10 for fun. 10 being the most fun and 1 being, just no fun at all. What would you rank piano?
1: Um, back then I guess I would say… 6.
Me: Okay, and do the same three for (instrument). So physical effort?
1: Um…
Me: Still thinking about your early years.
1: Early years, I think I would say 70 or 80.
Me: And for fun?
1: Fun was a 10.
Me: And, what about mental concentration?
1: Uh, I don’t remember it requiring a lot, but I sure I gave it whatever it needed. I don’t know. Um, I’m not sure exactly what you mean by that.
Me: So, for mental concentration – 0 would be not paying attention or just going through the motions, and then 100% would be, ah, putting forth every bit of effort.
1: Well, then I would put it at 100, then.
Me: Let’s see here. Let’s do swimming and reading, so we have kind of some comparisons. What about swimming? What’s your physical effort?
1: I’d say about, maybe 70%. I mean, it wasn’t… I showed up for the race – it wasn’t like I trained for it or anything. (laughing)
Me: Okay. And, mental concentration for swimming?
1: 0.
(both laugh)
Me: And, what about a ranking 1-10 for fun.
1: 10.
Me: What about reading. Physical effort?
1: 10? Yeah.
Me: And, mental concentration?
1: 10.
Me: and, fun?
1: 10.
Me: Okay. Let’s do the Community band for high school. Can you give me a physical effort for community band?
1: 100.
Me: And for mental concentration?
1: 100%
Me: And, fun?
1: 10.
Me: Let’s do… for college, that [X] festival.
1: 100% all around.
Me: I was expecting that. And that tour of France?
1: Um, well. I gave it everything it required… it didn’t require much, so.
Me: So, about 50% or lower?
1: No, I think… I mean it wasn’t taxing… um, but I certainly delinquent. Yeah, I would say, fun was definitely a 10. Physical effort… I did 100% of what I needed to do. And mentally…there wasn’t a lot of mental demand, but I did whatever was necessary.
Me: Okay. So, let’s one last little section. Let’s see, did you have – you talked about some of these – indirect involvement in music, going to concerts, you’ve mentioned. Um, did you have anything else besides going to concerts with your parents that you would list as an indirect involvement.
1: Well, in those days, there was a very good Classical music station, and my parents had the radio on all the time. I think that was really important, because it was… even when I was very little, there was Classical music happening all the time… Around me, I was hearing it.
Me: It can be very helpful to hear it. Let’s see, and what about um, organized music production with rules that are supervised by yourself or your peers. So that could be playing duets with your friends, jam sessions, playing by ear, sight-reading for fun, anything like that…

1: Yeah, there was a little of that going on. I had the music contingent in our public schools, kind of was a nice group, and we did stuff together. I think mostly happened, actually, when the stage band got together and read stuff, as I recall. Jazz stuff, mostly. Um, yeah, I played duets. You know, all (instrumentalists) play duets. We just do. There was only one person who was really serious in my little town, so.

Me: Okay.

1: And then, oh, I guess some friends of my parents, their son played the piano. At little dinner parties, he would play, or I would play, or we would play a duet or something.

Me: Okay. What about, um, so anything that would fall under the category of organized music production with rules supervised by teachers. So if your teachers were assigning you duets, or having you play by ear, but it was assigned by the teacher, or the teacher was at least supervising what you were doing.

1: No, not really. There was one year where I played a duet with another student of my piano teacher. This was a piano duet. I think I did 2 of those. We both studied with the same teacher… um, and, I played in – my (instrument) teacher had what was the precursor to the (instrument) choir. It was the (instrument) club. All of her students, we played these little arrangements and things. Which we had to play from memory, actually. Um, you know, there was marching band, which I actually loved. It was nothing like marching band is today. Totally different. It was just for parades in my little town. We didn’t do competition… we played at football games, but it was not a big routine or anything.

Me: Okay.

1: Yeah, that’s about all I can remember. My teachers, when I was growing up, would have recitals for their studio.

Me: Okay, and did you do anything listening to music actively or passively that was assigned by your teachers? When did that start?
1: I was always listening…and, I can’t even remember when it started. It was always happening. And, the only deliberate listening activity that I remember was when I went to school in Paris, I went to the English school – the British school – and at lunch time, the headmaster would gather those of us who were interested in Classical music and we would listen to records. It’s where I first listened to the Elgar *Enigma Variations*, actually. He had a little portable phonograph, and we used it to listen to records. But, I don’t recall having listening assignments. I just was always listening and buying records.

Me: Okay. The next category is individualized instruction. I know you said you had private lessons basically from when you first started piano and (instrument) right?

1: Piano, yes. (instrument), I think started in my 2nd or 3rd year of playing. We started school band (instrument) in 4th grade, and I believe the end of 5th grade where I started or early 6th grade where I started private lessons.

Me: Okay.

1: And, (secondary instrument), I didn’t have a teacher. It was just…

Me: It was just for fun?

1: Yeah, I mean I think my band directors, the music educators at our school knew a little about every instrument, so they probably helped me. But, I didn’t have a (secondary instrument) teacher, or anything.

Me: Okay.

1: I do know that I could not get a sound out of an alto (secondary instrument) – I could only get a sound out of a (secondary instrument). And, even though it was the stage band and it was jazz, I refused to play anything that wasn’t written down. I was not an improviser, but I swear, reading and playing those Ellington and Count Basie tunes, that was some of the best chamber music training I ever had.

Me: Okay, by your own choice, listening to music actively? So, paying attention to style, or some other musical element? Ah, when did you start doing that?

1: Oh…(long pause) Maybe graduate school.

(both laugh)

1: I don’t know… I listened, and when I got really serious about (instrument), you know, it was a lot about sound. I think…yeah, I would say college or definitely graduate school. Kind of late. Before then, it was just listening and osmosis.
Me: Okay. And, then, when did you start initiating your own practice? You were practicing because you wanted to, not because a teacher or a parent instructed you to.

1: Well, I mean there’s kind of a blurry line between being expected to and wanting to in my memory. It wasn’t as though my parents were standing over me, you know, forcing me to do it. I think they helped me establish a routine. I sort of took over and started on my own pretty early. But, the real passion for practicing happened quite late. I would say it was… I didn’t know how to practice until the summer after my second year of graduate school.

Me: Okay.

1: And then, I … because the way the logistics were at [School], you weren’t really in a whole big area of practice rooms. You weren’t really in around other people who were practicing. I mean I practiced hard, but where I really got serious and where the (instrument) really started to come first in my life was very definitely the summer of 1974. I met a guy on a plane (laughter), who is a well-known (instrumentalist), and I spent the summer at a music festival where he was at. He was quite young at the time. I had the practice room next to him, and he practiced all night. And, I heard what it was like to really practice, and to really discipline yourself to put the (instrument) first and be consistent, and yeah… So, that was after my second year of grad school.

Me: Okay.

1: And, that was at B. The B festival.

Me: Kind of similar to this, is when did you start setting your own performance goals? So, selecting your own literature, deciding I want to learn a new style or technique…

1: I would say probably… I think in high school my teacher would tell me what piece to work on, but in college, um T, he probably made some suggestions, but I think I sort of… Yeah, I think it was probably college when I said, “I want to learn this piece”. And, he wasn’t very dogmatic about what piece you had to do when. Yeah, I don’t remember his ever imposing repertoire on me, so I guess in college it was very much up to me to decide.

Me: okay. That, believe it or not, is the end! Thank you for making it all the way through – I know it was a lot of questions. It’s very interesting to see how many similarities
between our careers, even though I’m a little earlier in my career. The trajectories are very similar.

1: Well, mine’s kind of atypical, in that I was a liberal arts major, and just was not involved in the whole music thing until quite late on. And, I spent… really, what most people do – they spend their teens locked in a practice room. And, I didn’t get serious until my 20s and 30s, and that’s when I practiced (large hand gesture)... That was number one priority.
Me: Well, thank you, I really appreciate it.
1: Sure!

Participant 1: Follow-up Interview

Nov. 17th, 2014 via Skype

Me: Hi! How are you?
1: Good! How are you?
Me: Busy, but good.
1: So, how’s the project going?
Me: It’s going really well. It’s interesting to see how many people are really interested, but say – oh, I can’t afford that much time. Which, I can understand, especially during this time of year, it gets really busy. But, now it’s going really well. And, I think I might actually be able to graduate in May!
1: Great!
Me: Yeah, that whole graduation thing. I’m very excited about graduating. I hope all is well in your neck of the woods. How much snow did you guys get?
1: Not very much, just a little dusting. What about you?
Me: Just barely enough.
1: There were all kinds of dire reports on the news. And, 2-4”, and blah, blah, blah, but…
Me: Yeah, I saw those and went, well, maybe…but I don’t think it’s going to be that bad. And, sure enough, it wasn’t. My poor son was looking forward to a snowball fight. So,
we took a whole bunch of old paper that I was going to take to school to recycle and crumpled them up into little balls, and had an indoor snowball fight.

Both laugh

1: Great.

Me: I don’t want to keep you all night long, so should we dive in?

1: Sure.

Me: I’m going to start with, following up on a couple of things that I must have glossed over. I didn’t quite get clear enough answers on from the last interview. So, this is going back to some of the things we did towards the end. Having to do with some of your various different practice activities, and other non-practice activities – how many hours per week, physical effort, mental concentration and fun. Remember that?

1: Uh, no, but…

Both laugh.

Me: That’s okay, I can go back over it again. I’ll make it the quick version. The time is pretty easy, just tell me your best estimate on how often you did this… if it was only say… I’ll use the swimming one as an example. During those 3 months of the summer, you did it probably 25 hours per week. You were swimming all the time during elementary school. Um, so that was the hours per week and the months per year. Then, physical effort – 100 is the most physical effort and 0 is the lowest, just the easiest possible thing. Then, mental concentration – if it’s basically just the same as staring at the wall, it’s a 0. (laughter) If it’s really intense, then that’s 100%. That’s the sort of thing. And then, fun is just 1-10. Makes sense?

1: (nodding)

Me: So, you described attending concerts with your parents when you were young. How often do you think you did that?

1: Oh, my goodness. I’d say… that’s very hard to estimate. Um, I would say at least once a month, maybe more often.

Me: Okay. I would guess that physical effort is going to be kind of low on this one. What would you say? 10%? You had to walk somewhere?

1: Actually it involved going into New York, which was about an hour long train-ride, so… Yeah, I would say a 10.
Me: And, what about mental concentration? Did you concentrate that much as you were listening to these concerts?
1: Yeah, I was pretty involved. I’d say 90%...
Me: And, if you had to rate it 1-10 for fun?
1: 10. (smiling)
Me: And, what about listening to the radio? That was one of the things that you listed that you did in elementary school. How often did, or how much time did you spend on average listening to the radio?
1: Well, my parents had the Classical station on pretty much all the time, so…
Me: A lot, then.
(Both laugh)
1: Yeah, and then, I used to sneak the Rock and Roll station on my little transistor radio late at night under the covers. So…
Me: Okay, and that was probably all the months of the year. So, should we put that one at 40, 50, 60 hours per week?
1: Let’s see, how many hours are there? Oh, it’s really hard to say… 8 hours per day.
Me: And what would you put for physical effort on that one?
1: 0.
Me: Zero? Okay. That’s what I expected. And, mental concentration?
1: Um… I mean, I listened. It wasn’t just wall-paper. But, it didn’t require a lot of effort…
Me: 10? 20? 50?
1: 60.
Me: 60, okay. And would you rate it on a 1-10 for fun?
1: 10.
Me: Okay, so moving on to middle school and high school. You listed off a couple of things, like, um, playing duets with friends. This was… I think you were primarily talking about (instrument), not so much on piano. Do you remember about how often you did that?
1: less than 1.
Me: Okay. And, was that all year round? Just during school? During summer?
1: I don’t remember. (laughing). I really don’t.
Me: That’s okay. And, then for physical effort? Mental concentration?
1: Yeah, about, I’m going to say 80.
Me: for both?
1: Um, hmm. (nodding)
Me: Okay. And then, on a scale of 1-10 for fun?
1: Yeah, it was fun – 10.
Me: I hope it was fun. And then, you talked about playing in the stage band.
1: Sshhh…yeah. (chuckling)
Me: Oh, I always love the faces I see when I remind people about things. And, the stage band. How often, or how many hours per week do you think you spent doing that?
1: Oh, I’m going to say, maybe 3 hours a week or so.
Me: Okay. And, I don’t remember, was that one just during the summer?
1: No, that was during the school year. From 6th until… ah… I would say 6th until at least 10th grade. And, then I was away, so I didn’t do it junior year. I can’t remember if I did it senior year or not.
Me: Okay. And, then, physical effort for that one?
1: Not very, you know, I would say 80.
Me: Okay. And, mental concentration?
1: 100.
Me: And, fun?
1: 10.
Me: Let’s see, and then, individual practice… for (instrument).
1: Not too much…
(Both laugh)
1: I don’t really remember… I guess I practiced enough… Uh, I don’t know… May 30 minutes per day when I was very young.
Me: So, about 3-5 hours-ish?
1: Yeah, I would say 3-6, maybe.
Me: Okay. And did you practice during the school year and during the summer?
1: Probably.
Me: Okay. And, physical effort?
1: 100.
Me: And, mental concentration?
1: 100.
Me: And, fun?
1: 10!
Me: You are a rare person that would rate individual practice as fun, but that’s wonderful.
1: I think I did so little of it that I really enjoyed it.
Me: Well, good! Okay, I’ve got another one. The X (instrument) Club?
1: Yeah, that was just right at the beginning. It was not very many hours.
Me: And, how many months out of the year did you do that one?
1: That was only for a couple of years… it was very occasional.
Me: Okay. And then, physical effort for that one?
1: I mean, it’s a 100.
Me: Okay. And, mental concentration?
1: It would have to be a 100, because I remember she made us memorize everything.
Me: And, was it fun?
1: Yeah, 10.
Me: So, as much fun as the stage band?
1: Let’s make it a 9.
Me: Okay. What about marching band?
1: Yeah, I did that all through school.
Me: So, that was about how many hours per week, do you think?
1: Well, maybe a couple of hours per week. Because, it didn’t happen all year long.
Me: Okay. And, how many months do you think you had marching band?
1: Um, let’s see. September… maybe 4…. 3 or 4.
Me: Okay. And, physical effort?
1: 100.
Me: Okay. And, mental concentration?
1: 100.
Me: Okay, and fun?
Me: Okay, let’s see. Piano duets… how many hours per week did you think you did for piano duets in middle school or high school.

1: I only did those for one year, and it was only for one contest. So, it was pretty negligent.

Me: Okay. Then, I’ll just take that one off, since it was so little. What about passive listening to music. So, this could be listening to the radio.

1: Lots of it.

Me: Similar to the amount of time you spent listening to the radio?

1: Yeah, I would say that. And, listening to recordings. So, maybe add some on to the radio.

Me: Alright… And, then, thinking towards going into college – specifically your undergraduate. So, I wanted to talk about individual practice first. How many hours per week do you think you spent in individual practice? As an undergraduate.

1: Oh, boy. Ah, not many. Um, (pause). I guess it got more toward junior/senior year… Maybe, over my whole college career… I have no idea. Maybe 5 hours per week.

Me: Okay. And did you practice over the summers? Or was it mostly during school.

1: No, it was year round.

Me: And, physical effort?

1: 100.

Me: Okay. Mental concentration?

1: Yep, 100.

Me: And, fun, was it still fun?

1: Yeah. 10.

Me: Let’s see. What about playing duets? Were you still playing duets every once in a while with other (instrument) players or whomever?

1: Not really.

Me: Okay. And, what about let’s see. So I’ve got active listening and passive listening. Which of those do you want to do first.

1: Doesn’t matter.

Me: Okay, let’s do passive listening. Was music still always in the background?
1: Um… not as much. Yeah, I would say not as much, because it just wasn’t that available to me.
Me: Okay. So, the last one you had listed as passive listening as 25-30 hours per week. So, should I list this one as 15, 20, 10?
1: Um, this was in college?
Me: Yep.
1: I would say… I really don’t remember.
(both laugh)
Me: Okay. What about active listening? Do you remember how much time you spent… so active listening, we’re thinking of paying attention to style, or a particular performer, or learning a new piece of music through listening…
1: Yeah, I would say maybe, ah… 3 hours per week would be a good average.
Me: And, then, what about… was that 12 months per year?
1: Probably.
Me: Okay. And, physical effort for this listening?
1: Not very much…. 0.
Me: Okay. What about mental concentration?
1: Yeah, 100.
Me: And, fun?
1: 10.
Me: Okay. Almost done with these questions.
(both laugh)
Me: Alright, so thinking about when you were accepted into graduate school at [School]. This was when you kind of said, things really started to pick up. Um, can you describe to me, what sorts of activities you had while you were in graduate school. It could be practice, playing duets, scales, listening, reading, whatever.
1: Well, lessons, rehearsals, practicing, going to concerts, hanging out… yeah.
Me: Okay. How much time do you think you spent going to concerts?
1: A lot… I mean there were lots of really wonderful concerts… Well, if you figure 2 hours per concert, and I went to probably two concerts per week. So, at least 4 hours per week.
Me: Okay. And, did you attend concerts over the summer? Or, was it primarily during the school year?
1: No, it was throughout the year.
Me: And, how would you rate physical activity for attending concerts?
1: A 10… we had to walk to get there.
Me: And mental concentration?
1: 100.
Me: And fun?
1: 10!
Me: And, let’s see. What about practicing? Individual sort of practice?
1: Uhh… I would say that ramped up to about 3 hours per day.
Me: Was that 7 days a week? So about 21 hours per week?
1: Sounds good.
Me: And, that was 12 months out of the year.
1: 12 months, yes.
Me: Let’s see, so physical effort?
1: 100.
Me: And, mental concentration?
1: 100.
Me: And, fun?
1: Uh, 10.
Me: Okay. Let’s see, what about rehearsals?
1: Endless…
(both laugh)
1: I would say, probably 5 hours per day, maybe.
Me: So, that’s about 35 hours per week in rehearsals?
1: Maybe, let’s see. Well, we didn’t do it on weekends. So, maybe 20 hours per week.
Me: And that was, all year long…
1: Well, except when I was at music festivals.
Me: So, should we do 10 months out of the year? Would that account for festivals?
1: Um, yeah. I didn’t do many of them until after junior year, so.
Me: Okay. And physical effort for rehearsals?
1: 100.
Me: And, mental effort?
1: 100.
Me: And, fun?
1: 10.
Me: Okay. What about lessons?
1: Oh, those are 1 hour per week.
Me: Okay. And did you have them 12 months out of the year?
1: No, just the school year, so 9.
Me: Okay. And, physical effort for those?
1: 100.
Me: And, mental effort?
1: 100.
Me: And, fun?
1: Um, 10… It depends on what you mean by fun. But, very positive certainly.
Me: And, what about the hanging out, kind of leisure time?
1: There was a lot of that… (laughing)
Me: 10 hours per week? 20, 40?
1: Maybe 10.
Me: Okay. And, was that 12 months out of the year?
1: Um, no I’d say, more during the school year.
Me: Okay. And, physical effort?
1: not very much. (smiling)
Me: Okay, and what about mental effort?
1: 80.
Me: And, fun?
1: 10!
Me: Okay. Excellent. So, all of those questions with the numbers are done – yay! And, then, just a couple more questions for you. Please describe your typical practice or an
ideal practice session when you were still playing. Did you have any sort of a practice
routine, or what sort of activities did you do? Did it change often?
1: Well, I had a pretty set routine. Tone study, technical study, etudes, orchestral
repertoire and sight-reading.
Me: Okay. Was always in that order?
1: Um… not necessarily, but it was more in… I generally would start with technical and
tone study, and the other stuff varied.
Me: Okay. Now I’m just curious, was there a particular rationale for starting with
technical or tone studies?
1: Well, you get warmed-up, and they’re really important. And, I hadn’t done them when
I was younger, so I had a lot of catching up to do. And, they are just the only way to get
good technique and keep it.
Me: I would agree with that. You’d be surprised how many students tell me, “I do that
because you told me to!”
(both laugh)
Me: And, then, would you describe your family musical background for me?
1: They were very musical. Um, but they weren’t professional. But, they were
incredibly… they loved music and they were what I would call musical. They could sing
– they had beautiful voices. My mom played the piano. And, actually she sang in New
York for a while in the choir. My dad studied violin as a kid, and he had a mandolin and a
guitar around the house. They both sang and responded to music very strongly – it was a
hugely high priority.
Me: And, so, that sort of leads into the next question. Was music part of your family life
as a child? Was this something they did on their own, or was this something you did as a
family?
1: No, they weren’t actually involved in music until, during my growing up. But, um,
they loved it, and they were very active concert-goers. The radio was always on, and that
sort of thing.
Me: Okay. So, I could describe them of consumers of music, and lovers of music.
1: Yeah.
Me: What do you think contributed most to your musical development?
1: Wow… you mean the whole from day 1 to now?
Me: Yep.
1: Well, I would say there were several things. One is, well, I would have to say my parents for making it possible and supporting me. All the way – there was never any question about the support or their love for me. In fact, it was a priority. Um, I had several teachers that were really just the best people on the planet, both (instrument) teachers and chamber music coaches. And, then when I got serious, I practiced a heck of a lot. (chuckles)
Me: Okay.
1: But, I would say, uh, [School] was just an incredibly, incredibly wonderful place to be for musicians. Both as an undergraduate, even though I wasn’t heading down a professional track at that point… Really, really, a vibrant, driving musical environment…. And, then, when I stayed on to go to music school – it was just fantastic.
Me: Okay. Let’s see, since I know you teach, this next section will apply to you. Do you include any of the sorts of activities we’ve discussed either today or last time with your students? Some of them I’m guessing not – you probably don’t go swimming with your students.
1: Ha! Well, I encourage them to go or get some great aerobic exercise. And, since we have such great pools here, several of them do swim.
Me: Okay. Are there any other, not just the swimming, any of the other activities…
1: Go to concerts. I have certain concerts that I require, and then a certain number in different categories that I require. Um, they do a lot of listening… Um, I try at the beginning or middle of each semester – they draw match-up cards for duet partners. So, they have a duet partner.
Me: Oh, okay. And, now I’m just curious – are those duets, are they ever performed? Or is it just, get together and play?
1: Well, for this particular little thing is just, they have to get together once during the semester with the partner they’ve been matched up with. And, you know, just read duets together for an hour. But, some of them do (instrument) chamber music through the chamber music program here. And, sometimes the duet will end up on one of their recitals here.
Me: And, I’m trying to remember – do you teach anyone below the college level? Or, is it pretty much college and graduate students?
1: No, it’s mostly [College A] students. Occasionally I have private students.
Me: Okay, do you recommend the same sorts of activities to your private students as your [College A] students?
1: It depends on the intentions. It varies from people who are very (instrument) focused to young kids. But, I pretty much recommend the same sort of things.
Me: By the way, I really like that idea – for a whole long laundry list of reasons. And, when I have enough students at the same institution, I’m going to force them to do that.
1: You mean the duets?
Me: Yeah, I mean, they already have concerts they have to attend. And, pretty much everything else you listed off they’re already doing, but the duets, is… when you have one student here, and another over here – 40 miles away from each other – it gets kind of difficult.
1: Well, you know, they need to get to know the duet repertoire. But, also, it’s just to… since it’s very random, you might have a freshman together with a doctoral student. And, I seriously suggest they go out for coffee afterwards. Because, then it’s kind of nice. Some people have gotten to know each other that way.
Me: Wonderful. And then, is there anything else that you’d like to add to this conversation that takes into consideration everything you’ve done to develop as a musician? All the practice, listening, etc. Everything you’ve done in your life.
1: Uh, no. I’ve just been really lucky except for the part about not being able to play right now. I’m lucky in the playing I have done. And, my students are just wonderful. I’m really blessed with it. Perennial crop of terrific people to work with. And, yeah. I can’t think of anything we haven’t covered…
Me: Okay.
1: Feel free to let me know if I’ve left anything out, though.
Me: Well, if I think of anything, I promise I will. Or if I have any questions –
1: Actually, I guess there’s one thing that… you know, you asked about my development. I think, I mean I still do a ton of listening and concert attending. [City name] has these fabulous concerts here. One thing that really has turned me on in the past several years is
that I subscribed to Berlin Philharmonic Digital Concert Hall. And, to my mind, it’s the best orchestra in the world. And, being able to just – you pay a year-long subscription for just a little over $100 – and you have access to archives full of performances and interviews and films and lots of special features. And, one of the great [musician who plays same instrument] of all time, who I consider my [instrument name] hero, plays there. You know, that’s very nice as well. And, actually the whole section is my hero, so I would say that that really inspires me now as a 60 something year old, I am just so excited when I get to watch live their concerts. I never heard the orchestra in person, but yeah.

Me: Yeah, that sounds amazing. I listen to a lot of recordings – as many as I can get. It’s always interesting to me how many musicians, especially ones that are still active, still go out and actively seek new things to listen to. And, new things to…

1: Having the visual component is, well. You can get the live transmission, but you can also watch it years later. Just having the visual as well is just fantastic.

Me: Absolutely. Well, I’m jealous that you get to live there and have all those great live performances to attend as well.

1: People think this is… you know – especially on the coasts, but we have more and better offerings than many of the large cities out East and West. Truly very lucky.

Me: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. Well, thank you so much for your time, I really appreciate it.

1: Good luck! It’s great to know you.

Me: I will send you transcripts and memos of the major salient points once I’ve finished working through these.

1: You know, one thing I think I should add, that I think is truly important: I started piano early, and then (instrument) happened in 4th grade. I did remember, from day 1, walking into that band room, with 2 really, really wonderful band directors in our school system. And, just feeling as though… it felt like home. They made it feel very welcoming and just I felt important, and it was very comfortable and positive. And, I have to thank those two guys for creating that atmosphere where, even if it didn’t make me want to go off to music school in college, I think it certainly in an important way laid the groundwork for my positive feeling about music. And, even then it was something I didn’t know I had to do, but I eventually found out.
Me: Absolutely.
1: I still remember the feeling of walking in that room. You had to go down a few steps to get into that room, and that was the greatest feeling in the world.
Me: That is the best sort of compliment that any sort of teacher could have.
1: Yeah. Yeah, they’re both gone now, but they were important people. We had them from 4th grade all the way through high school.
Me: That’s a wonderful situation to have – great teachers and have them for a long, in depth period of time when they can really make a difference.
1: Alright, well good luck!
Me: Thank you so much!

Participant 2 Initial Interview Transcript

December 16, 2014, conversation via Skype

Me: So how are you today?
2: Okay. And, how are you?
Me: I’m fine, thanks.
2: So, how can I help you with this research of yours? It sounds very interesting.
Me: It has been so far. Um, well, if you’re ready, we’ll dive in.
2: Yep. I’m ready.
Me: So, first we’re going to focus on activities you participated in when you were young. So, a lot of this will be listing stuff that you’ve done.
2: Sure.
Me: So, we’re thinking about any activities that weren’t mandatory school activities. It could be sports, dance, drama, music, or any sorts of thing that you were involved in. So, looking back over your entire life, please tell me about any type of activity that you engaged in on a regular basis before you decided to specialize in music.
2: Oh, gosh. Um.
Me: As many as you can remember, and kind of when you started.
2: Okay. Well, I grew up in a small town, so there wasn’t a lot that was organized.
Me: Okay.
2: So, activities… I mean before I started school, there was a group of neighborhood kids, and we just sort of lived outside as a gang. It was a different world for children in those days. You know, the routine statement was, “Go outside and play, and I don’t want to see your face until it’s time for supper.” [loud noise]
Me: Sorry, my computer fell.
2: That’s okay. So, you know. We did all the kind of stuff that kids did in those days. But, you know, like sports and, you know, we went exploring on various trails. Once my friend and I were absolutely forbidden to go behind the water tower – which is, of course, a recipe to do so, you know.
[Both smile and laugh]
2: You know, we ran into a small little bear back there. So, that terrified us. But, you know, this stuff was not organized. You know, tobogganing, skating – the boys all played hockey. I grew up in Canada, so…they were all doing that. Before I started school, we spent, um, about a month in the winter in California every year. So, I used to love to swim. Once I started school, you know, I did Sunday School. Was that mandatory, yeah it probably was. And, Brownies. I was a Brownie dropout. I hated Brownies.
Me: [smiles and laughs]
2: My mother had been like, this super girl guide, so… that didn’t go down very well. But, anyway, I was a Brownie dropout. Let’s see, what else did I do that was not mandatory, or really mandatory? Um, I did drama in school… but I wouldn’t say that was, uh – that was elective.
Me: That certainly counts.
2: That counts, yes. I enjoyed that. Let’s see… This was basically parental pleasing… when I was in high school, I was involved in an organization. It’s a Masonic organization for girls called Job’s daughters. And, basically, I did that until I was kind of finished and never went back… So, yeah, there were lots and tons of activities with that. Was that about it?
Me: So did you ever do any kind of sports other than running around with your friends?
2: Oh, God no. I was the worst athlete in the world. No. I was a runner. You know, I would go run on my own. But, no, I am a terrible athlete.
Me: Okay. And…
2: And, we didn’t have a pool in our town. I would have probably been a swimmer if we’d had a pool in our town. But, no.

Me: Okay, so let’s see. And, what about where there any music activities that you did that weren’t a class you had to take. So, if you had elementary music that everyone had to take, don’t count that, but anything else.

2: In elementary school? Um... well, I took piano. And, that was huge. That was a huge part of my life. That started Grade 1 or Grade 2.

Me: Okay.

2: And, then I was the, um, the piano accompanist for this Job’s daughters thing for a few years. Um, until I just got sick of doing that, and I said, “No more.” I could just see myself being stuck behind the piano the whole time. Um, and then I quit piano, which was one of the worst mistakes I ever made in my life. Oh well, you do things when you’re 14.

Me: Yeah.

2: And, I sang in a little chamber choir, um, when I was in high school. A little 12 voice choir. I mean... you know, my graduating class was less than 100 people. So, you get the idea of how small our community was. And, actually from our graduating class 3 of us went on to careers in music. We had an amazing 3 years of an amazing teacher in high school. So, uh, let’s see. But, once I was in high school, it was basically, I was just really, really focused on music and academics.

Me: Okay.

2: Because, I thought I was going to go into law, so. That’s what I thought I was going to do.

Me: So, were you in high school when you started playing [primary instrument]?

2: No, I was in middle school.

Me: So, around age....

2: 12.

Me: 12?

2: Yeah. But, I had a really solid piano background before that time.

Me: When did you stop playing piano? Was that 14, you said?
2: Yeah, I was about 14. I was probably – you know, because I was in the X Conservatory system, so I was probably Grade 8 piano at that point.

Me: Okay. And, let’s see. For several of these, I need to get an age you started and an age you stopped. The outside playing probably started as soon as you could walk and go outside, right?

2: Yeah, yeah.

Me: And, at what point would you say you stopped spending that much time outside – just running around with friends or that category?

2: Just running around with friends?

Me: Yeah.

2: Well, I don’t think – well, it transformed into different things, you know.

Me: Okay.

2: Because, even in high school, you know, we would go down to the park, or we would just not be at home. We would be elsewhere. I mean, we walked so much. Because we didn’t have any other way to get where we were going. And, this was a small town, but still. I used the expression, the other day, about having to get somewhere on “shank’s pony,” and looked at me like “What the hell is that?” and I said, “my foot!” [Both laugh] He had never heard that one before.

Me: I like that one! I think I’m going to start using that one.

2: Yeah, you know you’re going by shank’s pony.

Me: Shank’s pony. That’s a good one. Okay.

2: We just walked everywhere, you know. You needed to go downtown – you walked.

Plus it was really down: you had to go down a couple of really big hills. You always tried to get a lift back home with my dad. [laughter] Because it was horrible-those hills-on the way up. 7-9% Grade… You don’t grow up in [British Columbia] and not have incredible quad muscles by the time you’re done.

Me: I’m sure.

2: So, uh…Yeah. You’re outside all the time.

Me: Okay. And, what about the skating? I know that would have been…
2: I decided to stop skating, because my friends who were into skating were then into serious figure skating. So, yeah. You know, I didn’t really do that. Sports – you start skating really competitively sort of around junior high school, so.

Me: Okay.

2: I got interested in yoga in high school, and, um, you know stuff I could do on my own. And, I liked – behind the high school, there some nice running paths. I always sort of liked being out in the woods. And, uh, I would often go running back there.

Me: Okay. And, then, the tobogganing?

2: Oh, we would do that all the way through high school.

Me: Okay.

2: We had a great toboggan hill…

Me: Something I always desperately tried to do growing here in Missouri, but we just rarely got enough snow.

2: Oh, yeah, well we had snow on the ground from Halloween to Easter… so, it’s a different way of life. One of the great sounds of my childhood was the first day you got to walk to school in shoes… and not boots. [laughter] Just to hear shoes on the pavement.

Me: I can see how that would be a big deal.

2: Yeah, it was a big deal. So, the crunch, crunch, crunch. [smiling] I spent about a month about 8 years ago at the Banff center for the arts… by the time I got there, there was a lot of snow. And, it was so nice to be there when there was snow. And, just to, you know, have a little nostalgia for the crunch, crunch, crunch… It was also very cold. 30 below Celsius.

Me: Oooh.

2: But not windy, so.

Me: Well, that helps. And, let’s see. You mentioned you were a Brownie dropout. I was a Brownie dropout too. [laughing]

2: One year. My mother had this thing about not allowing us to drop out of things until the end of the year.

Me: Sounds familiar.

2: “You’ll stay until the end of the year.” [raises eyebrows, alters voice to imitate authoritative command] Yeah, no I hated Brownies.
Me: I got the “You made a commitment to this, so”
2: Yep. That’s right. You’ll suck it up and do it. [both laugh]
Me: I appreciate it now, when I look back. But, not so much at the time.
2: Yeah – I was always really headstrong and rebellious. I must have been a really difficult child to deal with.
Me: Well, you know. It just gives you lots of personality, right?
2: Yeah! That’s the way to look at it.
Me: So, you mentioned being in drama as part of an in school, but voluntary…
2: Yeah. I started drama in… I guess in Grade 10. So, I did drama in Grade 10 and 11. Um, and that was more, um… and I was in plays and stuff when I was a kid. School plays and things. When I was taking drama in school – well, I guess we did some scenes and things. Um, I seem to remember that wasn’t the big focus of it, though. A lot of the focus was on improvisation and, um, acting techniques.
Me: Okay. Alright. And then, our next thing we get to estimate, approximately how many hours per week, and then months out the year, you think you were involved in these various activities.
2: Oh, okay.
Me: And if it changed a lot – say you were… for example, a lot of people describe outside hanging around with their kids, that sort of thing, there tends to be more of that in elementary school, and then less of that as you get older.
2: Right. Hmm.
Me: So, we can divide those up into periods.
2: Yeah, that will be helpful… I would say, preschool, you know, that was pretty well, most… I’m an only child, so that was most of my life, unless I was sick or it was horrible weather. I didn’t go – there was no kindergarten where I was growing up. So, that’s, you know – that was what we did. Play was our work, basically. And, um, I also – a part of that, too, was – you really can’t discount this, when I think about it – the influence of the Canadian Broadcasting Radio. They had amazing children’s programming. We didn’t have television until I was… in Grade 2. Um, actually I remember the day we got television. It was the day that President Kennedy was assassinated.
Me: Oh, wow. And that was all over the TV I’m sure.
2: Yeah, even in Canada. We got sent home from school. I, um, I guess I must have walked home. We got dismissed from school… um, and I arrived home, and my mother wondered what I was doing home. And, I told her that we got sent home from school because President Kennedy got shot. And then, like 2 seconds later my father arrived home from work. And, he was apoplectic, because he was convinced there was going to be a 3rd world war. My father was Russian… And, so by that night we had television.
Me: Oh, wow.
2: Yep. There was one channel for all of my growing up, until I hit senior high school. Just CBC. And it mostly didn’t come on until, like 4 o’clock in the afternoon. I was not much of a TV kid.
Me: Okay.
2: Um, so… yeah. So playing outside and then, you know, with friends after school. Um, in middle school we’d sometimes go downtown after school. Which was our sort of version of doing that, or go for walks. Um, but it decreased… you know, and the usual sort of sleep over stuff. But, stuff wasn’t organized much.
Me: Okay.
2: You know, if you wanted to do something, you went and did it. We’d go to movies – there was one movie theater in town. So, you know… sometimes we’d go to a movie on a Saturday afternoon. You walked downtown, and then you walked home – unless you could beg a ride back up the hill. Um…it was also the 70s, and that was also a time when people were starting to get seriously into drugs, so that was going on all around.
Me: Okay.
2: Um…so, I remember a lot of junior high school – just being bored. Just being bored… at home being bored. But, that could be just, you know. You know, that could be a 3 hour stretch of time with nothing to do.
Me: Sounds very… sounding pretty typical.
2: Yeah, exactly. [high pitched, mocking whine] “I have nothing to do.”
Me: [laughter]
2: Well, you know. And then you get the answer. “Don’t say that again or I’ll find something for you to do. I can make you un-bored very quickly.”
Me: [laughter] I may have heard that a few million times as a child.
2: [laughter] Yeah, so.
Me: Especially the “I can find something for you to do.”
2: Of course, it was nothing you wanted to do…
Me: So, let’s see. For outside play, during the time that you were in elementary school…
2: It was… it was maybe um. It depended whether it was summer or winter. You know, it got dark very early. You know, you get home from school at 3:30 or 4 and it was dark by 4:30. So, you weren’t allowed out after dark.
Me: Yeah.
2: So, unless it was a bunch of you going tobogganing together after dinner. That would sometimes be allowed. So, not much during the school week.
Me: Okay.
2: On the weekends – quite a bit.
Me: And then, would the kind of total amount of time when you were just hanging out with friends. You said it would go down a little bit during middle school. And, then I would assume kind of the same trend during high school?
2: Yeah. I would say that I spent more time on the phone with friends in high school.
Me: okay.
2: My best friend lived a couple of miles away, and I had a boyfriend who lived out in the country. Yeah, then it was time on the phone. And there was one phone in the house, you know. So, my mother would get home, and she would say, “You just spent all day with these people. How do you possibly have anything to talk about?”
Me: [laughter]
2: But, at least we talked, unlike teenagers today, who don’t talk.
Me: They just send messages to each other.
2: Yeah! Exactly. I just had a very interesting [unintelligible] I just spent some quality time with her. A student of mine – she’s doing a minor with me in [instrument], and she switched from a BSOF degree, an outside degree in climate studies, to a [instrument] major. And, she did not do well on her exam, and she’s just terrified of playing lyrically. And, her, um, her primary [instrument] teacher, asked her, “Well, do you talk to your friends? Do your express emotions to your friends?” She said, “No.”
Me: Oh, no!
2: “Do you talk to your friends?” [pause] “Well, no.” “So, how do you communicate with your friends?” “Well, we text” And, I’m just like, “Oh, Christ.”

Me: Wow, that’s a challenge I hadn’t even thought of!

2: I know! Somebody I knew, we were each selected – I did a thing on performance anxiety and perfectionism, and she did something on the effect of new technology on the communication of adolescents – at [State] Counseling Association. We each did a presentation, and I saw her survey. One of her questions was… “How would you ask a date to the prom?”

Me: Oh, man…

2: By phone, by text message, in person… Yeah.

Me: Wow! That blows my mind!

2: Yeah! Text message was the most popular response. It was like, “Oh, my God, what have we created here.”

Me: And, see, I can remember sitting in high school and being on the computer doing homework, and having instant messaging open. Because instant messaging was new and very big. And, I can remember sending messages back and forth with my friends, and eventually we’d get frustrated and call each other.

2: Yeah, we’d just send notes. Then we got caught, and got in trouble. We didn’t have any technology. None, it was a completely low-fi world.

Me: I could not imagine having someone ask me out on a date via text message.

2: Yeah, that’s the way they do it these days. But, they don’t date, they just hook up. So, it’s a little alarming for the future…

Me: Yeah, I would say! [smiling] Off of our tangent, sorry. It was an interesting tangent, and I’m all for interesting tangents. So, let’s see. Kind of the other big ones – piano… what age were you when you started piano?

2: 7.

Me: Seven? Okay. And then, and you said you stopped around…

2: 14.

Me: Okay. How many hours per week were you practicing piano, performing, taking lessons, whatever?

2: I took a half-an-hour lesson a week.
Me: Okay.

2: Um, with the best piano teacher. Until the year I quit… Um, I don’t know. I played a lot. I loved playing the piano. Um, I don’t think I really practiced a whole hell of a lot - you know. But, I guess I need to give you some back story. When I was… I don’t know how old I was… it was the year before I started piano. I had… and I only remember being told this, so, and I remember a little bit about the IQ test… Anyway, something had happened – something I don’t know what – but, I started to suffer from some really intense anxiety. So, I ended up with the kiddy shrink, which, of course, nobody did in those days. So, um, they also did an IQ while they were at it. The result of the kiddy shrink evaluation was that I had a very high IQ and that I needed activities in which I had no pressure.

Me: Okay.

2: For fun. Because he felt that I was under way, way, way too much pressure. Um, from both of my parents. And, so, we had a piano at home – my mother played – and, I, you know, enjoyed messing around on the piano. And, I loved to sing. And, my mother had said to me, subsequently, since I was three years old, I knew all of the words to my Christmas carols. I had this baby alto voice, but I would sing perfectly in pitch. She didn’t realize that was kind of an unusual thing for a three year old to be able to do.

Me: Yeah, that really is.

2: My mother had perfect pitch. And, so, anyway… so, she started me in piano lessons with a woman named Mrs. Gillespie, who understood that there was to be no pressure. This was to be a fun activity, and that I wasn’t to take any exams.

Me: Okay.

2: So, there wasn’t the, you know, the typical Royal Conservatory, where you learn these pieces, and then you sit down and play them for an examiner. So, it should be for fun, and I could bring pieces in to her that I wanted to play. And, so, I got to do… I would buy sheet music and bring things in and learn things on my own… um, and so, yeah, so I played quite a bit. Um, but I also, you know, I also had a tremendous amount of fun. She taught me some really great… I think I learned my first chamber music skills from her.

And, so, then she – her husband was transferred. And, so, then there were two other piano
teachers in town: one who had a huge waiting list, and the other one who was, you know, the not quite reformed Nazi.

Me: Wow! That’s a lot different than the teacher you described who started you.

2: Yeah! I mean, truly, [Redacted] had a ruler. She would smack you.

Me: Oh, wow. And, I’m guessing you didn’t want to take lessons from her.

2: 13 years old, and being smacked with a ruler? And, she was amusical, or even anti-musical. So… And, I am a very lyrical, expressive person. And, so, if there was no crescendo there, you couldn’t do it.

Me: No… oh, man.

2: So, I was like, you know. Yeah… putting a straight-jacket on your soul.

Me: And I spend so much of my days, when I’m actively teaching, I spend so much time working with my younger students – saying, “You hear this. When I have you sing it, you do this. Okay, now let’s do this on your instrument!” It’s what teachers do a lot of.

2: Oh, I know! I spent a lot of my life teaching young students, and getting them to transfer… doing that for me is nothing. That’s why teaching students, even in a place like [Institution name], there are…I’m finishing up with a student right now, who, just isn’t very expressive. It’s like really frustrating. I think a lot of it is that she uses some beta blockers all the time. But, then that’s another issue. She’s also a kind of cold personality, but she also uses beta blockers. I think those numb you up.

Me: Yeah, those two combined, I would think would make it – and I’ve never taken beta blockers – but, I can only imagine that those two combined would make it pretty difficult to try and emote. If you can’t emote when you’re talking to a person face-to-face…

2: Yeah.

Me: Doing that through an instrument, to me, seems even harder.

2: Yeah, so, anyway. So, I have to take a theory exam, because with the Conservatory, there are theory and ear training exams that go along with your playing exams. And, I was doing Grade 8, and, so it was worse than ever. Because, not only did I have to have a piano lesson with her every week, but I had to have a theory lesson with her each week. And, so…. And, I could do anything, but I used to sit in her kitchen, and I’d listen to her talk. And, I would do my homework – kind of half-assed – and, didn’t care. You know, I was 13, and, um, so she… [Redacted] called my mother the week before the exam. She
said to my mother, “You know, I think you should save your money, because there’s no way [Name] is going to pass this exam. She’s done no work. And, she doesn’t know this material.” And, my mother, who could be a total crazy bitch, she was right this way. She said, “Well, I think this could be the best investment of $10 that I’ve made in a long time. To teach [name] that she has to actually put a little effort into something. And, that she just can’t… you know, slide by the seat of her pants.”

Both: [laughter]

2: So, of course, I knew that I had a week to prepare for this exam. And, I did, you know, I walked down the halls with that theory book – memorizing everything. And, I ended up getting an incredibly high grade on that theory exam.

Me: [Laughter]

2: And pissed off [XXX] even more.

Me: Oh, man. [smiling]

2: You know, it’s just memorizing stuff. It wasn’t… particularly hard. So, anyway, then I told my mother I just had to quit. And, she said, “Okay.” Instead of saying I’ll give you 6 months leave of absence until you can get on the other person’s list, she let me quit-quit. But, I think the keyboard and me were not meant to be – you know? By that point, I was really, seriously into [instrument] – that’s what I wanted to do.

Me: Yeah. Well, we’re going to move on to the next section here. Let’s see… Now we’re doing a lot more specific about your development as an instrumentalist. So, we have to assess a couple of different factors.

2: Okay.

Me: I need a few biographical bits of information to make sure… What your date or at least year of birth.

2: XXX

Me: Okay. And, how old were you when you participated for the first time, in these activities on a regular basis. So, the first time you had regular involvement on your primary instrument.

2: Hmmm… 12.
Me: Okay, and your first involvement in supervised training or instruction by an adult. So, that could be practice sessions, band, or other sorts of activities where the adult is running the show.

2: 12.

Me: And, your first regular involvement in training that was not supervised by an adult.

2: I don’t understand what that means.

Me: So this could be your own individual practice, deciding that you’re going to go and learn to do something, or something similar… so, I view this, um, when I talk to athletes or similar sorts of things, in athletic terms: you’ve had all of your practices with the baseball team, but you don’t like how your batting is going, so you’re going to go do extra batting practice on your own. And, so, it’s that individual – I’m going to do something on my own to improve. For musicians, a lot of times, this can be our first time we do individual practice, or learning a piece that we want to learn on our own, or something where we are practicing, working out musical skills, without someone standing over us making sure we’re doing it correctly. Does that make sense?

2: Yeah, and this is on my primary instrument?

Me: Yes.

2: 12.

Me: Okay. And, then, how old were you when you started setting your own personal practice or performance goals. Not ones set by your teacher, or parent, or whatever other person…

2: Yeah, my parents were not involved in [instrument] at all, so… I would say 13…

Me: Okay. Let’s see. Moving on from there – how old were you when you first participated in any of the following festivals or competitions? Some of these may or may not apply because I’m not as familiar with what things were in around in Canada growing up. So, let’s see if you had section leader in your band… were you ever a section leader?

2: Um, let’s see. That would have been in grade… the equivalent of the beginning of high school. So, 13? Yeah, 13 or 14.

Me: Okay. And would that be about the same time – usually if you’re section leader you’re first chair as well. Was that true?

2: Yes.
Me: Did you do any kind of a chamber group in middle school or high school?
2: Yes…
Me: And, did they have anything like the equivalent of All-District or All-Region Band.
2: No, nothing like that.
Me: Did you have any kind of Solo and Ensemble sorts of festivals?
2: Yeah – Kiwanis festivals.
Me: And, when did you start doing those?
2: Um, under protest, in grade 10. Is that right? Yeah, under protest, in grade 10. I always
did them as a band. And, I always did them, actually, in elementary school. We did
something called Choral Speech, where you had to memorize a poem and do those as a
class. Yeah… yeah, under protest.
Me: And, did you do anything else that would be kind of multi-regional or multi-province
sort of level, like we have some invitation only summer camps in the US, or
masterclasses?
2: That was later for me.
Me: Okay.
2: So, that would have been, sort of grade 11. 17ish…
Me: And, was that a masterclass, or a summer camp?
2: Both.
Me: Both? Okay. Let’s see, at college level, we’ve got things like a featured soloist with
your band or orchestra, or a concerto competition, or a special performance award that
was based off of your institution.
2: Gosh, I did so much when I was an undergraduate. I won a concerto competition… I
was just playing all the time. I…played in several… I went to California, to Berkeley, to
play in a masterclass. There was a summer camp, quite well-known, that attracted
students from – mostly from [BLANK], but also from around the country, and
some from the West Coast of the US – I was very involved in that. I played in the
orchestra there. I did that the first 3 years of University, I think.
Me: Okay.
2: Um…And, I was scheduled to play a concerto that didn’t happen… I did a lot of chamber music, a lot of new music – I did an East Coast tour with the New Music Ensemble.

Me: Okay.

2: Um…Yeah.

Me: Alright. And, did you – you said you won a concerto competition – do you remember what year in school that was?

2: I can figure it out… Let’s see, going into 3rd year… It would have been 19XX.

Me: Okay. And, did you have any other national or international competitions that you did?

2: No.

Me: Okay. Alright. What about, did you have any of these in graduate school or beyond? These sorts of national or international competitions?

2: Hmm-hmm. [nodding] I did… I think there was just one, because I’m not a competition person. Um, the early music competitions are very few and far between and that’s when I made the switch basically.

Me: Okay.

2: Right, so I did the XXX competition in 19XX um, which is an international competition; XXX has changed it no longer exists. So um, I was a semifinalist in that competition.

Me: Okay.

2: Um, and yeah that was the what if.

Me: Alright.

2: I was thinking about professionally then to um, so it was in the kind of standard track.

Me: Okay

2: ‘Cause I was um, I did my first recording for the Canadian broadcasting corporation when I was um, well that was when I came back from Holland to do that recording, so that was 19 I guess 19XX. And um, then I was a soloist with the CBC chamber orchestra. Then we did a recording with Sir John Elliot Gardner conducting in ’XX. Um, I think is was ‘XX or ‘XX, I’m not sure. And so, I took a; I came back from
Holland to [blank] for a couple of years and worked. And then, that work was drying up and I needed to get out of [blank] for personal reasons. So I went to [blank].

Me: Okay. And let’s see, that professional recording that you mentioned with the CBC was that a solo or

2: It was one of the concertos soloist, yeah there were four of us, yeah.

Me: Okay, and then the first time that you went on tour with a professional ensemble as a member or as a featured soloist?

2: Um, professional being paid? Not a student group right?

Me: Yes

2: Well you see, I would have to say that, that new music tour that we did was professional because we were being reviewed by major newspapers, but um, on tour oh gosh. Well it’s just you mean, you know I can say that you know, being in; playing in an orchestra that was on tour or, being you know… But you want as a soloist right?

Me: Or as a member, so playing in an orchestra will count as well.

2: Okay. So, that would have been um, that would have been when I was still um, still an undergraduate.

Me: Okay. Was that your junior, senior, sophomore year?

2: Um, junior year.

Me: Junior year, okay.

2: Yeah.

Me: Alright. And then let’s see, we’ve got some other developmental milestones. Do you remember how old you were when you first had the idea of becoming a professional musician?

2: You mean, just like a dream in the back of my head?

Me: Uhah

2: Oh gosh, I don’t know. Maybe 10, 11 years old; something like that. I never told anybody about it because it was not going to go anywhere. Right?

Me: So you just held on to it for a while?

2: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. No it took a major life crisis for me to talk about it.
Me: Okay. Um, and when was it. Some people have this, can identify this when it goes from kinda an idea in the back of your head to deciding that this is what I am going to do with my life.

2: Oh, I can tell you exactly.

Me: Okay

2: Yeah, um, I what’s interesting about this is that I talked with people who knew me at the time and they all knew that I was going to be a professional musician. I was the one who didn’t know that I was going to be professional musician.

Me: [Laughing]

2: You know, there were yeah, um I mean I was going to be a lawyer because that’s what I was told my whole life I was going to be. Um, when I was um, when I was 17 my best friend committed suicide.

Me: Oh, no.

2: and um, that was the catalyst. Um, and I walked home from school one day and I said to my mother um, and I said this is what I want to do. And she thought well, this is nonsense but um, we’ll see. You know, she didn’t poo poo it to me.

Me: Yeah

2: And she found me um, I played in um you know, the way the class festival works is that you actually, it’s actually a performance like it’s not like the regional music um, solo at state. The solo at state ensemble things here. And so she, she and my band teacher talked to the adjudicator and he said yes I can recommend somebody and anyways there was some contact and I went and auditioned for him and he accepted me as a student. So, then started 2 years of, of um, going to traveling 350 miles back and forth to Vancouver every two weeks.

Me: Wow, that’s a, that’s a pretty impressive investment.

2: Yeah.

Me: It’s always amazing to me to hear what sorts of things have kind of, not really spurred on the change but make people, kind of inspire people to make that decision. Because it’s always a lot different for everybody.

2: Yeah, yeah it was definitely. Yeah, it was career day at school and you know it was not very long after Susanne died and um, and I was you know, I was just kind of floating.
I spent months after her death just kind of floating around. And um, um, I went to the things that I thought I was supposed to and um, and I thought I don’t want to do any of this crap. All I want is to just play the [primary instrument].

Me: I am impressed that you were able to make such a decision at what for a lot of people is a pretty young age at 17, that’s kind of impressive.

2: Yeah, I you know, yep that um. And when I had my interview at UPC my undergraduate interview, you know I said what I wanted to do is play chamber music and you know, teach at the university. That’s exactly what I ended up doing so, with a little therapy in there as well. So the second career.

Me: Second careers are good. Alright, so um how old were you when you would say all or at least most of your leisure time was being spent on either musical training. So, it could be lessens, practicing, those sorts of things.

2: Oh, that was right after I started taking lessons with XXX.

Me: Okay

2: It was grueling practice. He was a former student of XXX and yeah, so I was practicing 5, 6 hours a day.

Me: Okay.

2: There was no time for anything else

Me: I would say not.

2: Because I knew that if I didn’t keep my marks up that, that was the end of it.

Me: So you were very motivated.

2: I was extremely motivated, yeah.

Me: And is this, ahh how old were you when you first established kind of a close and not, certainly implying inappropriate, but a close relationship with the teacher? A lot of us have that teacher that we consider mentor as much as they were teacher. And, was that XXXX that you just mentioned or…

2: Ohhh, no.

Me: [laughing]

2: So abusive.

Me: Oh, I’m sorry.
2: So, it was so abusive. As a matter of fact, he died 3 years ago and. He had hundreds of students and, I was the only former pupil of his who wrote anything on the memorial page that the University put up.

Me: Wow

2: and I was, I was, you know, I was honest in that I said that, you know he, we certainly had our differences and our quarrels, but the one thing that he had done for me from the time I was a teenager was he had introduced me to the idea of historical instruments.

Me: Uh hah

2: Let me play his [primary instrument] when we played duets, he would give me his louie lock to play and um, and you would play the [primary instrument] horribly. But

Me: [Laughing]

2: You just, awful, miserably badly, but he showed me that there was something there. You know, to be explored. And questions to be asked. He was an editor, um and um, and you know, he ahh he showed me you know. He showed me a path that, that changed my life.

Me: Uh hah

2: The path lead me to Holland where I studied with XXX who is that mentor and guide and teacher and still is. And that, I was what 23 when I met XXX. 22, 23 I guess when I went and studied with him. Um, and we still have a very close relationship.

Me: it’s always wonderful to have, to still be able to have that close relationship with that teacher that’s, so much, so important in your life.

2: Oh, yeah. Yes. And about so many things you know, not just music.

Me: Oh yeah.

2: Yeah, yeah, it’s just, such an amazing human being and um, um, and he’s always honest.

Me: that is a very rare and wonderful thing.

2: He’s honest. So, yeah. So that ahh, person I can always trust.

Me: Okay, well um, and this is one that may not um be able to answer; but just in case.

Is there a point where you think you will reach or may have already reached your maximum potential in music and your performance?
2: That’s an interesting question because I battle with that I deal with, I’ve got some arthritis issues right now. But, I yeah, I mean you know, I’m going to be 60 in another year. And you know, at a certain point you don’t get better. I mean technically, you can always get better musically. But I remember XXX saying about Gustoff Landhart, the great Dutch harpsichordist. That he was very wise in what he chose to play after the age of 80 [laughing].

Me: [Laughing] Oh I like that.

2: No chromatic fantasy in fugue anymore, you know. And I am, I am a chamber musician. I mean that’s, I’m not a big you know, a big flashy soloist. That stuff just doesn’t interest me, never has. And um, so I hope there will always be something for me to do. But I can see the time, when XXX was teaching with me. We just all have to have a path that will tell each other, ok it’s time.

Me: [Laughing] Yeah

2: You know, it’s time. Because nobody wants to go out um, you know in a pathetic way. So yeah, you do look at that when you get to be a certain age. But, there’s always something to teach. And I see my career much more really about teaching than about performing.

Me: Okay

2: And I also see with integrating now the piece of dealing with performance anxiety and perfectionism. Something that I think is really, really needed. When

Me: I agree completely.

2: Yeah and I mean I am you know, I am the worst perfectionist on the planet. So um, yeah XXX always says it’s the Russian in me. A whole lot of Russians do; he said you know, you’re so. He asked Russian students why she did that. You know, she would finish something and she would say this and this, and this and this is wrong. And he said why do you do that, you don’t even let me say anything.

Me: Ohh

2: And he said I think you do that because it’s safer that way, to beat yourself up first.

Me: Rather than let somebody else do it.

2: Well, that is the Russian way of teaching. That’s the Russian way of teaching. You know, totally abusive. And um, it’s also it’s a very old school way of dealing with
students. When I was in high school I went to Vermont to see and teach and to audit his master class and it did teach me what kind of think skin you have to have. So you know, but I saw him be absolutely in humane to people. And you know, it’s like who in the hell do you think you are? To be talking to another human being like that.

Me: uh hmmm

2: But you know, I mean he’s not going to be pooping marbles so…

Me: [laughing] Yeah, it’s sad. I’m hearing more and more stories of people talking about, yeah I had that one teacher who was just awful. I learned a lot from them, but they were just awful. And it’s sad to me that, thankfully most of those people can also follow it up with I had this other teacher that meant more to me that was also wonderful, wonderful and that also taught me a lot and there’s just a big part of me that goes. Can we have find a way to have high standards but not be abusive.

2: Well, it just very simple as patience I believe. And your patience is, that you do not criticize a person you criticize the product.

Me. Mmm

2: So, it’s not you are flat, you know. It’s that passage is flat. And that makes a huge difference, it’s syntactical, but it makes a huge difference. You know?

Me: Oh yeah

2: Just never personalize it. And you know, I deal with, XXX is here twice a year to conduct our orchestra; and we’ve done now two recordings with him. And like, he is Mr. micromanager, nitpicky, oh my god. To the point that I think that it’s a miracle that he hasn’t been stabbed by a bow. Through the eyeball you know?

Me: Oh man

2: It’s just, cause I know how frustrating it can be. Like ughhhhh. I remember a lesson with him once 90 min on two measure of an ornament. One argument over every note in two measures. And it was not slow. And he wanted each ornament to have it’s own character. And the result coming out was one kind of big long Italian smushy ornament. And I know exactly what he means. But I didn’t then, really. I didn’t really have a concept of that. And you know just that, that level of detail but it was never that level of detail that, you are an idiot because you can’t figure this out.

Me: Yeah
Me: Okay

[Longer section removed to maintain anonymity]

2: Yeah, so any more questions?

Me: No, I think that will pretty well wrap it up for the first interview.

Participant 3 Initial Interview via Skype 1/7/2015

Me: First of all can you give me – I’ve read your bio on the XX website and your personal website – can you give me a kind of brief description of the progression of your musical career. So think about early training, the highlights, the important moments and then moving through your career up to the present time, what are the highlights and important things?

3: Well, in Russia before I left I studied with a teacher that worked with me in the typical Russian way, very long lessons with a lot of imagery, not a lot of muscle detail; so every piece was well prepared in the end, but when I left I realized that I had no idea how to practice at all because there was no system. Then I spent 4 years with a very bad Russian teacher in XX, where I collapsed completely. And each night I was basically reinventing the wheel, trying to figure out how to fix my playing on my own. Then when I was 19 I started with a new teacher, who was a student of [renowned pedagogue]. I started from scratch from absolute basic technique. I rebuilt my technique that first year. And then got accepted into the full studio where I continued working with both of them for the next 3 years officially, but kept taking lessons with them for another year after graduation. And
I started teaching almost immediately after graduating – which really pushed my own playing as well, because explaining things makes it much clearer in your own head.
Me: Yes, yes it does.
3: My motto when I started teaching was to make sure that my students wouldn’t have to go through what I had to go through, and also how to instill correct technical approach while not losing sight of the musical part. Because I was so desperate when I was 19 and to fix my technique that I pretty much forgot about everything else for a few years. I was just happy to put the bow on the string and know what sound would come out. And so after I graduated I started regaining the other side of playing. And then I had a period of medium successful performing career. I played with orchestras, I played recitals, but I focused mainly on teaching. Teaching became more and more important gradually. So I still performed, but mostly I teach. For the last 10 years or so, I mostly teach.
Me: Okay, thanks. Alright, so we’re going to talk about in more detail some of your early activities. And so, we’re going to focus on all the activities you participated in while you were young. So please list any activities outside of mandatory school activities. So that could be, in the US a lot of the time we would find things like sports, dance, drama, music, it could be…
3: No, only music.
Me: Only music? Okay. So what form did those music activities take?
3: Well, standard kind of Russian education was lessons twice a week and you know, I went to a local neighborhood music school. So that included once a week or twice a week, I can’t remember right now. I think twice a week actually, theory and training from the very first grade. Required piano from the second grade once a week, so I was basically at the music school at least 4 nights a week.
Me: Wow, that’s a lot different from what…
3: Yeah…
Me: from what most, certainly from what I experienced as a child, and what a lot of people here in the US experience. That’s great. I love this – I’m learning more about other countries as well, while I’m doing this. So it’s very fascinating to me. Alright, so could you describe, you mentioned briefly that the lessons you had as a young child were based primarily on imagery. Would you say that when you were taking lessons at the
neighborhood school, was that the same teacher where you had long lessons focused on…

3: Yeah, that was it.

Me: So what sort of things did they do, I am someone who got technique first and imagery later. Can you explain what sort of things did they do for you that were imagery based?

3: Well everything, even technical problems were described as an image. You know, she tried to teach me to shift smoothly, I had to imagine swans on a lake. It’s all very powerful imagery and certainly formed a lot of good habits, but I try to combine imagery with very specific muscular instruction as well. Somewhere in the middle. Because you can lose the image after a lesson, and then if you don’t know how to regain the skill…that’s a problem.

Me: Yeah, yes I agree. Okay.

3: But her imagery was very powerful, culturally one of the most educated people that I have ever met. I still am in touch with her regularly. Very fascinating lady, a very deep thinker, though she was not a player, she never actually she never even finished conservatory. And so, just phenomenal imagery combined enormous pedagogical intuition, but it really wasn’t always practical. So I think that’s where the problems came.

Me: Okay. And how long did you take lessons with her? Was it up until… [trails off]

3: From age 7 until 14. I had the first teacher for a year, when I was 4 I think, or five. No when I was 5, for a year and a half I had another teacher. I don’t remember her much – except that I was very scared of her.

Me: [Laughing]

3: No she was kind of bipolar or something. She always met you with a nice smile, but always screaming at you two minutes later. That’s all I remember.

Me: Ohh, [frowning] that’s always… it’s sad how many times… You’re not the first participant I’ve interviewed, and other people that I’ve interviewed have described their career in much different ways and yet, there’s already some themes coming out about a teacher not hitting on all of the points. The teachers have too much imagery and not enough technical, or too much technical not enough imagery, not enough musicality. It’s
that sort of a combination. There’s also almost everyone had at least one teacher that was just awful. Personality wise was awful or something like that. And it’s sad to me that that’s what comes out but I’m also not surprised because I have my teacher from my past that was awful. So yeah.

3: To make a finer point, it was technique learned through imagery so she did work on technique a lot, but it was always through imagery rather than specific, muscular instruction.

Me: Okay. I do remember from my strings class that the specific muscular instruction at least especially for me because I learned what very little I know about stringed instruments because I’m a brass player; I learned it as an adult and so for me that very, very specific as well as having the teacher placing my hand in the very spots, especially shifting between location. That was incredibly difficult for me. So I can understand how the specific things, the specific muscle instruction would be so important. And let’s see, thinking back to, besides the music school that you had in 2 to 3 nights. Was it 2 to 3 nights a week that you had music training?

3: No, no it was at least 4.

Me: At least 4. And was this something that the music school that everybody did together or was it just select people out of your neighborhood?

3: No, it wasn’t mandatory education, it was just certain people.

Me: Okay. And…

3: But you know, it was all regulated. There were no private music schools. Now those neighborhood schools became private but back then it that was all instituted by government so that every neighborhood had an official music school. And there was the central music school which was much more prestigious, but you had to have connections to get in there.

Me: Gotcha. Okay, and was there anything else that you did, besides school and music school that consumed a large amount of your time whether it was reading books, playing outside

3: Reading. Some playing sure.

Me: And let’s see. If you had to estimate how much time you spent reading, I realize it’s going to be a total estimate.
3: I would say just a couple of hours a day probably.
Me: Okay. And how much time did, would you think you spent outside playing or just being physically active somehow.
3: Well at least an hour a day.
Me: And were these games that you played with other peers about your same age from the neighborhood?
3: Yeah.
Me: Okay. They weren’t necessarily organized by adults
3: No, no…
Me: Okay. And was there anything else besides the reading and playing outside and music that kind of consumed a fair amount of your time?
3: No…
Me: No? Okay. Can you describe a little bit what sorts of things you did in those, in the music school classes. You said that you had theory and ear training…
3: Yeah, well from the very early age there was a lot of solfeggio, a lot of sight singing, serious theory, harmonic analysis, dictation, by grade 4, we did 2 and 3 voice dictations.
Me: Okay.
3: And not, not the way dictations are done here – from what I see. We were not allowed to touch paper with a pencil while the teacher was playing.
Me: Ohhh…
3: So, there were 8 bars, or whatever she was playing that you had to memorize and write what you could remember.
Me: That’s a lot tougher.
3: Oh yeah, I mean it’s much better work for memory. Well, we had chorus I think also for a few years. We had music literature but also music literature it was kind of different from what they do here... I guess it was also for kids, but it was again very descriptive and we learned specific music but it was more about implied meaning than compositional structure …I mean the teacher basically read to us, like whole essays about what the music might mean. You know there was always a story attached to every piece. It was kind of fascinating because it makes you hear music differently. I think probably, you know I had the same teacher for solfeggio, music theory, music literature and music
history. I think she probably had more influence on me actually loving music than anybody else. And she’s in Israel now and every time I go there we meet.

Me: That’s wonderful. And did, let’s see you said you had that teacher for literature…

3: Music literature, solfeggio ear training, dictation, basically all of the subjects I took with her.

Me: Okay. Your development because you started with such intense training so much younger than the average person in the US or Canada, your development falls into different categories. It’s kind of fascinating.

3: Actually there was something I didn’t say also. I started actually music at 4, I did a year before I started [primary instrument], and a teacher came to our house and worked with me on solfeggio and ear training very basic piano. It wasn’t so much about playing. I didn’t learn any pieces or anything like that, very, very little. Mostly it was harmonizing, sight singing, so when I ended up I played the [instrument], practicing was mostly a chore, but piano was always fun. I could spend literally hours at the piano just improvising and harmonizing.

Me: Excellent. So even when you were very busy with several hours of the lessons and the classes?

3: Oh, I would still sit at the piano whenever I could and improvise.

Me: Excellent.

3: And the reason why she came is because back then you couldn’t just go to music school and sign up. You actually had to take an entrance exam.

Me: Ohh…

3: So when I was 7, or 6, I took an entrance exam where you had to recite a poem by heart, a very sizable one. You had to sing - you didn’t have to play but you had to sing. And you had to recognize intervals, certain intervals and sounds of the piano. Turn around and guess what the teacher played, so it was a pretty serious examinations.

Me: Sounds like it. Not sure at even at age 10 if I would have been able to do that. And I considered my elementary music really outstanding compared to normal in this country. So the person that came to your house when you were 4, I’m assuming that since you were 4 that was something that your parents decided and they brought…
3: Right, yeah. She was first coming for my older brother, who had no desire – no real aptitude for it. And they just noticed that I was constantly around and I would come to the piano and repeat what they were doing. So then she started coming for me and my older brother very quickly quit.

Me: [Laughing] What does your older brother do now?

3: He’s a computer projects manager for HSBC international.

Me: So nothing to do with music?

3: Nope.

Me: That is fascinating. So were you always drawn to music?

3: I guess so. They say I was a late talker, I don’t know how, but they say I sang in tune before I talked. My father is an opera singer, so there are definitely genes.

Me: Yes, absolutely. Okay. And let’s see, you said that you would still even when you were in classes sit for hours at the piano and improvise?

3: Yeah.

Me: Which just, that makes me smile. When you did that, where you always by yourself or did anybody join you?

3: No, no. Just by myself.

Me: Just by yourself, okay. And about how long did you do that? Do you still do that or did…[trails off]

3: No, no. I did that until I was about 11 or 12 and then there were too many other things.

Me: Okay. And how many, would you say that you did that 2 hours a day, an hour a day?

3: I can’t say, it felt like hours, but you know I was 5. [Laughing]

Me: Okay. Gotcha. Alright, let’s go through a couple of these that will be pretty quick questions. So then this particular part, I’m mostly interested in your development as a string player. So before we can go through these questions, what year were you born?

3: ’74.

Me: ’74, okay. Thank you. And how old were you the first time you started regular involvement on [instrument]?

3: [instrument]

Me: [instrument]
3: [instrument], you don’t start any others until you are a teenager. [instrument], 5.
Me: 5? Okay. And was that the same age that you had regular training that was supervised by an adult, so lessons basically?
3: Yeah.
Me: Okay. And let’s see, then how old were you the first time you had regular involvement in training that was not supervised by an adult? So it could have been playing in an orchestra, could have been playing in chamber groups with friends?
3: Well, the unfortunate part of the Soviet music education was that there was no chamber music.
Me: Okay.
3: And still isn’t. I came for the first time back this last May, and it’s still the same. There’s no chamber music and very little orchestra. If any.
Me: Is it all solo training, pretty much?
3: Yeah.
Me: Hmm, interesting. Ok, so how old were you the first time you started setting your own practice or performance goals?
3: Well, I remember the very first time when I actually practiced with my own kind of, my own goal in mind. I was about 12, I think. I was preparing for the first little competition I did, and it wasn’t so little. It was the whole city, all of the neighborhood schools. And you were supposed to perform two pieces. I actually remember spending an hour on 3 notes for the first time in my life seriously trying to get something on my own.
Me: Good. I remember when that happened, I was definitely not 12. [laughing] Alright, so let’s see.
3: But I would say that the real efficient practicing didn’t start until I started at the studio in XX.
Me: Okay
3: When I actually knew exactly what to do.
Me: Makes sense, it’s hard to do something when you don’t know how to do it.
3: Right.
Me: Which sounds so simply and glib, but it’s very true.
3: When I was with the bad Russian teacher, when I just immigrated, I actually remember preparing for a major competition and I spent literally 6 or 8 hours a day practicing, and I couldn’t remember any of it. Because I had no idea what to do. I would want to practice for one phrase and I would start playing. My brain would shut down and I would wake up in the middle of the piece and there was absolutely nothing that I could do to stop it.

Me: You just described most, not all, but most of my undergraduate years, unfortunately. And I had a good teacher that was trying desperately to teach me how to practice. And it took a couple of years for it to sink in and so. I understand, I do. Alright, so how old were you… let’s see you said you were 12 when you were doing that city wide competition? Was that your first competition?

3: Yeah

Me: Okay. And then, what sorts of competitions that you remember that you did after that?

3: Well, the next one was about a year and a half later. I was 14, it was right before we left. It was also city wide. Much more, much more serious. It was 3 rounds, or 2 rounds. It’s Telemann solo sonatas, 2 caprices and the concerto. And I won that competition. I won both of them. The second one allowed me to play with orchestra for the first time. That was right before I left. And then in the States I did one big one big international one in Italy. It was for chamber music and sonatas. Which I also won (sonata division). That was with the bad teacher but, for that competition he really worked with me. And also it was sonatas it was more musical competition than virtuoso. And then a few local ones. But I never did big international ones again.

Me: Okay. Was it a conscious, you didn’t want to do the big international ones anymore or?

3: I didn’t feel like it was my thing.

Me: Okay.

3: I tried one after I graduated - I thought I did pretty well, but I got kicked out in the first round and decided it wasn’t for me.
Me: Okay. What was the first time, let’s see you mentioned one of those that you did was one of the city wide ones. Was the first time that you played with an orchestra, is that right?
3: Yep.
Me: And was that the one when you were 12 or 14?
3: No, that was 14.
Me: That was 14, okay. And what was the first time that you did any kind of a professional cd?
3: An actual commercial cd, I was about 27 I think. I did Shostakovich. I did recording before for demos, but that was the first commercial.
Me: Okay. And then, how old were you when the idea for becoming a professional musician first came into your mind?
3: Well it was kind of a given from the moment I started. But it became my personal goal, I would say around 12 or 13 after that first competition.
Me: Okay. When you say it was a given, was that because of family expectations, or
3: Yeah, yeah it was just, you know everybody thought that I was talented so that was kind of a…I mean I wasn’t against it, but I wasn’t really thinking about it.
Me: Okay. And how old were you, or did you ever, have an experience where you were in the regular training of an ensemble. For most of us in the US, we joined band or orchestra and that’s where we have solo lessons as well, but regular training with an ensemble is something separate?
3: Only when I got to the states. I was 15, it was called music pre-college and it had an orchestra.
Me: Okay. And would you say, was there a time when basically all of your available leisure time began being spent on your musical training?
3: Yeah, I would say pretty much yeah. From about 15, 16 yeah.
Me: Okay. And let’s see, when was the first time you moved or relocated to attend some kind of training in music?
3: You mean for, relocated for training?
Me: Yes.
3: Never.
Me:  Never?
3:  We immigrated to XX, but I lived at home for most of my training.
Me:  Okay.
3:  Until I got married and my last three years of master’s we lived separately.
Me:  And when was the first time that you established kind of a close, I have it as a close extended relationship with a teacher. Most people describe it as that mentoring, you mentioned the one that’s still in Israel and every time that you are in Israel you go and visit.
3:  Well that’s my solfeggio and music history teacher and my [instrument] teacher from, my main [instrument] teacher from Russia. I call her regularly and I went to visit her last year. And with my XX studio teacher - I teach with him every summer at his program.
Me:  Okay. Let’s see,
3:  I would say the [instrument] teacher would be first, because; I didn’t connect with the solfeggio teacher until quite a few years later.
Me:  Okay. And this one is always a challenging one for people who are performers and teachers. How old are, or will you be when you think you reach, when you will reach, or have already reached, your maximum potential in your musical career? So some people view this as ok my maximum potential as a performer, or as my maximum potential as a teacher, or is it a combination of both, or is it just change? This can mean something different to everyone.
3:  I hope never.
Me:  [Laughing]  Me too. And that’s my, that’s probably one of my favorite responses. You’re the second person to say that, “I hope never.”
3:  Well I mean every year I look back and I don’t agree with what I did before. Like what I did a year ago.
Me:  And do you think that there will be a time when you will ever retire from public performance?
3:  Performance?  Probably when physically, I don’t want to perform when I don’t feel like I’m in shape. So whenever that comes.
Me:  Okay. Alright, so now we’ve gotten to the point where I want to go through some of the, kind of relevant practice activities. So this could be, and you are little bit unusual
that you started early with training, not just on your primary instrument but you started with solfeggio and all the rest of this. Can you describe to me some of those various other, you listed off the ear training the sight singing the dictation. And harmonic analysis and what else did you list off, the music history. Was there any of the activities that you did either in those various classes, or within your lessons, any of those particular activities that kind of stuck out? Or that are interesting to you that you remember?

3: Well, as I said that the descriptive analysis of musical compositions, it wasn’t even called history, it was called music literature. In some ways, it was rather limited compared to the way you study music history in the states. The renaissance and medieval periods didn’t even come into that, we started with Bach. But it was a very rich descriptive way of looking at music. There was always kind of a hero who went through certain struggles - I mean without specifics - but there was always this kind of general things that you could imagine for every piece.

Me: So did you, the teacher in me is trying to imagine how that works.

3: She would just lecture that way and you know I would take notes. And she would demonstrate on the piano or a recording, and told to listen for what is happening in the music. Much less of actual specific composition analysis, actually I wish there was more.

Me: Okay.

3: Cause I you know, I actually remember when I was a college student here. When a theory teacher was analyzing a piece by Brahm’s, the compositional structure, I thought it was complete nonsense. For me it was all about expression and emotion. I couldn’t actually fathom that the composers thought in structural units.

Me: Gotcha. Fascinating.

3: Whereas now for me it is a 180 degree turn. I look for the structures wherever possible.

Me: I could talk for hours on the philosophy behind reasons behind why people lean toward either the emotion side of music or the structure side of music. And all of our different ways to understand it. I won’t go down that tangent too much.

3: Well it’s structure that creates the emotions.

Me: I agree. And I’ve had several teachers that whole heartedly disagree with me on that. Alright so, do you remember the first time that you did anything like going to
concerts, watching TV or video coverage of musical events, reading books about music, any kind of indirect…

3: From very early I was going to concerts. I didn’t enjoy it, I was always very bored in concerts. It’s actually still the only place where I can fall asleep sitting down. I can never fall asleep in an airplane, but classical music concert knocks me out.

Me: [Laughing]

3: You know I went to the opera a lot, because my father was in opera theater, so I knew every opera that he sang in. And I loved actually listening to them, when I was sick (which happened quite a lot) - he would bring me scores of piano reductions and recordings of operas. And I would just lie in bed and listen to full operas with the score. It was a favorite past time when I was sick, besides reading. And you know, whenever there were serious and interesting concerts on television, our teacher would always tell my parents to make sure that I watched.

Me: Okay. That’s fascinating. I’m trying to imagine my parents when I’m sick giving me a score and… The closest thing I ever had was – I do remember coming to my mom as child saying, “Mom I’m bored with all my lesson music for band.” And she looked at me, and my mom is a pianist, and she handed me a book of Hanon – all those technical etudes. And she said here, go learn this on every key on your instrument and come back to me later. Ugh. I never told her I was bored again. [Laughing] and that’s the closest thing I have. [both smiling] So, did you ever have, you told me that chamber music is really not that important and especially when you were in Russia as a child.

3: Still in Russia it is the same. They haven’t changed, and almost the whole world has moved on and things there are exactly the same. Except the level dropped significantly.

Me: Oh, that’s not good. So where there?

3: It was a serious lack of chamber music. That I when I was already with the XX studio my last years with my teacher here, we played a concert of chamber music with him and I remember how just how inexperienced and stupid I felt compared to his Israeli students who played chamber music from when they were 7.

Me: Yeah. So did you ever have a time where, I know chamber music certainly doesn’t, from what you’re describing, basically doesn’t exist in this program. Was there ever time when you got together with friends or with family members?
3: No, because there was no culture for it.
Me: Okay. And when did you, you described having concerts that would show up on TV that your teacher would know about and tell your parents to make sure that you went and watched it. Did that start happening basically as soon as you were attending that music school?
3: Probably, I mean maybe a little later. I can’t really say.
Me: Okay. When was the first time that you started listening to music passively by your own choice. So whether it’s music on in the background, or while your reading a book or studying.
3: It was as long as I can remember.
Me: Okay. And was there ever a time when you started listening to music actively? I know you described when you were sick your dad giving you those scores and LP’s. Was there a time besides that where you tried to listen to music specifically listening for the style that you decided on your own, not the teachers.
3: Well no. I mean I mostly just listened to the pieces that I was playing. Other than opera, that was pretty much the only thing.
Me: Okay. And when did you have what I call, self-initiated practice with practicing because you wanted to, not because a teacher or a parent was instructing you to.
3: Well it started you know, for a little bit with that first competition when I was 12.
Me: Okay. I’m skipping lots of parts. I’m trying to make sure that I skip the parts that don’t describe, that don’t apply to you. So know, you mentioned that, I want to take a couple minutes and dig in a little bit more to how your early musical training had, didn’t teach you how to practice basically. And how, when you started learning with the XX studio and later you really learned how to practice. Can you kind of expand that a little bit more? And you can’t describe more of what you weren’t being taught how to practice, can you describe more of being taught how to practice? If that makes sense.
3: Well, you know it is hard to describe when I was not told because I wasn’t very conscious of practicing. I didn’t really know what to do and I tried to make things sound better, but it was very… You know you can work on intonation you could try to do smoother shifts, but it was very kind of nonspecific. When I started with this new teacher it was very, very specific skills. Moving the bow a certain way, transferring the weight
from one finger to another, listening for an even sound, working on string crossings, working on bow changes. That was really the start of very serious analytical processing.

So I was about 19. When I could actually spend a couple of hours working on string crossings. And really working - like not allowing a single muscle to twitch, it was like going into a Zen-like state. And then when it came to learning pieces, I learned very specific way of practicing them, where you analyze what you want to do. Then you simply take a metronome, start from half tempo and break it into sections and build up every section. But not mechanically, that’s what I always try to instill in my students. Every one of those repetitions has to be completely conscious. Your basically practice memorizing a sequence of mental preparations.

Me: Ahhh… I like that.

3: Mechanical practicing is pointless, pretty much. So, hands shouldn’t move by themselves, you practice mentally, the sequence on mental commands. Before you do anything there has to be a mental picture. And it is a mental picture of the whole body. How everything feels together. So the muscle feeling, the mental state, the expression, the emotions you want to put in - it’s all together.

Me: Okay.

3: You also, unless you’re just practicing intonation, you also don’t practice without emotion, without expression.

Me: Okay.

3: Expression has to be part of learning the piece from the very beginning. It’s not mindless overwhelming emotion, it’s very specific expression which you put into sound.

Me: Okay. Was there anything in particular when you, I’ve lost track of your teachers of which one is which. You describe the first teacher you had in XX that was terrible. Did they use the same sort of instructional techniques as you had experienced back in Russia where it was all imagery based, or was it?

3: Well, not really, somewhat a little bit. There was some technique, but it was very dismissive. Kind of, you go and learn it. Like, what will you bring for next lesson? I would name a piece and it’s about 15 minutes long. Well that’s 15 minutes, what else?

Me: [Laughing] so no time to work on that 15 minute long piece?

3: Not really.
Me: Not really?
3: Just kind of description of things that I have to do.
Me: Okay
3: And send me on my own way.
Me: Hmm, interesting. And then, was it when you started taking with the XX studio, is that when
3: She’s was an associate of [my last XX teacher] I started with her first for a year.
Me: And she was the one who started getting you into this analytical style of practicing that you’re describing?
3: Yeah.
Me: Okay. Is there anything else that you can remember from either the time where you were re-leafing how to practice and kind of re-establishing yourself, or anything from early on beginning to learn the various different activities that you found particularly helpful for learning how to practice? It’s a tough question, sorry.
3: Well, no I mean just, basically what I would, what I just said. The very specific things. At first just fixing technical skills then it kind of spread out into the pieces. Just, you know creating a mental picture of what I wanted it to sound like in the end. And then building to it from very slow tempo. And that’s been my thing ever since. Even like the most expressive color, impressionistic color of music; I still take slowly if I find each color. And then I work it in, just drill it in.
Me: Alright. And let’s see, can you describe a little bit more of your family’s musical background? I know you said that your father was an opera singer.
3: Yes, I mean from direct lineage that’s the only musician.
Me: Okay.
3: We had some cousins, some distant cousins and nephews that were musicians but in the immediate family my father and I were the only musicians.
Me: Okay and did you, did your parents do any sort of musical activities with you at home?
3: No.
Me: No? Okay. Is there anything that you think contributed the most to your musical development?
3: There are so many things, I don’t know. I mean I think that the ability to think in imagery, that’s probably something that stayed forever. I can’t really think of anything more specific.

Me: Okay. And what sort of, I know that you’ve talked about when you are teaching your students and your focusing a little more on teaching now, especially in the last 10 years than you had been, what sort of these things do you describe. Sorry, let me restart. With your students, you’ve talked about using, having a specific mental picture of what you want it to sound like, and your body to feel like holistically, and then starting half tempo and moving forward from there. Can you talk to me a little bit more about how you use chamber music now with your students, since you’ve described…

3: I require all of them to do as much as possible.

Me: Okay.

3: Depending on, you know when I was teaching in XX, I had a large pre-college studio as well, so with those students it was harder to teach chamber music; the chamber music program was not very good. But I encouraged them to go in the summer to programs that had chamber music. Now here at [Institution], chamber music is, is really excellent. I do a lot of chamber music coaching and I encourage all the students to do it as much as possible. And I don’t have to encourage them too much - the atmosphere here is very different, and they all take it very seriously. But it also depends on where the students are, if they came in technically weaker. If the students have to do a lot of technical fixing, then I usually try to have them somewhere near me in the summer. So that I can follow through the technical work. But those that are more set, I push them to go to some summer programs that have lots of serious chamber music.

Me: Okay, excellent. Do you ever have your students do anything as far as duets or something like that within the lesson? Do they play duets as sight reading with you, or?

3: No, I’ve never done that. Unfortunately here the standard is one lesson a week, so you have to focus on what we really need to do. I try to give extra lessons, but still it’s not, it’s not a constant. I need to focus on things, to prioritize.

Me: Yes, I understand. When you had the pre-college students that you describe in XX, did you ever do anything like that with them there?

3: Not really, no.
Me: Okay, okay. Is there anything else that you can think of that might be helpful right now?
3: In terms of?
Me: Anything else you think might be interesting as far as the questions I’ve asked and the things we’ve discussed?
3: I think, you know, routine in the practicing is extremely important.
Me: Okay.
3: But again, not mechanical routine, but mental routine. Memorization I think is key – from the very beginning. That’s what I try to instill in my students regardless of whether you will end up playing the piece from memory (like a sonata). Because practicing is basically memorization. You memorize thought processes, thought processes and muscle movements. Even emotion is part of the thought process and memorizing notes is just a small part of the whole memorization process, but as long as your eyes are reading music, you are basically reading, not memorizing either notes or any other aspects of playing the piece.
Me: Ah, Okay.
3: So I, when I learn a new piece I memorize it immediately. I take it line by line and memorize. I practice without looking at the music. Or maybe glancing at it, but internalizing right away.
Me: Okay.
3: And then I may play with music, but I don’t think you can really internalize a piece if you don’t know it by heart.
Me: Okay, excellent. Well thank you for your time.

Participant 3 Follow-up Interview
Me: I didn’t ask you very much detail about why chamber music is so important?
Because I know a lot of musicians who consider chamber music to be very important.
But, we didn’t really discuss the why part of it? And, what skills you expect your students to gain or learn during chamber music?
3: Well, it’s obviously very important to listen for the other parts in chamber music. And, in terms of playing with or in an orchestra it’s also important – or at least it should be.
Me: Okay.

3: You know, you need to understand the score, and how you relate to the other voices. To me, it’s like combining all the technical skills. You also need to be able to fade in and out properly... And, it’s a great way to understand musical structure. Especially for something like a string quartet. And, just, yeah, that ability to hold an entire score in your head. Because, you know, if you play with piano – the piano is the center. But, with chamber music, everybody has to be a good chamber musician or the music doesn’t work.

Me: Yes, yes.

3: Also, working on basic control of strokes, of intonation, of things that are impossible to do together unless each one has that technical control. So, it kind of pushes your limits in that way.

Me: Okay. Do you think doing chamber music gives your students, or any musician really, more independence?

3: For sure, yes. Because, I think, you may have somebody coaching or teaching these things. But, chamber music really makes you understand how music works in general by playing and practicing it together.

Me: Okay, makes sense. One last question: What do you do to find joy in music? Or, do you find joy in music?

3: So, for me... It’s just so important to do it.

[Both laugh]

3: It’s the ability to use the greatest possible variety of expression. That’s what I look for in playing, and that’s what I work on with my students. As one of my former teachers said, “Never miss an opportunity for expression – look for every possible nuance.” It’s how you ultimately, actually make music.

Me: Okay. So, when you... do you ever have moments where you feel like you need to either focus on the mechanics or just play... or something to go and remind yourself of the experience of the joy of music... to get that expression?

3: Not really... not at this point. I mean, the physical aspect of playing is so connected to the expression I want.

Me: Okay.
3: But, not to say that it’s completely that way – because I teach. Everything I do is very academic. I know exactly what I am doing to get the effect that I want. Another thing also besides the emotional expression is the structure. The older I get, the more I enjoy musical structure. And, trying to play in such a way that it demonstrates the structure – rather than just being emotionally involved. It’s kind of like Isaac Stern playing Brahms’ sonatas – you know? He plays in such a way that he shows you how the piece is put together.

Me: Yes.

3: So, that’s what I enjoy a lot.

Me: Okay. That’s all of my questions, unless you can think of anything else that you do with your students to help them enjoy music, or stay motivated… or, that you do as a player to keep motivated and keep enjoying music.

3: It’s just that… The amount of detail of expression that you put into your playing is the point of it. That’s the joy of it – always looking for more.

Me: Yeah, okay. So, it’s that constant search, in other words. That’s what challenges you.

3: Yeah, that’s it.

Me: Okay, well thank you so much for your time. Those are all of my questions. I truly appreciate your help.

Participant 4

Me: Would you start with just describing your musical career, just highlights, just a little bit more detail than what is in your bio.

4: Okay. This is kind of a long story, because it is a little strange. When I was a kid I grew up in [State] on a farm in the middle of nowhere; nowhere. My high school graduating class had 23 people in it. But my brother was a really, really fine Instrument player. My dad played all the brass instruments. My sister played clarinet and oboe in high school. They both went to college and got music ED degrees. And I picked up the horn, according to the family story, I picked up my dad’s cornet when I was about 5. And just because I wanted to be like my brother and my dad – like everybody does – and I have a really distinct memory of sitting on the floor in front of the dresser that I shared with my brother, with the bottom drawer open and a scale sheet, one of those old sort of thick, thick paper scale sheet they used to get in school, trying to learn my scales when I
was 6 or 7. So, that was a little unusual I think probably. The circumstances of growing up in the middle of nowhere and picking up somebody’s cornet when I was 5 is a little bit weird. And then I was sort of a normal dufus high school kid, except for a couple of years I spent in a working rock and roll band. That played Chicago, blood sweat and tears, and a bunch of 50’s tunes. I can still play about an hour of Chicago stuff from memory. That’s because that stuff was drilled in so deep.

Me: there are some good licks in those pieces too.

4: Yeah, great stuff. Really those first two Chicago albums, I still listen to them. And we did, you know, the fairs the dances, and the wedding gigs as anyone else that a working or a running gig at a I guess you call it a night club. One summer, I don’t remember who many nights a week, but I think it was 5 nights a week in this band. And I learned a bunch of things about the music business, most of which are bad things. That’s a sketchy business and I sort of learned that you just don’t automatically trust everybody. That you’re gonna get paid what you’re supposed to, when you’re supposed to, or at all. And it was really an interesting education. I had about three 4 hours of music memorized because nobody told us we weren’t supposed to be doing that. Then, that band exploded and all of those bands do. And I’m kind of glad it did. 16 when the band broke up and I was just sort of went back to a normal high school life. Our high school band, jazz band was really, really good. We won everything we went to my senior year. Except the team contest, this little tiny high school band in [State] has four people who are still in the music business, where in that jazz band.

Me: Oh, wow.

4: bizarre. One is an opera singer in Seattle, for crying out loud. It was just this sort of funny confluence of people at the right time. I went to college and got a bachelors in music ED degree. I was a jazz player, that’s what I was going to do. I was going to move to LA and try to break into the studio business. And then I looked up at the end of my senior year and was like I wanna make something, and I took some auditions. Got offered a couple of assistantships to grad school. I studied with 1st great teacher there, who is recently retired from a Texas college. One of the great Instrument teachers in the world and one of the nicest people in the world. He’s just a unbelievably, I don’t if you know him or if you’ve ever met him
Me: I’ve heard of him
4: He’s just one of the last of the old school gentleman.
Me: Okay
4: Really, truly.
[Section redacted to protect anonymity]
4: 1st great teacher changed my life, changed my playing. I got an orchestra job by accident. I was at a Christmas concert with a date, and I was trying to impress and we were sitting at one of these round tables. It was sort of a cabaret concert, and 1st great teacher came up to me at the intermission of the concert with his face just beat red. Said, “how would you like a job in this orchestra?” I was like, OK. Because if I said no he was going to hit me. So I bought a C Instrument, I didn’t even have a C Instrument at the time because I was going to move to LA. And all of a sudden, just like arrgh. And discover modern Baroque instruments, Strauss, and started listening to that stuff 24 hours a day. All a sudden decided that I was going to try to maybe be an orchestral player.
Me: Excellent
4: Yeah. It was a weird, I mean the reason I got the job is the guy playing second Instrument slept through the concert. Fired on the spot, I got a job.
Me: [laughing]. Wow
4: so I was playing in this professional orchestra, chamber orchestra of [State], the college jazz band, the college wind ensemble, the college orchestra, two brass quintets, the Dixieland band which was a very hard core lots and lots of work the Dixieland band, I was sort of doing everything. The same kind of story at the end of, sort of like January in my second year. I was like, oh, I should figure out what I’m doing next year.
Me: [laughing]
4: I have never thought I ahead farther than 20 minutes in my life. So I took some auditions and I got in at prestigious grad school 2. Went to grad school 2 and studied with another great teacher and about half way through the first semester, I was starving to death, really starving. It was the whole starving artist thing, which is not cool no matter what anybody tells ya.
Me: Yes I agree
4: and he told me to go home. I mean I came in and finally told him that I was literally not eating anything because I couldn’t. He said, why don’t you go home for a while. But some money in the bag and just go home and practice. I was like, what? I can do that? I really remember where I was sitting when he said this. It was just like, hit by a 2 by 4. So I went back to [State] for a couple of years and made a really good living as a freelance musician. Playing everything I could, studio work, orchestras, I got that orchestra job back. And actually ended up playing, Instrument in that orchestra for a year or 2 years. Taught at a small college in [State]. It’s a Lutheran school, but I got some college teaching experience. Went back and finished the degree and got this job at the age of 28. Basically my doctorate was about 2 weeks from being done and they offered me this job. I mean it was, ridiculous circumstances and I’ve been here for 25 years. I feel like I walked in, the story I tell is that I walked into the elevator at the bottom floor, right before the door closed I started going up the school. This school has really transformed itself in the last 2 decades. From a little mom and pop school with some local connections into a really big national deal. It’s amazing. And now we’re just a few million dollars away from building a new building downtown. A conference center. So here I am, this stupid farm boy and you know, that’s the story. That’s why I didn’t want to type all that out because I was going to hurt myself. It’s a weird, there was a lot of weird twists and turns in there. There’s a woman that I dated very seriously at northern [State], but we now have an Instrument harp duo that’s played all over the world. Got a couple of CD’s out, and we’re best friends and she comes and stays with us. We did a tour of Hungary a few years ago, where I was overseas with an old girlfriend for 3 weeks. And my wife was fine, because we knew that Betty and I are brother and sister now.

Me: that’s, it’s always interesting to me when I hear different stories of career paths of people. It’s never linear, and I wasn’t really expecting it to be linear because my short career has been anything but linear. and it’s fascinating to hear all the twists and turns 4: yeah, people are coming here as college freshman and say I’m going to do this, and this, and this. And I’m going to get an orchestra job. I used to just sort of shake my head and kind of talk to myself about it, but now I say, “No you’re not. You’re, that’s not the way that this is going to go.” They’re like, what? “I know something will change, you’ll move to London and play in a ska band. You just never know.”
Me: yes, yes. Well, we’re going to. We’ll focus first of all on the activities you participated in when you were young. So not just the music things, but everything.

4: Well, when I was in high school, I was a farm kid. So, in my circumstance I was by myself a lot because my mom didn’t have any money. My mom was working a part time job in town and my dad was always out in the fields in the summers. So, genetically and conditionally I became really independent and able to sort of take care of myself. I think that ended up being a really good thing for me because it made me practice however much I needed to, to learn something. I was just used to taking care of myself, you know I would do my own laundry by the time I was 10. And then I my folks just encouraged me to be a person pretty early. I played baseball in high school. I really wasn’t very, I would say that I was a terrible team member because I just sometimes just would like not even show up because I was stupid. I played soccer in college, and I really loved playing soccer, that was really fun. And I didn’t know anything about the game at all, I just like the running around. And trying to figure out what was going to happen next part. When I was in grad school 2, I was playing in big bands and, when I was a doctoral student I just absolutely 24/7 being a Instrument player. With a few stops in a place to get some wings and some beer, but really that was just, that was all just really work for. I really worked really hard when I was there. The story I tell a hundred times is that I slept 3 hours a night the last year. I was, I went to bed at 3 and got up at 6. I basically did this 7 days a week, 6 days a week very consistently. I was the first one in the music building and I was pretty much usually the last one out. And then I went home to my little basement office that I made and I worked on whatever music history papers I was reading. So,

Me: that takes a lot of dedication.

4: and a lot of coffee

Me: [laughing]

4: I drank a lot of coffee

Me: I’m sure. So what about in elementary school? I want to take into consideration anything that would be outside of your normal school activities. So even if it’s a sport you did outside of, or watching TV, or listening to the radio, or helping dad on the farm?
4: All those, all those things. I was, I really wanted, I loved being a farm kid and really wanted to always be out in the field, I wanted to be on the tractor. But we had a small farm and there wasn’t the opportunity because we didn’t always have two tractors to be working on. We had pigs when I was a kid, we had cattle when I was a kid. I remember, I was in 4H and I raised one calf. I barely remember this, how it all went. It was just a little farm. I don’t know, we had a million cats. I loved and still love cats. My brother started a kind of like, fell into having a painting business.

Me: Okay

4: With some friends of his from college. And I started working for him when I was 13. And I don’t think I was really full time in the summer with him until I was maybe 16 or so. But I was working some for Scott. I worked, I was a cook in a restaurant in a little town about 15 minutes away. Starting my junior year in high school. I remember I’d get out of school, and hop in my car and drive over, and change clothes in the men’s room and go to work. It was sort of what I did. And you know, get home at 11 o’clock at night smelling like a big French fry.

Me: I remember that smell.

4: it was a good restaurant. I learned a lot from this man. He was a very quiet, hardworking; just a nice guy. Just a good guy and he was, I remember wanting to do well. I remember I wasn’t going to be sloppy about stuff. And I think that probably helped me be a better Instrument player, you know. ‘cause it was no short cuts in the restaurant. It was the good restaurant in town.

Me: so it was important to make sure that it stayed the good restaurant in town.

4: Yeah.

Me: let’s see, so did you do any sort of artistic activities like drawing or sculpting, or any non-sport movement based activity? So like dance or theater?

4: no, there was no opportunity for that. You know, OK I was in this show choir, we called it swing choir when I was a freshman. And I hated it.

Me: One year was enough, huh?

4: Yeah. One year was too much.

Me: [laughing] So was, I’m curious was it the dancing, or the singing, or the combination?
4: yeah
Me: [laughing]. Okay.
4: I don’t know, I can’t dance, I can’t sing. So it was just sort of what everybody was doing. And it was terrible too. I would not want to watch any videos of any of the things we did. The shows were really awful.
Me: Gotcha. That’s just amusing. So was there any other activity that kind of consumed kind of a large amount of your time? That could be watching TV, you listed off working and a couple of sports and 4H. It could be watching TV, working, running around outside?
4: Running around outside. I was outside all the time. I also read a lot. Everybody in the house always had a book to read. My dad and my brother were big science fiction readers. It was a store in the little town 5 minutes away that would do the thing, after they had books on their rack for a while, they would tear the covers off and send the covers back. They would get some kind of rebate, refund on the books they had bought from the book seller. But they were supposed to destroy the books, but they didn’t. so you could buy a paperback book at this store for a nickel.
Me: Ohh
4: So you, I mean we didn’t have any money, but that is where some of the money went. We would go to the store and buy, you know 10 books for 50 cents. It’s great, it was amazing. Comic books for 2 pennies. With the covers torn off. I still have a box of those comic books that I’m going to give to my 8 year old, pretty soon actually. I – about time for him to get that. I was a huge Twins fan, Minnesota Twins fan. So every day in the summer I would try to work it out so I could hear the game. Played baseball on the little town team. It was a really normal farm kid upbringing except for all the reading my family did. Just like everybody else.
Me: So did you ever, do you remember listening to much of anything else besides the Twins games on the radio?
4: you know the radio was on sometimes. We didn’t kind of do radio background noise like some houses have it on in the morning but nobody is paying attention to it. But we had a record player and my dad had a kind of a strange eclectic music taste. It was everything from Doc and now hurt, to some orchestra recordings. And he belonged to
probably the Columbia club, so it was a new record a month sort of thing. You know, modern jazz quartet. I remember that CD, I remember some Strapenski, sort of a strange, you know we didn’t have polka band records in our house. We had a bunch of 78’s that I remember when I was a little kid I would give almost anything to have back. Just because, I don’t remember what any of them were, but it was fantastic stuff.

Me: I feel the same way. My mom made me listen to Bach, growing up. My dad made me listen to Stravinsky, the Beatles, and his other favorite one, Pink Floyd.

4: Yeah.

Me: Kind of a weird combination of

4: I got way into what’s now called progressive rock when I was about 15 years old. So it was all about Yes, Emerson Lincoln Palmer, early Genesis. And it kind of still is, I mean. I was actually listening to a bootleg recording of a 1977 Yes concert on YouTube this morning before I was warming up. And I’ve done my best to get my kids addicted to this stuff too. It’s pretty cool, yeah. I’m trying to do some of the same stuff my mom and dad did only on purpose.

Me: [laughing] I like that. “Only on purpose” I think I’ll use that as my excuse for the weird things I’m teaching my son.

4: Right. I meant that.

Me: Let’s move on to the next section. I got lot’s of charts and lots of papers.

4: Do you need another one [music stand]?

Me: No, no I’m good. I’m used to doing these on my lap. So in this section of the interview, I’m particularly interested in your development as an instrumentalist. We’ve kind of touched on it here and there, but now it’s now more focusing in on music. So before we can start discussing this, I need to get a few biographical things established. So what is your date of birth.

4: (Removed)

Me: Okay. And how old were you when you participated for the first time in these types of activities. The first one is regular involvement on your primary instrument as a child or an adolescent.

4: It’s grey, probably 9. When I was 9 years old.
Me: Okay. And the first time you were involved in supervised training. It could be lessons, band class those types of things.

4: 5th grade.

Me: 5th grade, okay. And the first time you had regular involvement in training that was not supervised by an adult. So that, so your story of trying to learn the scales at 6 or 7 would kind of count.

4: Yeah, but I don’t know if that was something I did once or if that was something. Let’s say 10, let’s say 9 years old again. We took lessons, actually no, we had the option of taking lessons with the band director. My parents, it wasn’t an option.

Me: Gotchya.

4: I practiced 20 minutes a day, minimum at home. Starting at 5th grade. We got the little practice cards, we got home and my mom and dad we practiced 20 minutes a day. It was funny, there were never any fights about it either. It was just like, you probably ought to practice, no questions.

Me: It was just an expectation. That you just never bothered to question.

4: Yeah. My parents had expectations that they didn’t ever have to talk about. It was really sort of cool. It was also from following in the footsteps of my brother and sister. Both of them were really smart and worked hard in school. It’s just like it’s what you did.

Me: how old were you, do you think the first time you started setting your own performance or practice goals? Instead of letting a teacher set them for you?

4: I want to say 13, ‘cause I’m going to hook that into that band that I was in, because we had to learn this stuff. I remember transcribing the Instrument solos from beginnings and does anybody know what time it is, when I was probably 14. Using an old reel to reel tape recorder.

Me: Excellent. So, let’s see. Since your school was you described, pretty small. Some of these may not apply, did you do anything like a chamber group for school?

4: Oh, yeah. We did always the, we took brass quartet and quintet to and stuff to a high school contest.

Me: Okay, so the first time you did something like that would have been high school, jr. high?
4: Freshman year. So, what was that?
Me: 14, 13?
4: 14
Me: Yeah. And did you try out, I know [State] has, I think it’s district band right?
4: there’s district, it was when I was younger it’s just all-state. But then somewhere along the line, so yeah, I tried out for district band.
Me: and did you, I’m guessing make it and try out for all-state?
4: Made all-state one year.
Me: Okay
4: My senior year I sat last chair.
Me: [laughing] I think I made all-state band once and I made second to last chair. On tuba, which is kind of like, oh man.
4: ooh, [laughing]. That hurts.
Me: and did you ever do a summer camp that was at least more than one state? Okay. And did you ever do any master classes or any kind of?
4: there was no opportunities for us, so.
Me: Okay. And then, once we get into college level, did you do a concerto competition? Whether you competed or won, doesn’t really matter.
4: Yes.
Me: Competed, okay.
4: Yes.
Me: and were you ever a featured soloist with a band or an orchestra?
4: Yeah.
Me: Okay. Was there any other kind of institution level performance based award that you won?
4: mmmm I don’t think so.
Me: Okay. Did you do anything like MTMA, or Instrument guild, or any of the rest of that stuff?
4: I was in Instrument guild. I went one year, 19XX and the only reason I remember that is the only other time I’ve gone was 30 years later when I actually performed at the
conference. It was Boulder, CO and I went with my teacher and I really don’t remember much about the conference at all.

Me: Okay. That was 32 years ago

4: Yes it was. I do remember one performance that XXXX did, a recital because it wasn’t very good. He actually had to restart, he was trying to do something from memory and I remember being shocked that he actually restarted something. 30 years later there I am, the guy up there playing. So my joke is I’ll go in 30 years from now if I’m still alive.

Me: 30 years from now?

4: They’re going to wheel me out.

Me: I shouldn’t joke about that. My professor from my alma matter is planning for his 50th anniversary teaching. [laughing] he had one for his 40th and we all thought that would be the end and the big one.

4: Wow

Me: He’s powering through. And going to make 50.

4: That’s impressive. That’s really cool.

Me: Yeah, he’s slightly determined, really determined individual.

4: I could make 50, in fact I probably should financially, but I just don’t know if it’s really worth it. I’m hoping, my wife is 10 years younger than I am, I’m hoping she is healthy. And I’m out of here at 67.

Me: [laughing]

4: I’ve got a 2 year old too, actually. So I’m going to have to work longer than most, but it’s alright. What am I going to do?

Me: Kids are worth it. I’d be bored. I’m so used to working.

4: I’d love to have like a month, where it was just, I could do whatever I wanted. But I’d lose my mind after that month. Learn how to play bagpipes or something.

Me: [laughing] Yes, yes. Alright, so we’ll get back on track here. Sorry I took us on a side track. Let’s see, the first time that you did a professional CD? So this could be chamber music or solo.

4: The first time I recorded one or played on one?

Me: Yes
4: Can it be a recording session, or does it have to be a
Me: Yes
4: Umm, I was doing commercial recordings while I was a master student.
Me: Okay
4: I was playing in a recording studio called Catamount studios. Actually I just read that the guy at Catamount studios finally got into the state hall of fame. He’s been one of the great professional studios in the center part of the state, for 20 years. Actually CDs? I was on one of the grad school 2 CDs. One of the ones with Wynton Marsalis. And then I’ve got a couple of CDs out with my Instrument organ duo on Gothic records, but that’s been
Me: Okay.
4: I’m on the new symphony, [City] Symphony CD.
Me: Let’s see, what was the first time that you toured with a professional ensemble as a member?
4: Professional, not college?
Me: Yes
4: Okay
Me: So professional, in this case I’m counting anything paid.
4: When I was 14.
Me: Okay. And then, we’re going to skip some of these and go down to some kind of developmental milestones. So how were you when the idea for becoming a professional musician first emerged?
4: I’m old enough that I don’t know. But, I mean it was when I was 13 or 14.
Me: Okay. And when did you make the decision to become a professional musician? Was it around about the same time?
4: This morning.
Me: [laughing] That’s besides that you have to make that decision every day and keep practicing and keep working.
4: That’s a depressing thought, isn’t it? I guess probably, I’m going to say when I was in this band. This is an amazing way, it didn’t seem like work to me. So 14.
Me: Okay. And right around that same time, is that when you would say that most if not all of your leisure time was spent either working with the band, or preparing stuff for the band, or more music in general?

4: No, I got serious about this, really serious about this when I was a master’s student.
Me: Okay.

4: That’s when I first actually started practicing, I mean that’s really. I would learn music, but I wasn’t practicing. And I didn’t, my teacher didn’t really didn’t teach me how to practice. He taught me how to be a lead player, but that was a whole different thing.
Me: Ohh

4: I could sight read and I could play high and that was about it. That was my skill set – that was it. So I had to, when I was studying with 1st great teacher, I had to learn how to practice. That’s when I started bearing down more.

Me: Okay. Let’s see, and how old were you the first time you moved or relocated to attend some kind of regular training in music?

4: 17
Me: 17? Okay. And how old were you the first time you established, a lot of people call this a kind of mentor relationship that close and extended relationship with a teacher?

4: 17
Me: 17? Okay.

4: Yeah
Me: and, is there a time where you think you will reach, or maybe hopefully not have already reached your maximum potential in your music career? That’s a tuff one

4: The way that question is worded is impossible to answer.
Me: Okay.

4: I don’t mean to be dodgy about it. It’s not, I don’t want to ever reach my potential.
Me: Okay.

4: I mean, I’m determined to continue to improve incrementally. Until I throw the horn in the river somewhere.
Me: [laughing]
4: I mean I’m sure there’s going to be, yeah I’m XX and there’s a time that’s not that far on the horizon where I’m gonna have some diminished physical skills steps start to happen. But it hasn’t yet and I’m going to try to put that off, I don’t want to peak.
Me: Okay.
4: I just turned in my faculty activity report and one of the things I said in there is that I worked really hard last year. I had about 100 performances, which is insane. I also practiced longer than I have in a really long time and I think I probably am a better Instrument player than I ever have been. That’s a successful year. I’ve had years, well when [blank] I just didn’t play. So I had to sort of dig myself out of a hole. And it’s going ok right now, it’s kind of fun.
Me: Good
4: One of the things that changed is that I’m not afraid to isolate my weaknesses and really hammer away at them. I’m not just, I don’t waste a lot of time. I’m really working at the stuff that I suck at you know. Instead of just playing the same things over and over again.
Me: Ahh. If we could teach freshman to do that, can you imagine what it would do? [laughing]
4: Well, you know what you’re not at a developmental stage yet, where it’s really even possible for you to understand that. Even the best freshman students I’ve had here, they just don’t get it yet.
Me: mmm
4: The light bulb goes on for most people sometime around their junior year it seems like, 21, 22 years old. There’s some developmental stage thing that happens. It’s like, oh, I should probably go get some work done you know. That bizarre?
Me: [laughing]
4: And it has nothing to do with what you say to them, it’s just that their brain goes into another gear and it’s like ohh I suck at this. I should
Me: [laughing]
4: I’ve been telling you that for three years.
Me: Yes, yes that definitely happens. I have to stop laughing. I’m laughing because I’m remembering when that happened in my career.
4: Yeah!
Me: And I’m remembering my professor just going, seriously woman, it took you long enough.
4: I was half way through my master’s degree, so I was about 21, 22 when the light bulb went on. I didn’t even think about that, but that’s yeah. I really do think I was too stupid to figure it out yet. Not even stupid, yeah I was stupid, but it was just I wasn’t there yet.
Me: Uhuh. Okay.
4: Sorry
Me: No, that’s fine. Let’s see, one last one of these. How old were you when you began your first non-instrument specific training. So I’m like music history, music theory, secondary instrument lessons, those sorts of things.
4: 16
Me: 16? Okay.
4: Yeah cause I took some theory at the little junior college when I was a junior and senior in high school.
Me: Okay. Well, that’s a great thing to be able to do in a small town.
4: None of it stuck. Seriously, it’s awful.
Me: Alright, so moving on to the next section and tell me if you need a break.
4: Okay
Me: Since you’re the one doing most of the talking.
4: Like usual.
Me: [laughing]. So I’m going to talk about some relevant practice activities. Alright, so we’ll run through some of these pretty quickly. I’m just going to check on a couple of things. Did you have any kind of, or when did you have some kind of indirect involvement in music. So this could be going to concerts, watching TV or video coverage of various different music things, reading books about music or your instrument?
4: 16, 15 16, because I remember watching Don [blank]’s rock concert and Saturday nights. When my mom and dad were off at bridge club, or whatever. It would come on the ABC station, we could get 2 channels where I grew up, and it would come on at 10:30. And I remember seeing Tower of Power when I was 15 or 16 years old and just
having my brains blown out by how cool those guys were. And I mean, I made a point of trying to figure out who was on next week and trying to always watch that. We didn’t go places, honestly. We couldn’t afford it. We didn’t go out to dinner, it was a really big deal if we went somewhere for dinner, supper because dinner was noon on the farm. And so, I mean I got a lot of that kind of stuff was just through the television. There was no YouTube obviously, because it was the civil war era for God’s sake, but I can remember watching that when, maybe I might have been 13 or 14.

Me: Okay
4: I remember, you know already sort of developing a sense of what bands were really good musicians. And being kind of disinterested in most of the pop musicians because they weren’t musicians, they were just a pretty face. American Bandstand was another thing. I remember I used to watch them because they used to have live performances on American Bandstand. I watched Soul Train sometimes too. They were the black version of American Bandstand. Because the music was way hipper. I mean, Kool and the Gang and all those, I mean this was pre-Kool and the Gang. Whatever those bands are long gone, I can never remember who they are now, but. Soul train. Oh, you know what, here’s another one. Do you remember the aahhhhhhh. When I was a boy, this is all, this is embarrassing, but I remember watching Saturday morning cartoons and one of my favorite cartoons from the time I was probably 12 was the Monkeys.

Me: Ohh, yes
4: Do you remember those guys?
Me: Yeah, I know, I remember the Monkeys.
4: that was a really good pop band. They could sing, the harmonies were cool, and the, whoever wrote their songs, cause it wasn’t them, could write. Some of that stuff, I can still hear a lot of the songs. The show was just stupid, but always in the middle of they would always contrive some way for them to play one of their songs. That was cool, I remember that, education actually.

Me: Listening to all that great stuff.
4: I’m going back to YouTube as soon as you leave
Me: To go find the Monkeys? [laughing]
4: Yeah.
Me: Okay, so can you describe and this is where your development is a little bit different than some of my other participants, which is great. No it’s great, it’s wonderful. So can you describe as early as you can remember, you talked about your band director telling you, you had to practice at least 20 minutes a day and mom and dad expected you to practice 20 minutes a day. Can you describe as much as you can remember what that practice was like and if you ever did anything extra, what it was like. So start from as early as you can remember and we’ll just kind of go forward.

4: Well, it would have 5th grade I would have been 9 years old. And it was the Rubank elementary method and some scales. And it was just sort of typical lesson, you’d work on a scale or two and then you’d work on a page in the Rubank book and if you got some work done on that, which of course I didn’t know how to do. I was just sort of hack and slash practicing, you got to go to the back of the book and get more of the solos and work on that, so that would have been the extra thing.

Me: Okay, did you look forward to those solos in the back of the book?

4: Oh yeah, that was way cooler music. It was the kind of stuff that I was hearing my brother play when I was practicing at home.

Me: Okay. How do you remember listening to your brother practice often?

4: Oh yeah, I mean it was just part of the day. James would get his, you know 20 minutes or half an hour, he’s 7 years older than I am and he was always 1st chair everything. So you know, seriously all the things that I did in high school, my brother, until he graduated and went to college, my brother was the guy that I was hearing play Instrument. You know, the pep band and the marching band and all the sports stuff because the small town, you know, Friday night football game was the highlight of the week. It was great, you know. And going to the basketball games and watching the band and going to all the concerts. Me and my sister were always like the stars in the band concerts. Yeah, I was hearing both of them practice. I remember mostly hearing my sister practice and hearing her get really mad and yelling and stomping her foot in the room. Just pissed… I’m going to have to tell her that.

Me: [Laughing]

4: Damn it! Stomp.

Me: So now when you practiced did you do the same thing when you’d get frustrated?
4: I don’t know. I don’t remember, I think that when I was in college I do remember being frustrated. In fact I tell a story sometimes when I’m talking about practicing. I tell a story about my memorial hole in the wall of the practice room at College. Yeah, I kicked a hole in the practice room wall, ‘cause I just didn’t know how to practice. I didn’t know how to do anything, nobody ever taught me to practice.

Me: Which is one of the most frustrating things in the world, I’m convinced.

4: It’s terrible, it’s a terrible plan for God’s sake. I mean that’s the thing that I start pounding into the freshman’s head.

Me: Yes

4: Before they even come to school here, they come here for a lesson, that’s one the things I tell them about. Make your practicing organized and enjoyable so you wanna do it more, you know? How obvious is that?

Me: So, would you say that as we’re moving into college practice was approximately the same, sort of as you described it hack and slash?

4: Yeah

Me: Yeah?

4: The one thing I did that was a routine – it took an hour and a half a day. It was a whole long bunch of lip slurs that my teacher got from the lead Instrument player with the A troop of the Ice Capades. And I played the ice show three times, I think when he was playing. He was really incredibly great professional Instrument player. And he did, this was his routine, his lip slur routine. And that was really the only thing I did. God, it’s awful.

Me: and let’s see, you described when you went on to your master’s, you finally figured out how to practice.

4: Started to get some kind of an idea. I mean, part of it was realizing how many things that I needed to work on.

Me: Okay

4: And that was one of the things that 1st great teacher was a better, way better teacher about. It was just, you know, shining a light in the dark places. I had a lot of, I was really bad at a lot of stuff. Cause all I’d ever done was work on playing high. So, yeah,
it was starting to kind of, beginning to compile the list of stuff that I’d better get to work on.

Me: Okay

4: What really happened was when I was at grad school 2 and I started to hear in these 18 year old kids that were better than me. And I was a doctoral student, it’s sort of a huge wake up call. You just, having an expanded role as an Instrument player was what changed me the most. It’s like, oh my God. I sound like an idiot.

Me: what fascinates me the most is, it’s so hard to realize. I think when we first start playing, I really don’t think we have any idea how bad we sound. Which I think is kind of a blessing in disguise.

4: Well yeah.

Me: Cause otherwise you’d quit.

4: Right. I talk about that all the time. There seems to be this sort of thing like here’s your awareness and here’s your ability. And if your awareness ever went like this I think you’d shoot yourself, you know. So, yeah I agree.

Me: and let’s see, can you describe to me what sorts of things your band did? Just, I’m fascinated by that what you did to get ready for a gig if anything, or learn a new song, or put together something new.

4: Which band do you mean?

Me: The rock band.

4: Ohh. It was an autocracy which run by a guy, one guy who ran everything. He did all the arranging, he was a really brilliant musician who could play guitar, was a really good drummer, he could sort of play a little bit of everything. He ran the rehearsal, this was 40 years ago, so it’s like. And I think it was, at first it was just like let’s learn some tunes, but he had a plan he had an idea. He transcribed an hour of Chicago music for a rock band, you know? And he’d say here’s your music. So, to be completely honest, this was the 70’s, he was doing a lot of amphetamines at the time, so he would be awake for 20 hours a day. And so that’s what he was doing. So we’d rehearse in my dad’s seed corn store building. This big old store, and 3, 4 hours of working through stuff and I don’t remember much. Honestly it was a long time ago. And it was just at first it was just like he just put this band together, and then we had some gigs. Real early on where we were
awful I’m sure and you know, trying to sort of get our feet wet. It was about, it was some it was about repetition I think, memorization from repetition. And it was, you know, we had choreography and all the ridiculous stuff that you do. But I think, I don’t really remember other than just running things through. I imagine if a place was really bad we’d probably actually rehearse. We would, not rehearse, we would just go over it again.

Me: Okay

4: You know that’s not rehearsing, that just going over it again.

Me: And hoping it gets better.

4: Yeah, and assuming it eventually is like beating on something until it gets better, but we were young and flexible. We did, we got to the point where we were a pretty good, pretty damn good band actually. I heard a recording of that band, I don’t know, 20 years ago some recording from some dance that we did. And we, it was pretty good. Kind of surprising, actually. You know, everybody played all the right notes, everybody played in tune and we were obviously having fun, and it wasn’t as awful as I was assuming it was going to be.

Me: I love that, it wasn’t as awful as I was assuming it was going to be [laughing]

4: You know, this family that’s been friends of my family for, as long as I can remember, they had stumbled onto some reel to reel recording and were going to play this and it was like. And the dad who was one of my dad’s best friends also Instrument player, said no really 1st great teacher, this is pretty good and I’m like OK Bob, he put it on and I was like hell that’s not bad at all.

Me: It’s the awareness thing, your awareness is so much higher now.

4: Yeah, if I listen to it now, I’d probably shoot myself in retrospect. Retroactive suicide.

Me: Let’s see, would you, can you describe some of the gigs, anything that you remember about the gigs. Were they enjoyable, was there anything in particular that made some of the gigs more enjoyable than others?

4: I remember we played the famous Surf Ballroom in our state. The ballroom where the Big Popper, all those guys had played and that was cool cause I knew just a little bit about the history. And we played another one that sticks out for me for some reason was we played a holiday fair in Minnesota. Somewhere where the band was, we were playing
at probably our peak and for some reason that performance sticks out for me. And then this long, this running gig we had at the supper club I’ll never forget the supper club. It was called the, oh man, that’s sad. It was a bar basically, so we shouldn’t have been in there, none of us were, there was one of us that was over 18. But that was fun because that was kind of the place where we started to get to be almost professionals, because you had to do it over and over and over again. And that, I remember we did that was all memorized. So we did it without any music on the stage anymore. It’s amazing.

Me: So, do you consider that memorization a helpful thing, or something you did because you didn’t know better.

4: It was something we did because more traditional for a rock band to not have music stands on the stage. My philosophy about it now is that it really is sort of pointless. You know, you memorize something for a concerto competition, you spending about 60% of your focus, just trying to remember what the next note is. And that’s kind of stupid. The one time I saw Maurice Ambre live, with the Minnesota orchestra, many, many years ago. He had a music stand in front of him and he was playing the Haydn. For God’s sake, you know he’s recorded the Haydn 50 freakin’ times.

Me: He’s played over and over and over again, yeah.

4: Hey, he skipped the. Hey. He can’t do that. You know, it’s like

Me: Okay. So if you could start a beginner, what sorts of practice activities would you give a beginner? Cause you teach primarily college and graduate students, right?

4: Yeah

Me: Okay

4: Simple, repetitive things that I would still try to figure out how to make it fun. But it would, I would try to make it sort of like insidiously helpful, you know? So, it’s not like I’m beating them over the head to get them to have a good sound. But I would really want part of their daily thing to be listening to somebody who is really good. My idea about an elementary book has always been to include recordings of every single thing that’s in the book. All the whole notes, all the things, all by somebody who’s really got a beautiful sound. And I just think that would be invaluable, because the worst thing about elementary school is how awful they all sound. They don’t have anybody, they don’t have any modeling, you know. I mean their elementary school band director
probably shouldn’t be playing his Instrument anymore, you know what I’m saying. So if they play something it’s probably not going to be, but if you’ve got. If your elementary book, remember this because somebody needs to do this, if your elementary band book has, you figure out a way to pay the principal Instrument players of the Atlanta Symphony to do these recordings. So it sound incredible, that’s what’s going to be in their ears. I think honestly that’s the most important thing is just to have a good sound in your ears. All the technical stuff is going to come, it’s just going to take time. But what I think the fundamental problem is with almost every Instrument playing is bad tone production. So I guess it would be, if there’s a starting point, it’s going to be trying to help them sound better.

Me: Okay. So, compare what you have for, or what you kind of described as your ideal for a beginner, to what you do now with your students.

4: It’s the same thing

Me: It’s the same thing.

4: It’s more complicated, but it’s the same thing.

Me: Okay.

4: My starting point is always having a beautiful sound. My first goal is always to have a beautiful sound. Everything else is really secondary. You can play a million notes a second, but you sound like a yack nobody is going to care anyway. So I’m really, I’m trying get people from the very beginning to just have a beautiful sound. And the nice thing is honestly, is the students who come to school here now because I can pick and choose. And I take about 10% of the people who apply here I can pick the people who have good sounds. Teaching somebody to sound better is really hard. By the time they get to be, particularly a grad student, it’s really ingrained. They sound like they sound, and it’s just going to be like teaching a pig to sing to get them to change their sound. It’s really hard.

Me: Yeah.

4: Freshman are a different story, because most of the time they haven’t really been exposed to much and they’re more malleable in the terms of this basic thing. So I mean I’m talking about how, I’ll be more specific with how to actually form a sound. Specifically what to do and how to use the air and there’s a concept that I talk about
that’s a, we’ll probably get to at some point, but it’s really not that much different, it’s just a little bit more of a complex version of the same idea.

Me: Makes sense

4: Okay

Me: and then, one last question for today. You talked about your dad played several instruments and you listened to your brother and sister practice and they both went on to get, was it music ED degrees? Both of them?

4: Yeah

Me: Was music, other than listening to your siblings practice, was music was music part of kind of your theme of life?

4: Yes

Me: Aww, excellent.

4: Yeah, this is my favorite story. I mean, sorry, this is like old familiar ground, but my dad and my brother both played brass instruments, my sister played saxophone and clarinet and oboe. I forgot about that also saxophone, and my mom was what felt really left out of this. So she taught herself to play saxophone. And she came from a family that had no more musical ability than a potato. It was this old sort of dour German family. I’m like, but she was just like determined that this was going to happen. So she taught herself to play alto saxophone and what we did a lot of nights was just we all, for some reason this ended up happening almost all the time in my brother’s bedroom that I shared with my brother. We would get together and play out of the marching band books.

Me: Ohh, wow.

4: All five of us. And it was great. And my mom was terrible. But it was just, it was some subtle difference between the crap we gave her about how bad she could sing, because nobody wanted to sit next to her at church. Everybody just, we all gave her a hard time about that, I think it probably really hurt her, but she maybe, I think she. I come from a family that gives each other a hard time about everything. But nobody ever gave her any grief at all about this saxophone thing. I think we all thought this was pretty damn cool that she had done this. So we played from the march and swing book, I mean just my dad was really good friends with the band director and he would borrow some of
these marching band books. They’d all, probably, with their little wire, clip them on. We still have that saxophone, I lent that saxophone to somebody in college 25, 30 years ago and never saw it again. But my sister, it was her horn and I borrowed it from her to lend to this guy, and I don’t remember why, and she, God she was poking at me. She never played it, and it was like jab, jab, jab over and over again. I need that saxophone back, it’s too bad you stole that saxophone. So I tracked this guy down, he actually lives in XXX now. And works at a shop at one of the car dealerships on XXX. I tracked him down, I got the saxophone back and I had it reconditioned. I spent a couple hundred dollars on that, by an instrument repair guy reconditioned it. I gave it to my sister for Christmas,

Me: Uhuh

4: It blew her mind. It was one of the greatest things. It was 45 years later, here’s your God damn saxophone.

Me: [laughing] Oh that’s wonderful.

4: And she said that, she knew it was her saxophone when she started taking the wrapping paper off, cause she could smell the case. She could smell what the case was like, and you know supposedly, how supposedly that your sense of smell is the most deeply ingrained memories that you have?

Me: Uhuh

4: She started tearing the paper off and she started crying. And then laughing at the same time. I think she called me a lot of bad names.

Me: [laughing]

4: But that was the saxophone mom learned to play on. And you know, I don’t know how many times we did this, but I remember struggling with some of the instrument parts in these march books. All the old Carl King, John Phillip Susa marches. They’re hard!

Me: Yeah, there are some tuff ones in there, that’s for sure.

4: And I, I would have been playing this instrument, which is my dad’s old instrument that he had when he was a kid.

Me: Yeah
4: which, I’m playing next week with the symphony, of all weird things. So, yeah that was a big deal. And I mean, we just all, we went to all the school concerts and it was just what you did.
Me: Cool
4: And we all went, we all played in all the school concerts. They used to do this thing, when I was in elementary school I remember this. They would have a PTA show, a variety show. Where people, parents in the community would put together this variety show, and it was everything. It was like, I remember mom and dad and three other couples being on stage in the gym in some version of the newlywed game. I remember, it really sticks out for me. It was hilarious.
Me: [laughing]
4: and it was this guy Bob that I talked about that had the recording and the band. He did it, I mean this was so not PC, but he did it. He did a really great Sammy Davis Jr. imitation in black face. Because he could tap dance. There were people in this community that had these bizarre hidden talents. And he was the MC for the show and at one point he came out with black face and did his Sammy Davis Jr. imitation, probably smoking a cigarette on the stage, you know. Because, yeah
Me: Nobody would have thought anything about that.
4: Yeah, nobody. Yeah. And my dad, wow, I haven’t thought about this in probably 40 years, my dad was in the pit orchestra for this show. And some of the time he was playing Instrument, some of the time he was playing trombone, and some of the time he was playing tuba, you know. So it was just, that was just. I should talk to my brother and sister and see what they remember about these variety shows.
Me: was it an every year sort of thing?
4: Yeah
Me: Oh wow
4: One of the things that’s funny about, ooo my God we have some movies about this.
Me: Ohhh, next family get together, I can tell
4: With my mom on stage in a flapper outfit dancing the Charleston.
Me: Oh, that’s fantastic
4: Oh, my God. A lot of these shows were directed by the guy who was the drama teacher. He was also the typing teacher, I learned how to type from this guy. But, looking back on it, he was an absolutely completely in the closet homosexual. And he was a drag queen because one of the things in this show is that he would somehow always end up in a dress.
Me: [laughing]
4: Nobody thought anything about this. Oh my God. Yeah, I’ve got some videos of Mr. Adams in one of the dresses. He was also dancing the Charleston actually. So this camera’s, it was Scott must have taken this, my brother must have taken this. Because my dad’s playing in this little Dixieland group on stage and there’s these dancers and my mom is one of the dancers. All these other farmers and ladies and I remember I was just sort of like
Me: [laughing] just staring open mouthed, just awww
4: Oh my God. That’s, that’s you know. Yeah, it was a different time, boy. I gotta get that video, I got to find those. We got them all transferred from the reels onto disks. So, I don’t know if we’ve ever looked at them, but I just had this flash of
Me: Now you’re going to go find them aren’t you?
4: Oh, yeah. This is great.
Me: Good memories, good memories. My son, my 8 year old has been asking about his grandpa and grandma because they died when he was very, very young. My mom had died when he was 3 months old and my dad died when he was 9 months old, so he’s never, you know. I should, that’s your grandpa years ago.
Me: No, that’s great. I’m still, I’m fascinated at the getting together as a family and playing marching band music.
4: we still do, once a year.
Me: You still do, yeah?
4: yeah, I don’t know when this started, but we go, there’s this place in Minnesota we all go to in the summer. And it was the, it’s not worth explaining this whole thing, but they have a parade around a section of this lake and for some reason, 20 years ago we decided we’d play in the parade. And we got in the back of the pickup and got the same damn
march books out again. And it was my dad and my brother and his wife and I and my wife and my sister, in the back of this pick up.

Me: [laughing]

4: And we do this every year. It’s just like doesn’t matter where anything else is going on, we play in the parade.

Me: Oh, that’s awesome.

4: Yep. When my dad passed away, boy a lot of years ago now. My best friend the tuba professor here, he now drives 10 hours to Minnesota to play tuba in this band.

Me: Oh, wow

4: Yeah. It’s amazing.

Me: that’s wonderful.

4: and I just get up I the morning and you spend all morning decorating the hay rack or something, start drinking and manage to get up, it’s just. There have been parades where I don’t remember most of the parade.

Me: [laughing]

4: We’re all just.

Me: Just enjoying yourselves

4: Yes. It’s hot, you know. It’s the 4th of July, so beer tastes really good and the parade hasn’t even started yet. Half the band is gone. So yeah, that there’s a link to that I hadn’t even made before with the playing in the back, playing on those march master’s books.

Me: That’s awesome. That’s wonderful. Alright well, I think I have plenty

4: Of incriminating information

Me: No, everything is confidential.

4: Thank you

Me: I’ll go through this, and transcribe everything.

**Participant 4 Follow-up**

Me: So, I hope you’ve been doing well.

4: Yeah, I’ve been busy, but like everybody’s saying I can see the light at the end of the tunnel.
Me: Well that’s good, it’s always good when you can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

4: Yeah. I’m sure you feel the same way.

Me: Oh, yes. I took another job since I saw you last.

4: Oh, wow

Me: So now I have 4 jobs [laughing]

4: Congratulations.

Me: Um, thanks. I think it might have been one too many, but that’s ok.

4: [laughing]. Well, better too many jobs than not enough, I think I don’t know. Maybe that’s not true either.

Me: Well, uh, that’s probably true. Alright, so the last couple of questions I have for this project of mine. We’ll start with, can you describe to me why you consider chamber music to be important. It’s something that came up in almost every interview with every participant. And everybody has a slightly different viewpoint on why chamber music is important, but everybody agrees it is important. So I was wondering if you could tell me why you consider chamber music to be important.

4: I think it’s a great exercise, it’s a great um, this is going to be a funny way to put it, it’s a great tool to use with students of any age for teaching them listening and independent thinking skills. Because you can hide in a large group and you can’t hide in a brass quintet for example. So you have to really listen to each other, you have to learn to listen to each other, you have to be able to play your part independently of everybody else. And the other thing is it’s just, it’s there’s been a sort of a resurgence in brass quintets as a viable professional ensemble in the last 2 years again. There’s a lot of young quintets out there that are making a living at being brass quintets.

Me: Yeah

4: So it’s almost become a more practical skill than playing, say in the school orchestra or the university orchestra, the university band. Because you know you’re not going to get an orchestra job unless you’re incredibly lucky and incredibly good, but you can be a good player and get together with 4 friends and work really hard at being a good brass quintet and go out and make a living. So, I think there’s a teaching aspect to it and there’s a just an entrepreneurship aspect to it that’s worth talking about too.
Me: Ah. So how do you view entrepreneurship umm, how would I ask this, do you, is that something, basically how to market yourself. Is that what you’re viewing entrepreneurship as?

4: I think it’s partly marketing and it’s partly being, not being afraid to metaphorically knock on doors and go through the whole process of, of aah not necessarily going down the beaten path of being a musician, but seeing if there is another way of making a living that you might enjoy more might fit your skills more. But we don’t all have to either teach at the high school level or be in an orchestra, there’s a million other ways to make a living and I talk about this all the time. About you just have to not necessarily assume that the path you thought you were going to walk on when you were a sophomore in high school is going to be the one you walk on with your career. Because that path might be gone for one thing, but it might turn out that you’re just not a good enough clarinet player to get a job in the Chicago symphony and, but that doesn’t mean you can’t get a job with the Chicago symphony as their music librarian. So, I think it’s just about keeping your eyes open and I think yeah, the marketing thing is, I’m kind of appalled by it but it really is becoming a lot more important. I mean everybody needs a website, everybody needs you know, it’s just the awareness of social media and how much social context means anymore to, it’s getting people to come to your concerts.

Me: yeah

4: Boy that’s a big job, I could talk about this for the rest of the weekend, but it’s something that I really work on with everybody to try to get them to understand that this is not going to just be practicing 5 hours a day and somebody’s going to tap you on the shoulder and say, hey you’re the new principle Instrument player in the Chicago symphony. It’s figuring out a way to make a living doing something that you love doing.

Me: Yeah, so I’m curious, your institution offer a music entrepreneurship program?

4: does, do we offer that?

Me: Yes

4: No we don’t. We used to have a music business degree but it lasted a couple of years and some key people involved in the development of the degree ended up going to another school. That was a long time ago actually, now that I think about it. I think most of us in the brass circle we just talk about it all the time. I mean it’s a constant sort of
running thread in everybody’s approach to teaching. That this isn’t just living in a vacuum anymore, you’ve got to go out and knock on doors and take chances and just not go the sort of same worn path way that everybody else has.

Me: Yeah. So do you encourage your students to form chamber groups or just find places to perform around that kind of major metropolitan area?

4: Yes and yes. I mean we’ve got a pretty, pretty hefty chamber music requirement for undergraduate degrees for example. And like all our graduate recitals and the doctoral program, one of the recitals at least has to have a pretty major component that’s chamber music. And really that can be anything from a traditional brass quintet to breaking away from that mold too. Doing, you know, completely non-traditional ensembles. I mean, yeah so, the short answer is absolutely to both those questions.

Me: Okay. So now I’m just curious. How do you view things like the, oh I can’t remember the gentleman’s name, but there’s he has a whole series of youtube clips, the trombone player. He does loops and he’s done, you know several different pop songs. When he started this he was a freshman at Julliard. So he had recorded

4: Yeah

Me: You know which one I’m talking about?

4: No, I know what you’re talking about, but I’ve never actually listened to any of his recordings or watched any of the videos on youtube. But I do know who you’re talking about, yeah.

Me: Okay. So is that something you would ever consider having your students do?

4: Yeah, hell yes. I mean anything that’s gonna, I mean anything that’s interesting and innovative that still has like musical integrity. If you end up becoming the latest viral sensation that lasts 15 minutes, whether you make a million dollars or whether you just get a million hits on a youtube video that’s still pretty cool, I mean. That’s exactly the opposite of the old two choices of being in the orchestra or public school teaching, that’s

Me: Yeah

4: Totally changed everything just in the last 5 years.

Me: Okay. That makes sense. And then, my other question if you would, and this is somewhat similar to one that we’d already talked about during your interview. If you were to get a beginner or kind of work with a whole bunch of beginners, what sorts of
things would you have them do to start the process kind of early, or tell me if you think this is a bad idea, but starting the process of looking for other paths to learn things and to figure out how to do stuff. How would you start that early? That’s a tough question, I know.

4: Yeah, and it I’m going to be, honest, I’m not really the guy that’s qualified to answer that question. Because I don’t teach young kids anymore.

Me: Okay.

4: If I gave you an answer it would just be something that I’d be totally making up, and I’m just going to just sort of opt out of the question instead of just blathering at you about something that I really wouldn’t know about it.

Me: Okay, that makes sense. And is there anything else that you can think of to, I know it’s been a while since we had our last conversation, is there anything else you can think of about how, kind of things involving play and enjoyment in music and creative ways to do stuff, kind of how that interacts with the more traditional forms of practice that you want to add to this conversation?

4: This is gonna be obtuse, but yeah, I I’m in my own life, I mean, all of a sudden in kind of a frenzy state of activity about commissions, about commissioning people to write stuff. And what I think we should all be doing is having everybody write music for each other. I mean, we could, getting back to elementary school question this is a way that I think you could apply that idea. You know, you umm, one concert a year with your 7th grade band is all pieces composed by people in the high school competition class.

Me: Ok

4: And just have it not, not be so sort of distant, have composition and the creation thing not be so distant from the performance of it, even at the elementary school level. How cool would that be, for some kid in 6th grade to have a piece on his high school band that was composed by his older sister, you know, his 6th grade band, a piece that was composed by his older sister, I mean that would just be, that would be amazing. So that’s kind of an obscure answer to the question, I guess, but I just think that we just don’t need to, need to be afraid to innovate when we’re practicing. I don’t, I think we should look for new ways to do stuff, always. Cause the old ways are good, but they’re not always great and some of the old ways are kind of pedantic, boring, and stupid.
Me: [laughing]

4: I mean, practice is hard enough you know, without making it boring and pedantic and stupid. So, I mean, I’m, ah, I’ve been yelling a lot this semester especially about people recording their own practice sessions. And particularly doing sort of mock performances whether they’re people getting ready for orchestra auditions around the country, I had a few of those going on this year, and just, just record yourself more. And find new ways to listen and look back at the recordings. I think one of the things I talk about sometimes is looking at the actual visual of the wavelengths on the screen of the phrase that you just played and see if the wavelength is consistently full, or if your notes are collapsing towards the end like wind players tend to do. Are you driving through all those notes or are you actually collapsing all the time and so your phrases sound all disconnected. Sometimes it’s easy to hear that, but some people can’t hear that stuff yet, but if you see it on the wavelengths on a computer screen

Me: Yeah, it would be pretty easy to see

4: Right. It’s look, look right there. Do you see how that note goes and then it collapses right there at the end? Is that visual aspect of the thing help you queue in on it a little bit better, because I’ve had people that, that’s really happened to. That they were just more visual learners at that stage and I don’t think I’ve ever had anybody look at one of those wavelength images and say anything other than, you know, pardon me but it’s always like, “Oh, shit.” [laughing]

Me: [laughing]

4: Cause the, the visual reinforcement just poked them in the eye, you know.

Me: yeah

4: about this thing that you can talk about and listen for, but sometimes just another way to approach, I mean seeing something, seeing a visual representation of the sound that’s been pretty cool for me a couple of times. And really, half a dozen students in the past few years have had their eyes really sort of violently yanked open by that visual thing. Had their ears yanked open – I guess is what I should have said.

Me: Yeah, well and it’s when you have it presented that way and it’s done by a computer it’s a very accurate measurement and you really can’t argue with it, so the, “oh, shit” response kind of makes sense.
4: I like those “oh, shit” moments because they’re usually, I mean that’s the way we learn the best I think is by getting annoyed about something we’re doing. It’s like okay that sucks I got to fix that and those oh shit moments almost always lead to these nice arcs of growth.

Me: I think you’re right.

4: And they’re fun to watch too [laughing]

Me: [laughing] yeah they really are.

4: I have to confess that I get a certain sick enjoyment out of seeing somebody that I’ve been kind of mildly arguing with about this particular thing over the course of a couple of weeks like okay I’m going to bring out the heavy artillery and it always give them the oh shit moment.

Me: [laughing]

4: [laughing] “Okay, you’re right, God dammit. I see, yeah, yeah, yeah. And then like next week it’s a thousand times better.

Me: Yeah.

4: everybody learns so differently it’s really sort of a coolest thing about private teaching is that I mean no person is ever the same as the next person, you know that comes in the next hour for a lesson and everybody has, you gotta constantly be on your feet gotta figure out how to approach this. The personality type, sorry go ahead

Me: no, absolutely I was just agreeing with you

4: So I’ll stop babbling about that, sorry.

Me: No, that’s fine. That’s all good stuff and I absolutely agree I don’t know how many times I’ve had that moment with the student where they finally figure something out and realize that, “Oh… They were telling the truth.” Yes, yes I was. [laughing]

4: Yes, yes I was

Me: It’s a little bit of vindication and it’s also I’m just so happy that they finally figured it out.

4: Right, yeah. And it depends on how much coffee you’ve had that day what that percentage is right?

Me: Yeah.
4: Sometimes the vindication is worth a couple of cups of coffee too it will get you through the next two lessons.
Me: Very true, very true. Well that was all the question I had for
4: Excellent.
Me: For this project. I will, I’m almost done transcribing everything and I’ll transcribe this little bit of conversation that we’ve had. I will shoot those to you in an email if you have time at some point, I know it’s the end of the semester, but if you have some time before the middle of May to look at them, you don’t have to read the whole thing if you don’t want, cause they will be kind of long, but I’d also rather not misquote someone accidently. So, if something that you said wasn’t quite what you meant when it’s in print, please let me know.
4: Okay, and you have to leave in the oh shit quotes though, that’s my only request.
[laughing]
Me: [laughing] Oh it will be in there. Things like that are great I could almost guarantee you that’s going to be in the paper because.
4: Oh good.
Me: Because those are the sorts of poignant words that just drive the point home like that one.
4: Okay good. If I can add anymore color just let me know [laughing].
Me: [laughing].
4: Well I should be able to, before the middle of May, the next two weeks are pretty stupid but then there’s finals and I’ve got a little bit less frenzied schedule during finals week and after so it should be fine. I should be able to look at them.
Me: Okay. That would be wonderful. I’ll get that done and get it sent off to you.

**Participant 5**
Notes from 1st portion of initial interview (recording failure)
Career Description (chronological)
- Started playing at age 15 (1981)
- Played in school wind band at beginning
- Started playing with adult wind band within 6 months of starting to play
• After playing for one year, started playing in a Brass Band that was styled after a
traditional Brass Band. (more advanced players)
• Also played in a brass quintet w/ professionals
• Played in Big Band
  o Credits this and mother for early introduction to jazz
• Applied very early for the Norwegian National wind band
• Started playing as a substitute for various professional orchestras or chamber
groups
• At age 20, he studied in Stockholm with Michael Lind for about 18 months
• Was teaching while playing from rather early
• Got a job in the Norrkoping Symphony Orchestra, and played with them for
  almost two years
  o Enjoyed playing with the orchestra, but felt it was limiting to his musical
    expression
  o Decided to go back to Stockholm and try to make living as chamber
    musician and/or soloist
• Moved back to Stockholm
  o Lots of performances with different combinations of groups
  o Considers this important for his time to experiment with different
    combinations of what works – have to include what you like as a
    performer, and what the audience likes
  o Side conversation about budgeting – find a way to earn money with what
    you love doing. Keep your expenses always a little lower than what you
    earn, so you can have elbow room to explore, experiment, and fail.
• Thought of playing as fun
  o Pushed himself because he enjoyed it
Activities from Elementary (EL), Middle School (MS) and beyond
• Skiing – mostly cross-country (EL)
• Hiking, and anything else that took him into nature (EL)
• Football (soccer) (EL)
• Stamp Collecting (EL)
• Ice Skating/Hockey (EL)
• Chess Club (MS)
• Shooting – target with rifle and shot gun (MS)
• Computers – BASIC language programming, etc. Computers were new, and he has tried to keep up with technology since then. (MS)
• Anything to keep him outdoors – continued hiking (MS)
• Added Rock climbing (MS)
• Trying things out – rowing, sailing, etc. (MS)
• Lifelong – building things (mostly concerned with rough construction, clay, metal work, wood, etc.) “My dad would come home and find me with another watch in pieces – just trying to figure out how it worked.”
• Lifelong – reading, by High School and University ages, really getting into philosophy
  o Read Socrates, Plato, and others in original text
  o Goes back to need to have the source of information, like opening up the watch to find out how the gears worked.
• Diving – a sort of outgrowth of travelling, which came with playing.

Transcription of second portion of interview
5: So there’s no really universal truth that [Teacher] said that applies to everyone. There might be some really, really basic things that applies to everyone, but mostly he was very adaptive and adapted. That’s why I like to go to the source and to find out myself. Like if you look at the clocks again, why did I open the clocks, I didn’t want to read about how a clock worked, I want to open it and find out myself. So that’s, along that line I guess. Back to the hobbies, at that time I was doing diving as well. Scuba diving. Getting more into traveling, which I’ve always done, but I wouldn’t consider traveling a hobby it’s more like something that came with playing.
Me: Uhuh
5: Then of course continuing the interest for computers and always trying to keep up with the latest development in that field.
Me: That’s a hard thing to keep up with.
5: I know, [laughing]. I guess that sort of wraps it up until I was in the university.
Me: Okay. So what sort of activities, let’s see music wise, you talked about playing [early instrument] in school
5: Yep
Me: Um, did you take any lessons for that was it all just part of a band program or how did that work?
5: Well, the way it worked at that time was that you, there was no really organized education except you went to the wind orchestra and you said, cause they had a day that they invited every kid that wanted to start to come to the meeting. And we came there with the parents and they said well here are the instruments we have available. Of course the most pushed kids they went and grabbed the trumpet and the flute and the clarinet first. Then the less pushy guys got the [early instrument] and the slowest ones got the [primary instrument] and that’s how it was.
Me: [laughing]
5: So I was I guess, second slowest.
Me: [laughing]
5: So, and then the teaching was really about the oldest kids in the orchestra would teach the youngest kids. So it was really random, there was no organized adult to. It was really, really random in the way that you could run into a guy that had some pedagogic talent but you could most of the time, you simply found some body that; this is the part you blow into and here are the fingerings as well as you can, you know. It was really on that level. If they were really good they could also tell you played the wrong or the right notes.
Me: [laughing]
5: So, yeah, pretty basic. And then later when I, obviously I quit [early instrument] because I didn’t really at that time I was too young, maybe I had the wrong teacher, maybe I didn’t. I clearly remember an episode in the orchestra where the conductor told us to play F# second finger, cause we were playing the first finger because we didn’t care about #’s right. And I clearly remember that we were looking at each other, me and the other [early instrument] guy, who cares first, second, I mean
Me: What difference does it make? Oh, man.
5: Yeah. We were not able to hear that this was wrong in the whole setting here. Looking back at that episode really taught me something about how kids can look at music these days and we take it for granted sometimes that they are driven by the wish to make good music. But even somebody like me that has made this into a profession, started off with total cluelessness to what good music is and is not.

Me: Which I think is really common.

5: Yes, I think so and we shouldn’t be so focused on, you know the God given born talent you know? You can develop almost anything if you have the interest.

Me: That’s a great story. I like that. Okay, so can you, did you have any other music training as part of your just normal elementary school sort of years other than the wind band?

5: Yeah I did. The one band was not part of the school. It was not in the school organization. It was something we did on the spare time. It was in the schools premises though it was the gymnastics hall, that’s where we practiced. But that was, it had nothing to do with the school what so ever. Now, in the school time we had some music lessons about once a week. But those were totally pointless I would say. We played the recorder. And if you can imagine 25 kids playing the same song on your own recorder, trying to sound unison, but it’s not really working. You can imagine how that can, rather than encourage your interest for music it can totally destroy it, right? So, and it was you know, they did their best with the resources they had, the teachers. They had a bunch of percussion instruments, wood blocks and some triangles, stuff like that. You know, but how cool is that really

Me: [laughing]

5: And that, so that didn’t give any of us much, I think. You can safely say.

Me: Yeah, I remember similar experiences with them and by the time we got to recorders, when I was in elementary school I had 3 older siblings who were all playing instruments and I would steal my sister’s trombone every once in a while and try to play.

5: Okay

Me: And so, at that point, I don’t want to play recorder, it sounds awful. I want to play something I can do actual music with, rather than you know a little plastic thing that is now on its fourth child. So, I can completely understand that.
5: it’s not always that the school gets it the right now.
Me: Yeah, and it’s hard now that I’m on the other side and I’ve taught elementary music every once and a while, it’s rough. Trying to find ways to build creativity and help them to find any kind of musical expression, it can get very tough.
Me: So, let’s get back to when you went back to band. And decided to start playing [primary instrument], do you remember why you decided to go back to wind band?
5: Yeah, it was sort of a, I guess a little hobby vacuum right then. So I needed something to fill my spare time with. It might have been, the real reason I can’t simply not remember, but I know my mother she’s always been into music and she was conducting the school orchestra for a while there. And I think she might have told me that they were doing some kind of a school tour and a band tour and they might have been going to London and I thought that sounded cool. So maybe I’d, maybe I should get into that and try and she said clearly that okay, if you sign up for this you can’t just quit after a year. You have to at least play it two years or something. And the [primary instrument] was at that time the only available instrument. Really it had to be the [primary instrument]. And the first [primary instrument] I got was a beaten up instrument it was like a, from Czech republic really, really beaten up instrument that was super light weight you know.
Me: Oh yeah, I’m sure.
5: Absolutely lowest quality that you can imagine. And then they, so I played on that for a while. In the beginning I had like the same teaching system that the oldest guys in the orchestra taught the youngest. And it wasn’t super cool I remember, but it was you know more fun than before. Not because it was a [primary instrument] compared to [early instrument], but I think I was older and I thought it was more of a challenge, more fun. And then all of a sudden, I got really interested in this and probably because I got a good teacher. Just out of the blue came one of the professional [primary instrument] players in XXXX where I grew up that happened to live very close to the, where we had the rehearsals for the orchestra. And the, he took on two of us, teaching us and all of a sudden it became real, real fun. So I can simply thank him for the reason that I continued playing the [primary instrument] I think. It wasn’t the school, it wasn’t orchestra tours, it
was really him that put really high demands on and showed us what could be done. Register, we could play a melody on the [primary instrument], we could play really low really loud and it was fun things that kids see as a challenge and they want to try. So that was really good, and then I think that after half a year with this instrument I got [better quality primary instrument]. And this was partly sponsored by my grandpa, because he thought this might be a good thing for me to be doing. He was a previous [primary instrument] player himself, so I think he liked the idea of me playing the [primary instrument].

Me: Great
5: Yep
Me: So I’m curious, what sorts of things do you remember doing during those lessons with your, when you finally got the new teacher?
5: Well, we worked on sound and I think that’s some of the most important thing. Because as a kid you don’t know what a good sound is.

Me: Oh, yeah
5: It’s very easy to take for granted later on in life that everyone knows what a good sound is. And then, if you have that ideal in your head, you should be able to make it happen. Just by following your own sound ideal, but the problem is we don’t have that sound ideal. And I remember clearly in the lower register there was so many ways to put your, to shape your lips and cavity in the mouth and pressure they angle towards your mouthpiece and all of this, everything changed the sounds. I asked my teacher what’s good. Is that good, is this good? To me it was totally equal, a little bit in the line of well should it be F#, should it be F.

Me: [laughing] yeah
5: What the right thing to do, obviously if it says F# it’s good to play it. When it comes to sound it becomes more fuzzy and more difficult to determine, is this good it’s not good. And he would help me on the right track. Later on XXXX would help me what a good sound when it comes to solo playing for example, especially in the lower register with my first teacher was very important. So that’s some of the things we did. We did some Rubiks cube you know totally off music.

Me: Interesting.
5: This guy was really, he was like a mathematic nerd as well. He thought that that was cool and Rubik's cube came during that part of time, in the beginning of the 80’s. When at least that’s when it came to XXX and became like a thing for a lot of people. So that’s something that we did, we played around with the, it was like a whole experience. It was not just about [primary instrument], it was about reading old Donald duck magazines, it was you know, looking at different [primary instrument] models, talking about different [primary instrument] models, talking about technical things like computers, that you know cross both of our interest path. So it was really not just to plain, you could say. Which I think was good and one thing I remember also, was that he said to me that one day you might surpass me in playing, he said one day you might be better than me playing. And at that time, it sounded pretty incredible that happened. But it was also, it sort of opened the views a little bit. You know for a guy 15 years old to think that you can be better than your teacher one day? That’s pretty, pretty huge.

Me: Yeah

5: Not something necessarily that you’re born with that vision. That was fun, then he gave me a competition. He gave me a challenge once, he said if you can play from the pedal, the pedal tone on the instrument up to the next octave and the next one and the next one, so that means 4 different octaves. Bum, bum, bum, bum, and down again. I would earn a hundred XXXX, he would give it to me. How’s that for motivation you know. You think okay we’re musicians, we should have no blurred motivations and that we should sort of look at the emotional goals, the artistic goals, and all of that, but at that time that’s exactly what I needed. You know, some cash in my pocket. It did equal now a days to about 150, no hang on 15 bucks about 15 bucks [USD].

Me: [laughing]

5: But at that time it was worth a lot more and really, really drove me to try to get those.

Me: It was enough, you know whatever works.

5: That’s what I’m saying. Cause it’s not that I would keep on working only for money, but at that time that was a good carrot.

Me: Uuh. That’s great. So, let’s see, talk me. Did you have, you said you worked on sound a whole lot and you talked about and he included several other things with you, like the Rubik's cube and the old comics and this and that. Did you have kind of normal
assignments where you know, go work on this etude or learn this scale or those sorts of things?

5: Yeah, absolutely. We had that too. For example, we used Arban a lot, the standard books like, he introduced me to the [lyrical] book. To the [ ], and [ ], and I think we also used some of the Rubank books. Plus, we, he had these like limitless thing that you can start whatever you like and I’ll see if you can help you make it happen. So for example, I looked at the Carnival of Venice in the Arban’s book and it shouldn’t really be a smart choice for a guy that has just played [primary instrument] for a year. But, it really motivated me so that’s part of the. And he would teach me how to do the double tonging and triple tonging and all of that. So there’s no reason why we should wait with double and triple tonging until we’ve played for 4 or 5 years for example, why not dive into it because it’s no different from normal tonging really. I don’t buy this, you should learn to crawl before you can walk, and walk before you can run, why not start on running right away and then fall and get up again. Fall and get up again. I think that’s, to put it in sort of a broader pedagogic spector, I think it’s really important to realize that people are different.

Me: Uuhh

5: Some students really need to go the slow path and learn to crawl before you can walk and before you can run. But some people don’t work like that it’s getting to boring for some students. You really need that you know, in your face challenge. And you fall and you get up on the horse again, and you know we’re simply different.

Me: Yeah

5: That worked.

Me: Well, that’s wonderful.

5: It’s actually described as pedagogy of anger. [laughing] where you need that little heat to learn something.

Me: I’m going to look that up and bring that up to my other doctoral students and say hey, you need to look into this.

5: Yeah, yeah. I think so.
Me: That’s fascinating. I’m certainly, we find that often when we run into research terms for stuff that we’ve all experienced over and over again, and ohh this is real? It’s very validating.

5: Exactly. Yeah, in Sweden they’ve actually done quite a bit of research on that pedagogy of anger and they found out that a certain number of the students respond to that type of pedagogy a lot better than the regular type of pedagogy. And these people could be the normal ADHD people for example, the people that the regular gradual step by step process doesn’t work. And since the whole school system is built on this step by step learning curve thing, they don’t fit. It’s simple and there was one teacher that found out this and she found the term pedagogy of anger and said those are the kids that learn slalom skiing downhill for example, or whatever. Not by going the really slow slope first, and then gradually increase until you really master it, these kids are the ones that go straight into the black hill. You know the term black, where you start it’s almost like vertical?

Me: Yeah.

5: And they almost kill themselves falling, but they get such a kick out of this and they go up again and try again, and of course very often they learn a lot quicker. Because they’re so driven and they find it so motivating and to take this motivation from them is really killing their whole joy of what they’re doing. And I think that this teacher that was teaching me, he understood this that I need this carnivale of venice piece, like compared to the black slope in slalom. In order to keep on playing the [primary instrument]. This was motivating me and all he had to do was simply give me a little push in the right direction and then I was more or less self-going. Cause of this. If I had had one of those boring teachers that didn’t understand this? You would probably have said to me, no no, don’t even look at that piece. Go ahead and play your scales for another 5 years, right?

Me: [laughing]

5: I’m sitting here playing the [primary instrument] today.

Me: Yeah. I think I’ve seen many people, I wonder many times if the difference between the people who like the slope that, you know as your describing just gently going out. Cause most of the time I’m one of those people, I like the nice easy little steps. But I’ve worked with so many people and my, my brother is definitely one you
would, if he’d had the option he would have gone straight for the big hill and kill himself on the way down just about. But I wonder how much is because, if you’re too concerned about failing then you’re afraid to try. I think sometimes I wonder if the motivation is different because we look at failing differently. Someone like me who tends to walk the nice little easy steps, I’m by nature petrified to fail.

5: Yeah

Me: And sometimes people who are more willing to just go for it and learn as they go, they do failure totally differently.

5: Yep

Me: And I think it’s actually a lot healthier to view failure that way. The way I want to do it, naturally.

5: Maybe the school in general should look at the way they view failure too. Because, very often the school punish failure rather than encouraging people to learn from failure.

Me: Uuhh. Yeah, no I completely agree. So, we’ll get back to your… Can you describe your, what you did when you were, you called it I thought of it as playing but really I was practicing. Can you describe kind of what you were doing?

5: Yeah, I was for example, having a little paper clip on different pages of Arban. And I really enjoyed at that time exploring the technical aspects of playing. So playing really fast, was fun, playing high, playing low, you know. You could call it the athletic part of playing if you like, mechanical. So I would simply use the metronome and I would try to beat my own records in how to play double tongue faster for example. So I wrote with a pencil above the exercised, the existing record. So say I could do double tonguing in 140 beats per minute, 60 notes. I would simply write 140 and the date and then the next day I’d try to beat that record. If I didn’t, I didn’t write anything. Next day again, try to beat my own record, ohh yes, today I did 142. Yay. I write that with today’s date. So that was kind of a motivation to drive myself through those. And again, I didn’t look at that so much as practicing either. And one thing I, that was hugely important for my development. I didn’t understand then, but I understand later, was that I got myself one of those recording devices where you can make quartets with yourself. So you could

Me: Oh
5: You record, I had a few quartets. I arranged quartets just for this. And I would play the four parts on top of each other. And then listening to this, not only did I learn that if you do play F instead of F# it doesn’t sound good, cause listening and playing at the same time is not easy when you’re a kid. But taking a step back and listening to yourself, you can easily determine a lot of the things that you are not doing right. And those would be the basic, play the right notes. Secondly I would really hear if I was playing out of tune. Not easy to hear when you’re playing, much easier when you’re taking a step back. Secondly I’d also hear when I wasn’t accurate. When the first part would be a little slower than the second part. For example, I would listen to the dynamics. Was I doing the crescendo at the same time in all the parts? Would I have the same articulation in all the parts? Very easy to determine, it always turns out the third part was a lot less articulated than the fourth for example. And so on, and so on. It could be the vibrato that could be different, it could be the expression in general. It could be more energy in the first part, not so much energy in the second, third and fourth part. And all of this could be redone so I could always play the second part again and improve it. The precision for example. And if you look at all of this, I mean what more could you wish for when it comes to becoming aware of different musical aspects. What goes into good performance. Intonation, precision, articulation, expression, character, dynamics. I mean it’s literally the whole freakin’ list.

Me: [laughing]

5: Over what we listen for in the competition for example.

Me: Oh, yeah

5: And this is stuff that I did just because it was fun. Because I wish to make those quartet recordings and then just for my own amusement. For nothing else than my own amusement. And it turned out to be super, super valuable.

Me: Oh, yeah.

5: Yeah.

Me: No, that’s fantastic. So you said, you were, were you arranging these as well?

5: Yeah, I would for example, I would listen to recordings of XXXX, he did a recording of XXXX for [primary instrument] quartet. And I thought that was very cool, I want to do that too. So rather than looking for an arrangement which I couldn’t find. I don’t
think it was even published back then. I took the recording and I simply listened to what he was doing and I wrote it down. Again, another helpful thing to learn, you know? And I maybe didn’t get all the things right, but it was no, no people were correcting me. No, it was no teacher hanging over my shoulder saying, oh that’s pretty good but that’s not good, so on. I had to use my own, cause this was a project that I did parallel to the lessons with my teacher. Totally on my own behalf.

Me: Wow. A gold mine for me, this is excellent. Okay, look here for just a second and see if there’s anything else. Oh yeah, so can you describe to me what you remember from your early time playing in the brass quintet and the big bands? What were rehearsals like?

5: in the brass quintet we would have 4 professional musicians and then me. And this was at the same time I was starting subbing in the orchestra, so I guess I was more or less considered a professional musician too. And this was after having played for I think I was 18 years old when I started doing that. I would have three years of experience in total playing [primary instrument]. And then it was the trumpet player from the wind orchestra, it was another from the philharmonic in town, pretty good musicians. So rehearsal would be, you know they handed out the music and the, since they were the oldest, they were probably lead the rehearsal. And tell me more or less what to do and sometimes I got to say a little comments of my ideas, you know. It was real fun. And we played the core repertoire, you know, Ewald and all of this. Plus, you know, some more jazzy things and I guess very average quintet repertoire.

Me: Okay

5: then in the big band, this was a big band that was obviously not standard settings, since they had a [primary instrument]. It was more or less they had an arranger, XXXX who is now pretty well known jazz music, he plays in a brass quintet actually who has made a living playing only jazz called the Brass Brothers. And they have also a drummer with them, but at that time he was a leader of this band. And he would arrange everything for the setting that he had. Maybe they had just three saxophones, maybe 5 trumpets and then maybe 2 trombones and he would really fit it to the setting. And the rehearsals would be in a tiny room with a lot of sound. For me it was a revelation just to be part of that the vocabulary that these jazz people used. Talking about choruses and
talking about, you know all of the different gestures that they used to show how you’re supposed to play. And also get a feel for how to play swing for example. Which is something that takes a while to learn.

Me: It does. Yeah.

5: So, yeah I think it was really a good experience to be introduced to that at that time.

Me: Great. Let’s see, so what about listening to music other than when you described kind of listening to music and basically dictating that quartet to be able to play it with tracks. What other listening to music did you do. Either just music on in the background, or listening to really trying to pay attention to it?

5: I was at that time, listening to pay attention to music. It was absolutely no music in the background at all. And the music I was listening to was I think the first ever record that I bought was like a best of Vangelis. I’m not if you’ve heard of him, but he composed I think he won an Oscar for the music to chariots of fire.

Me: Oh, okay I know who that is now.

5: [singing] and so on. That was actually the theme he came up with earlier before he wrote that music. But anyway that was one of the first records I had. And when I listened to this I would sit really, really and pay attention to the music. And at that time, maybe I was about 16 years old, music meant started to mean a lot. Music became sort of a part, partly the answer to the meaning of life if you know what I mean. A lot of kids have this, that the music means a lot all though it might be in the background. But for me it was never in the background, it was always in focus when I listened. My mother she played in the same brass band as me, so when we took the car to the brass band rehearsal she would always play jazz for me. In the beginning I would be very skeptical and question what makes a good jazz performance. Oh well, it’s the feel it’s the phrasing, but what is feel what is phrasing? You know, stuff like. Would talk a lot about this and she would play music with Dizzy Gillespie, Lester Young, Herbie Hancock, Miles Davis, all of the jazz classics. So and I gradually started liking this and that became also very important in my life later. Listening to Miles Davis for example, his one record that not many people know about, but I listened to that over and over and over again. It’s one of the weirdest records that he made, it’s called get out with it, from 1974. That particular record meant a lot. Then later on I’d listen to Electric Light Orchestra, which was
popular at that time or yellow, short for ELO. And then maybe not the typical music that the 15 year old or 16 year old would listen to at that time, but well, I guess yellow was fairly popular back then. It was instrumental, no singing. Actually music with song never really caught my attention. I was listening mostly to music that was instrumental. And I started listening more to classical music. But not as much as you would think. I got a couple of [primary instrument] cd’s I really liked them. One with XXX after I visited him as a 17 year old. And one would [primary instrument], I had one with [primary instrument], actually two with [primary instrument], a coupe of cd’s with [primary instrument], and at that time that was pretty much all there was. You know, of [primary instrument] cd’s.

Me: Yeah

5: I guess you could count them on two hands, more or less, the available [primary instrument] cd’s. So, and I had, I listening a lot to them as well for inspiration and for to see what was possible to do. And also I have to admit, can I do it better? Is it possible that I can, that I at some time could surpass these guys.

Me: So, I’m just curious cause you’ve always had such a competitive nature of, or is it just about certain things?

5: No.

Me: Just yourself, can I do this better?

5: Yeah. Always, always competitive. And I remember, in 19XX I was 19 years old. And I went to this summer camp in XXX. The first time I ever met some of my heros like [name] and [name] was there, and [name] was there and a lot of those guys that you really looked up to for years. And they had phenomenal recordings and I listened to the performances and I actually heard stuff on the performance that I knew at that time I could do better, you know. With this French guy, I can’t remember his name, but he’s out he’s playing out of tune, you know. Why, why can’t somebody come pull his trigger? And it wasn’t a bad performance, but it was like it showed that they are only human. And that they might have a bad day too, I mean don’t get me wrong it was some fantastic playing, but it was elements in every single concert that told me that they’re humans. And that was a big revelation too. It means that we’re made of the same type of flesh and blood. And that I have equal chances of making this happen as they have, you know? So,
Me: Yes.

5: It’s not magic it’s not a god playing it’s a human being that occasionally, you know, play the wrong notes although it has magic to it though. But, yeah. It sounds maybe like a bad experience, but it was really a great experience.

Me: Well, to me it sounds like it would have been a great experience just to know that it’s attainable, it’s out there.

5: Right, and now we have, I mean I have the elite of [primary instrument] playing right there. And to feel that it’s within grasp, maybe not the first year, but I can get there in over seeable future.

Me: Let’s see, so how old were you, or do you remember a specific time when you decided that music is what you wanted to do with your life?

5: That must have been when I was about 18 years old. After having played just for about 3 years.

Me: Okay

5: And that it was a big change when I bought my first professional instrument. It was such a big investment at that time and that sort of marked my determination. Like a sign of commitment I guess you could say.

Me: Uuhuh. They’re no small investment.

5: No, they’re not.

Me: [laughing] But we don’t have to make reeds.

5: That’s the thing

Me: That’s what I joke with. [laughing] Let’s see, I’m flipping through making sure. This has been very helpful and great. I wanted to go back to your mother and anybody else in your family, you said your mom, your mother directed the school orchestra.

5: Yeah

Me: Was there anyone else who was very musical or musically trained or just part of a pastime?

5: We have no professional musicians in my family, up until I started. My sister played the Cornet, if she could have become professional, she actually subbed in a professional brass quintet for half a year. But she decided to study something else instead political science. But my father was always amateur singer, sung in choirs, did a lot of guitar and
song. My brother played the drum set, now he’s not he never end up being a professional but he still enjoys playing in rock bands. And my grandfather used to play the [primary instrument], but again as an amateur. And also a band director occasionally. So there’s always been music there, so I guess it’s part of the reason I started. And a lot of important musical input from, you know, people around me all the time. For example I would practice in the living room, I didn’t have a. Well I sometimes practiced in my own, smaller room to and where we lived. But practicing in the living room was kind of fun because you got those comment every now and then, oh that was great or you should practice more on that. You know, from my mother’s in particular, she was probably the one that knew best what it was supposed to sound like.

Me: Uhuh. Okay. And let’s see, thinking back to the time that you taught either at any point in your career, so what if any of the activities that we’ve kind of talked about, so far today have you included with your students when you teach? Or have taught?

5: Yeah, I think the most important is to record yourself. To not only record yourself, to listen to the recording as well. That sounds just, but you have no idea how many people who actually record themselves and then don’t listen and analysis. I see that as really one of the foundations because I think I have a lot of teachers with me when I say that very often we feel like the world’s most expensive metronome.

Me: [laughing]

5: what is the point of a teacher telling his students that he’s rushing or dragging? And that is something the student can find, and not only can, but should find out himself. When he’s playing any kind of phrase, why go to a teacher to hear if he’s dragging or rushing? I mean, this is something you can find out by recording yourself, listen back with the recording device and the metronome, easy. Again, why do you need a teacher to tell you if you’re not playing the forte’s and piano’s? if you record yourself and you can’t hear the forte’s and piano’s, you’re not doing it. Go back and fix it. You know, again it’s nothing you need a teacher for. Are you playing the right notes, are you missing the notes? Nothing you need a teacher for. What you do need a teacher for though is fundamental technique changes. If you can’t reach that high note no matter how you try, you of course need a teacher to teach you how. Give you some exercises you can do and get there. But those, basic errors that we do when we practice, that’s
totally useless to use a teacher for. Wouldn’t you wish as a teacher that you didn’t have to tell anyone you’re rushing, you’re late, you’re after the beat, you’re before the beat, you’re, you know stuff like this.

Me: Oh, my goodness. I’ve had one student so far that had taken the record yourself thing, not as seriously as I had hoped, but a lot more seriously than I expected. It’s just not at all a culture at any of the schools where I teach.

5: I know
Me: and oh, my goodness the difference it made so quickly. And he went, why haven’t I been doing this before? I don’t know, you grew up in a small town. Nobody said to.

5: Well, I’ve been teaching guest teaching at more than 50 US universities and this is not a culture anywhere. Unfortunately the students are lazy because they’re allowed to be lazy and be coming to the teacher and a lot of the time the class is about fixing those things that the students should have fixed himself, with the metronome and the recording machine. And intonation for example, why waste your teacher’s time on that? I’m just asking. It’s something you can hear

Me: Yeah

5: With either by using a tuner or listening to a recording device. So, this is something that when I talk to teachers about this, university professors, they shake their head and say yes. I mean, that’s the way it is. I wish, but I think actually, we’re doing the students a great disservice not to expect this from them. Because when they learn how to fix these things themselves, they’re so much more empowered when it comes to the rest of their career.

Me: Oh yeah, absolutely. Absolutely.

5: That’s a the recording things is that’s the biggest deal.

Me: so, you kind of lead into my next question. I have a feeling I know the answer, but what do you think contributed the most to your musical development?

5: Well, that’s part of it, but I want to add another thing. Are we talking about musical or technical development right now?

Me: Hmmm, I guess both.

5: Ok, so if you talk about the technical development, one of the most important thing was the year, actually after I finished school in XXXX, it was in XXX. When I was
practicing, no hang on; XX. I was practicing about 6, 7 hours a day. And I wasn’t doing anything else, I wasn’t taking on any subs, subbing gigs and I wasn’t doing any quintet or ensemble playing, just solo practicing for 1 year. I would start in the morning about 8 o’clock and I would go on until about 4 o’clock in the afternoon. Like a regular day job. And this extremely scheduled and planned playing was the single most important thing in my technical development as a musician. Have you heard about the Pomodoro technique for managing time?

Me: Uhuh a little bit.

5: I heard about it later actually, much later just last year. Where you are doing tasks and you split them up in chunks of 25 minutes. And then you take 5 minutes off and then do another 25 minutes, you use a timer to manage those 25 minutes. When the timer beeps, you are allowed to go and have a 5 minute break. What I did was very similar. I had those 20 minutes of practicing total face time all the time, not a single second of rest during those 20 minutes. Then I would, everything would be laid out. So I knew exactly what, in a booklet I would go from one exercise to another and just do that for 20 minutes. Then I would take 10 minutes off and I would start after that doing another 20 minutes. I start every full hour, so do 20 past and so on.

Me: Uhuh

5: So it meant 20 minutes of rest during one hour, 40 minutes of playing during one hour. And this I would continue doing the whole day and it really, really worked beautifully. Because 20 minutes is about the most you can keep focused, and without sort of dropping in concentration. Which you can’t really afford when you try to improve all the time.

Me: Yeah

5: Yeah, so that year of, that really target practicing was, with recording of course and everything was the single most important thing. Now musically, if you want to talk about the musical development. Probably simply go out there and play a lot of concerts.

Me: [laughing]

5: there’s nothing that can hone your musical skills as first of all playing with good musicians. With good accompaniment and good pianists and good you know musicians, but secondly also, just get practice in how to play this. Nothing that has changed my way
of phrasing, I’d say the whole operation with the audience, when you’re on the stage and when you have the feeling of atmosphere and the hall and you taste the timing for example. Some halls have more acoustics than others, which means you should hold the fermata’s maybe a little longer or take the breaks in the cadenzas a little bit longer. Sort of to get friendly, be friended with the atmosphere of the hall really changes the way you play.

Me: Oh great

5: So playing a lot of concerts, it, the single most important thing for musical development.

Me: Okay. Great. And is there anything else that you can think of right now to kind of add to our conversation about development and various different activities that you did to develop as a musician?

5: Probably it had to be something that was like crucial and I think, yeah so one very important thing for musicality is also imitating. This is something that I have a feeling a lot of institutions want to keep that element down and almost are a little afraid to what they call copying. But there is a difference between imitation and copying. And I think like kids one day learn how to speak language, learn how to write language, they always imitate in the beginning. They imitate their parents when it comes to dialect for example or how to phrase a sentence, later they start reading books perhaps and they start imitating the way the authors phrase their story telling. And you would never expect a kid 5 years old 7 years old to write their own novels. Cause they are too young, they have no, they haven’t been imitating enough yet to get there. But we have a tendency to expect from a musical student at the age of 18, 19 that they should start creating their own interpretations, very often without being prepared for it. Very often before they have any knowledge of how to approach this phenomenon. They hear their teacher talk about story telling about beautiful phrasing and all of this. But in reality they have no clue what to do. So in those cases it’s really, really helpful to imitate good performances. To the smallest atom, really. Go ahead and find out where are the crescendos, where are the decrescendos, where are the rubato changes in tempo. I know one institution, jazz institution here in XXXX that has had tremendous success with the first year they have all the students take their favorite recording of a jazz musician and their job is to imitate
this recording. Again to the smallest detail so that all the accents all the small color changes in the tone are so equal that to the original, that if you record both and put them on top of each other it would be like a blueprint you wouldn’t be able to hear the difference. And first when you come to that level of imitation, that’s when you start learning that the building blocks of how to tell a story. And then you can go ahead, and they had a 4 year education and the first year was all about imitation and the second and third and fourth year was really about developing your own style. And this makes sense to me. And this school has had so much success, I mean, I think 2 of the students has been voted the young jazz musician of the year by the American jazz educators society, that come from this school. I think this is done too little in classical music, maybe unconsciously sometimes, but we should encourage it.

Me: Great. Well that is the last of my questions for right now.
VITA

Originally from Columbia, MO, Jackie Lordo earned a Bachelor of Music in Music Education from Tennessee Technological University and a Master of Music in Tuba Performance from The University of Texas at Austin. Ms. Lordo is an educator and clinician, having worked with students of all ages throughout the Midwest and South. Ms. Lordo has performed throughout the United States as a soloist and chamber musician, including performances at state and regional music conferences. Her work has been accepted for publication in the *Missouri School Music Magazine* and the *Journal of Research in Music Education*. Currently, Ms. Lordo teaches applied low brass lessons and online music appreciation courses at Central Methodist University, and music appreciation courses at Columbia College.