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Making Music, Making Selves A Call for Reframing Music Teacher Education

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Rhoda Bernard: The Boston Conservatory



Introductions¹

The Conference Chair steps up to the podium. He welcomes those assembled at the round tables in the main hall to the opening dinner of the education research conference. The graduate students and college faculty who sit behind plastic plates filled with their selections from the buffet laugh politely as the Chair opens his remarks with a joke about how difficult it is to find parking in San Francisco.

“Before I proceed with my prepared remarks,” he continues, “we should take a few minutes and introduce ourselves. Let’s start with the table to my left.” A feeling of dread comes over me. Here we go again. What am I going to say?

“My name is... I am a doctoral student.... and my research interest is....”

“My name is.... I am a faculty member at... and I study...”

Theme and variations, I suppose. But not much variation, really. Essentially, it’s the name, rank, and serial number of the academy. But as I hear the others in the room introduce themselves, I feel my stomach tighten. Is it warm in here? Is my face turning red?

Introductions are a ritual of academic life. It seems that whenever people gather, the first thing that happens is that people take turns introducing themselves. There is no escape from it.

The impulse behind the introductions is a positive one: people want to know something about each other. They want to know a little bit about every person in the room. It is certainly better to introduce yourself than to be invisible. There is also

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something validating about the interest that people take in hearing each others' introductions. It is as though they are saying, "We want to know about you. You matter to us."

Yet at the same time, these introductions are the object of much worry, anxiety, and confusion on the part of graduate students and faculty. The reasons for these concerns vary. Some graduate students feel anxious because they have not yet figured out how to state their research interests in a concise way, or they fear that they have been doctoral students longer than the others in the room, and they don't want to sound unproductive or unfocused. Some faculty members worry about the political implications of their introductions. How will their colleagues perceive them? Other faculty members, like me, have trouble with the limitations of the form that these introductions take.

As I listen to the other people in the room introduce themselves, the buzz-phrases of education resonate. "High-stakes testing," "teacher content knowledge," "inclusion," "experiential education." My breathing becomes shallow as I realize that I won't have a buzz-phrase to offer when I introduce myself. What am I doing here? Who are these people? Who am I?

Wait a minute. I know who I am. I am a musician – I sing jazz music and Jewish music in concerts and at private parties. I am a music educator – I founded and worked at a charter school where academics and music are intertwined. I am a music teacher educator – I am the Chair of Music Education at The Boston Conservatory, where I teach in and lead a Master's degree program that also leads to licensure to teach music in grades K-12². I am a researcher – I study the professional identities of music educators. But I don't get to mention all of these aspects of who I am when I introduce myself. *That's* what's making me anxious.

When I introduce myself at events like this, I can present only one part of my identity. Only who I am as a researcher matters. But who I am as a researcher is deeply and profoundly connected to the other aspects of who I am. And I don't want to forget

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that there are still other aspects of who I am that may not appear immediately relevant to who I am as a researcher, but are still important parts of my identity. I am a wife, a sister, a friend, a kickboxer, a golfer, a Red Sox fan, a homeowner, and so much more. I resist introducing myself in these settings because I resist placing values on the parts of my identity. I am uncomfortable with putting limitations on who I am, how I am known, or how I present myself.

In my research, I study the professional identities of music educators. The people who teach classroom music in our elementary schools are required to meet high standards in musical performance as part of their training. When they secure teaching positions, most of these individuals continue making music on their own, outside of school. Yet these musical lives are not acknowledged by the field of elementary general music education; nor are they recognized by the music teachers' school communities. Through my ethnographic studies of elementary school general music teachers, I have come to better understand the ways that elementary general music teachers express and enact their identities. It is often said that academics study themselves when they conduct their research. By studying the complex and multilayered identities of other people who are musicians and teachers, I am coming to better understand my own complex and multilayered identity, which includes being a musician and being an educator.

Suddenly, it is my turn to speak. I stand up and take a deep breath: "My name is Rhoda Bernard. I am the Chair of the Music Education Department at The Boston Conservatory. I am a musician, a music educator, a music teacher educator, and a researcher. In my research, I study the professional identities of school music teachers."

So there it is. I introduced myself. And unlike the others in the room, I didn't use the standard script. I added a few more dimensions. Taking the time to say a little bit more has made me feel a little bit better about how I introduced myself. Better – yes, but satisfied? No. This is not at all how I wanted to introduce myself. I was constrained by the demands of the context, by the ritual practices of the academy. I had no other choice. All I could do was offer my slight elaboration on the standard academic introduction.

After I sit down, I start to fantasize about what I would have said to this group, if only I could have: “My name is Rhoda Bernard. I am the Chair of the Music Education Department at The Boston Conservatory. As a researcher, I study the professional identities of school music teachers. But in order for you to really understand who I am, you ought to hear me sing in Yiddish with my klezmer band. You ought to observe a graduate seminar I teach on the history and philosophy of music education. You ought to visit the charter school I founded, the Conservatory Lab Charter School, where classroom teachers and music teachers develop interdisciplinary curriculum that links music with the other subjects. And those are just ways to get to know me professionally. To really understand who I am, you ought to hear about how I met my husband, about the time I screamed “Whooh!” at the top of my lungs on the golf course – which I later learned was a huge faux pas – or about my passion for the Boston Red Sox....”

Identity as Shifting Positions

In order to really understand how I think about who I am, you ought to understand how I think about identity. I conceive of identity as processual, as positions and contexts that constantly shift, and as constructed on multiple levels. The positions and contexts I refer to include gender, age, class, race, ethnicity, and status, as well as (in the case of the current discussion) musician, teacher, researcher, and many others. At any point in time, we might catch a glimpse of one position, only for a moment, before it shifts and we glimpse another position. Over the course of our lives, our repertoire of positions and contexts undergoes revisions, as new positions and contexts are added, existing positions and contexts are reshaped, and obsolete positions and contexts are released. By conceiving of identity as something that is constructed on multiple levels, I argue that our identities are always evolving in response to our experiences and to the social context. As we negotiate the meaning of our identities from moment to moment, we construct who we are.

We negotiate the meaning of our identities from moment to moment on individual, social, and cultural levels. When I step back and wonder who I am in my professional life, I wonder who I am on all of these levels. On an individual level, I think about myself: how I know myself, how I have thought about myself over the years of my life, and how I would like to think about myself. On a social level, I wonder who I am in relation to the other people around me: other music educators, other musicians, other researchers, and so on. I also wonder about the ways that others regard and respond to me, as well as the ways that I regard and respond to other people. On a cultural level, I wonder who I am in relation to the context: in what ways I feel I do and do not fit in, do and do not understand what is going on around me, and do and do not feel comfortable and connected to activities and events. This way of thinking about identity is similar to the notion of identity articulated by scholars known as social constructionists (Burr, 1995; Danielewicz, 2001; Gergen & Davis, 1985; Harre, 1983; Jenkins, 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 2000), who, in turn, were influenced by postmodernists (Burr, 1995, p. 12). Put briefly, the social constructionist position on identity is that individuals have multiple identities that may run counter to one another, that identities constantly shift, and that the shifting of identities takes place through and as a result of social interactions (Hargreaves, Miell & Macdonald, 2002).

I agree with much – but not all – of the social constructionist notion of identity. Like the social constructionists, I subscribe to the notion that individuals possess multiple identities – which I refer to as layers of identity – that relate to one another in various ways, including resonance and harmony as well as tension and conflict. Also like the social constructionists, I argue that identity is continuously shifting and changing, ever under construction. I part ways with the social constructionists when it comes to how identity is constructed. For me, the construction of identity takes place simultaneously on three levels: individual, social, and cultural. By contrast, for the social constructionists, identity is constructed primarily (if not exclusively) on the social level – through social interactions, and, more specifically, through discourse, broadly defined as what people

say and do (O'Neill, 2002). While, for the social constructionists, discourse is the clay with which identity is molded and constructed, I consider discourse to be one of many means by which identity is constructed. I conceive of identity as also being constructed through personal associations, meaning, and experience.

My thinking about who I am and what I do is grounded in this perspective on identity. Knowing this about my thinking, it is no surprise that I silently rail against introducing myself at events like the conference dinner. The way that I think about my professional identity doesn't fit the formula of the academic introduction, which privileges only one layer of a person's professional identity: researcher. My conception of identity as multi-layered, ever shifting, and continually under construction is not acknowledged by the way that academics are expected to introduce themselves.

When I began reading the literature in the area of the professional identities of music teachers, I was surprised to find that my conception of identity is absent from the academic conversation about this topic. Specifically, I noticed that writings have traditionally pitted against one another music making and music teaching in the professional lives of music educators. This opposition has often been portrayed as disabling, as in need of some sort of resolution. I also noticed that most of the individuals who write about music educators and identity ground their articles and studies in a conception of identity as roles, and in a notion of music teacher education as the socialization of individuals from the "musician" role to the "teacher" role. This paper is an effort to broaden the academic conversation about music educators and identity, to make room for a wider range of perspectives on identity, and to help us in the field to think deeply about what it means to be a music educator and what it means to become a music educator.

Traditionally, scholars in the field of music education have placed music making and music teaching in the lives of music educators in opposition to one another. Some, like Charles Hoffer (1993) and Robert Klotman (1972), argue that successful music educators must choose teaching music over making music. Others present music making

and music teaching as opposing forces that need to be balanced in a healthy professional life. Consider the words of Jonathan Stephens, from his article, “Artist or Teacher?”: “In teacher education there is a need to balance personal, musical or subject-based development (the skills of the Artist) with professional orientation, which is concerned with the development of others (the tools of the Teacher)” (1995, p. 10). Still others seek to resolve the opposition between the performer and the teacher by conflating them into one – performer – as in the following passage, which begins one of the most recently published education textbooks:

Perhaps you are sitting in this class trying to decide whether you should be a music teacher or a performer. This question need not worry you at this time, because it is possible to be both a teacher and a performer. In fact, the authors of this text are good examples of balancing teaching careers with that of being successful performers. The authors firmly believe that you cannot be a good music teacher unless you are a good performer. You see, it is not a question of being a teacher or a performer, because great teaching is a performing art and a great performer is always teaching. (Erwin, Edwards, Kerchner, & Knight, 2003, p. 1)

With these three approaches – arguing that successful music teachers must choose teaching music over making music, presenting music making and music teaching as opposing forces to be balanced, and seeking to resolve the opposition between performer and teacher by conflating the two into performer – the literature in the field of music education pits music making and music teaching against one another in its discussion of the professional lives of music educators.

Numerous investigations of the professional identities of pre-service and/or in-service music teachers reflect the notion of identity as roles into which one is socialized (Barnes, 1972; Bladh, 2002; Bouij, 1998a; 1998b; 2000; 2002; Bladh & Bouij, 1996; Clinton, 1997; Doloff, 1999; Harris, 1991; L’Roy, 1983; Roberts, 1993; 2004; White, 1996; Wolfgang, 1990). These researchers present music teacher education as a socialization process from the role identity of musician to the role identity of teacher.

Several of these authors lament that music teacher preparation programs are failing their students because “music education majors appear to be socialized in school as performers or general musicians and not as future music teachers” (Woodford, 2002, p. 678; see similar assertions in Cox, 1994; 1997; L’Roy, 1983; Roberts, 1991a; 1991b; 1991c).

Some researchers present the professional lives of music teachers as a conflict between identities (Precesky, 1997; Purves, 2002; Roberts, 1991a; 1991b; 1991c; 2000) or roles (Harris, 1991; L’Roy, 1983; Scheib, 2003; Wolfgang, 1990). For example, sociologist Brian Roberts (2000) writes about a war between the identities of musician and teacher, and he invokes the notion of balance between the opposing sides of the war: “We acknowledge that to be a fine music teacher there will always be a personal war between oneself as a musician and as a teacher and that each individual must seek a balance which best suits both oneself and the teaching position that he holds” (p. 73). Similarly, Scheib focuses on role conflict in his recent study of four music teachers, as he notes, “all four teachers exhibited varying (and significant) levels of stress from inter-role conflicts (two or more incompatible roles) between personal and professional roles” (2003, p. 130). While most of these authors describe the conflict between identities or roles as in need of resolution for a successful, effective professional life, Roberts (2004) states in a recent article that, in the war that he describes between the musician self and the teacher self, “we don’t really want a winner. It is in the struggle that we can keep both our musical self and our teacher self alive and both must be strong to produce the kind of great music teacher we want in front of our students” (p. 43). While Roberts appears to argue against resolving what he describes as the war between the teacher self and the musician self, he suggests privileging the teacher self as a way to resolve this war when he writes here about producing a great music teacher, as well as earlier on the same page, when he characterizes his work as a music teacher educator as: “I teach musicians to be teachers” (p. 43).


The presentation of teacher education in terms of the socialization of musicians into teachers (Cox, 1994; 1997; L’Roy, 1983; Roberts, 1991a; 1991b; 1991c; 2004; White,

1996; Woodford, 2002) and the characterization of music teacher education as “teach[ing] musicians to be teachers” (Roberts, 2004, p. 43) underscore the underlying values of the field of music teacher education when it comes to the teaching and performing of music education students. Simply put, those working and writing in the field of music teacher education place a higher value on the teaching of pre-service music educators than on their music making. They aim for their programs to take individuals who come to them as musicians, and to transform them into teachers. Behind this point of view lies the implication that, somewhere along the way (and certainly by the time the students in these programs complete their studies), pre-service music educators’ music making ceases altogether – or certainly that it ceases to matter in terms of who they are as professionals. Who these individuals are as teachers becomes primary.

In my research, I set out to investigate the professional identities of music educators, but I began from different ideas about who music teachers are, what music teachers do, what identity is, and how identity is constructed. Regarding who music teachers are and what music teachers do, I developed the term “musician-teacher” to refer to school music educators, illuminating and celebrating the fact that making music is so important to music teachers that many, if not most, also make their own music and live rich musical lives outside the classroom (Scott-Kassner & Kassner, 2001; Strauss, 2001; National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Reflecting my ideas about what identity is and how identity is constructed, I created the phrase “musician-teacher identity” to describe the professional identities of school music educators as a way to highlight two of the shifting positions and contexts in music educators’ professional identities – musician and teacher – that exist in relation to one another in various ways.³

Laying the groundwork for my study with these ideas, I designed a research project to better understand the ways that six elementary general music teachers who are also active musicians⁴ express and enact their identities as musician-teachers in their talk about their work and in their classroom lessons. Through intensive narrative interviews of


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more than four hours with each respondent and systematic observations of their classroom lessons over a twelve-week period, as well as through rigorous and thorough analysis of transcripts and field notes⁵, I sought to develop a rich and nuanced understanding of how these individuals make meaning of who they are and what they do. My hope was that this close work with actual music educators would inform music teacher education. If we in the field can understand the ways that music teachers make meaning of themselves and their work, we can do a better job of educating individuals to become music educators.

Experiences of Music Making

Over the course of my research, I came to a startling realization about how the musician-teachers in my study spoke about themselves and their work. In response to my requests to tell me how they came to be musicians and how they came to be music teachers, all of the respondents provided narratives of their experiences making music. These narratives were unsolicited; never once did I ask these individuals to tell me what it is like for them to make music or to tell me stories about times when they were making music. Rather, my informants felt compelled to share stories of their experiences of making music with me in the interviews.



For example, oboist and elementary general music teacher Catherine⁶ told me two stories about times when she was playing the oboe in performances:

Um, time stops when you play. Um, I played a quintet concert in early June. It takes a lot of endurance to play a whole quintet concert. So and then ending up school and everything, that's a lot. Um, but it was a great concert. There weren't many people there, but it was a really good concert, and I felt like I was able to really blend, really be one with the group. To be one with the music. To, yeah, just that. Uh, one of my most wonderful moments was playing in the St. Matthew Passion. There's two orchestras in that, and I was playing in the first orchestra, so I was playing, you know, oboe, d'amore, and English Horn. And it was hot, you know, and we were off in a corner, and that thing is three and a half hours long if you're lucky [laughs], and towards the end, and you know I'd taught school all

day and went off to play the St. Matthew Passion, and um, you sit there for a long time and don't play, but then when you play, you don't, there's nowhere to breathe, and you play three songs in a row, just like that. So maybe I was just hallucinating, I don't know, but I was doing this English Horn piece, and all of a sudden and I think maybe Bach does this, too, to you. Suddenly the room wasn't there, and the notes on the page weren't there, and it was just me and the music. And it was like, oh, you know, I live for this. You know, I live for this. So that's the best. Of course, then there's the other times when you're just working. I don't know, but life is meaningful for me when I play. It's meaningful when I teach, too, in a different way, because that lives beyond me. But the here and the now is just so, that's all there is when you play music. So it's a real quality of life thing.

By telling these unsolicited stories in response to my request that she tell me how she came to be a musician and a music teacher, it is as if Catherine is saying that the best way that I can understand who she is as a musician-teacher is by learning about her experiences playing the oboe. At the same time, she is making it clear to me that her understanding of herself and her work is bound up in her music making experiences. Witnessing the same narrative urgency on the part of all six participants in this study, I learned that all of their understandings of who they are and what they do are bound up in their experiences making music.

Coming to appreciate that experiences of music making are central to the way that the six musician-teachers in my study make meaning of themselves and their work pointed the way to literature in phenomenology and musical phenomenology. Bringing this literature to bear on what I have learned from the field (Bernard, 2002; 2004), I have developed a new framework for examining and understanding musician-teacher identity. In the sections that follow, I will present this framework and will demonstrate some of the ways that the framework can contribute to our thinking about the professional identities of music educators, as well as to the field of music teacher education.

A Dynamic Framework for Understanding Musician-Teacher Identity

We can gain valuable insights into a person's musician-teacher identity by examining and understanding the dynamic among three elements: (a) professional discourses about

music teachers and identity; (b) characterizations of music making experiences; and (c) personal relevance of music making experiences. These three elements are not fixed; rather, they interact with one another in a dynamic that unfolds in its own way for each individual musician-teacher. Together, the elements create a dynamic framework for understanding and investigating musician-teacher identity.

Through putting forth this framework for understanding musician-teacher identity, I am offering a new way of thinking about music educators and identity to the larger conversation in the field of music education about the problem of the opposition of the identities of musician and teacher. Based on my experience interviewing musician-teachers and observing their classroom lessons, I argue that in order to understand how music educators understand who they are and what they do we must think deeply about experiences of making music. Contrary to the discourse in the field, experiences of making music are not in conflict with effective music teaching. They are not something that should be abandoned by pre-service music teachers so that they can become socialized as effective teachers. Rather, experiences of making music are absolutely central in the way that musician-teachers make meaning of who they are and what they do.

Let us examine each of the elements of the framework in turn.

Professional Discourses about Music Teachers and Identity

As we have seen, writings in the field of music education regarding music teachers and identity set their music making and music teaching in opposition to one another through three arguments: that effective and successful music educators must: (a) necessarily choose teaching music over making music; (b) strike a balance of some kind between music making and music teaching; or (c) seek to integrate music making and music teaching by conceiving of them as activities that require performance.

This discourse about music teachers and identity saturates the various contexts within which the musician-teachers work: from the music education programs where the musician-teachers received their training, to the district-wide music departments where

the musician-teachers relate to their local colleagues, to the music supervisors to whom the musician-teachers report, to the local and national associations of music educators where the musician-teachers find resources, meet colleagues, and gain opportunities for various forms of professional development. Working in the context of this discourse, musician-teachers construct their identities in reference to it in some way, using their own discursive strategies – for example, by embracing the discourse, by resisting it, or by molding it for their individual purposes.

These three discursive strategies were used by the participants in this study as they spoke about their music and teaching careers. Cellist and elementary general music teacher Brad embraces the discourse of balancing music making and music teaching in his professional life. He refers to his professional life as a “constant balancing act” to engage in enough music making and enough teaching to satisfy him. By contrast, pianist and elementary general music teacher Lorraine resists the dominant discourse when she speaks about her work. She describes herself as a music teacher who gives concerts. For Lorraine, her professional life has two kinds of activities, and it is as simple as that. Never does she speak about the ways that her music making and her music teaching are different. Furthermore, she does not contrast the two activities, nor does she refer to any conflict between them or any notion of balancing one against the other. Jazz pianist and elementary general music teacher Peter molds the discourse to suit his own purposes. He takes on aspects of the discourse by distinguishing between his music making and his music teaching as different professional activities, but he also speaks about what he sees as powerful connections between the two: improvisation. Talking about the activities as separate but related to one another, Peter speaks about the ways that his training in improvisation as a musician has influenced his elementary general music teaching.

I do not intend to suggest that the discursive strategies that I describe here are something that the musician-teachers are conscious of or something that they do in full awareness. In fact, the musician-teachers may or may not be aware of the different ways that they respond to, mold, and use the cultural resource of the professional discourse in

the field of music education. Yet, at the same time, whether or not they are aware of it, the ways that the musician-teachers speak in relation to this cultural resource provide me as a researcher with important insights into the tacit understandings that the musician-teachers hold about themselves and their work.

The second element in the framework has to do with the central role that experiences of music making have in the musician-teachers' understanding of who they are and what they do.

Characterizations of Music Making Experiences

One of the key lessons that I learned in the field is that experiences of making music are very powerful for music educators. In my dissertation study (Bernard, 2004), the unsolicited narratives of music making experiences that I discussed above demonstrate that musician-teachers' understandings of their professional identities are bound up in their experiences of making music. I first came to appreciate the critical role that experiences of making music play in the personal relevance that music holds for musician-teachers in my earlier research in this area (Bernard, 2002). When they spoke about the ways that music is personally relevant to them, all six of the participants in that study described what their experiences of making music are like for them. Clearly, experiences of making music are extremely meaningful to the music educators whom I have interviewed and observed.

Musical phenomenologists write about the meanings that can be found in music as it is experienced. They argue that, as Wayne D. Bowman summarizes: "meaningful claims about music's nature or value can follow only from close attention to the way it is actually heard, experienced, lived through" (1998, p. 255). Although different scholars in this field may bring different perspectives to their work, they are all concerned with music as it is experienced, and they all seek to understand and describe the ways that we experience music.

Each of the respondents in this study characterized his or her music making experiences in his or her own way. Systematic analysis of the ways that the musician-

teachers spoke about their music making experiences enabled me to gain important insights into their understandings of their professional identities. By way of example, let us look more closely at three participants' characterizations of their experiences making music.

When oboist and elementary general music teacher Catherine tells stories about her experiences making music, she uses the phrase “I think I am the medium for that” to describe her role in bringing the music to life. For Catherine, music making experiences are most satisfying and powerful when she feels that she is the vessel through which the music becomes realized. When Brad, a cellist and elementary general music teacher, speaks about his experiences playing the cello, he highlights particular times when he was able to make music with expression. Using the phrase, “it’s a voice,” to describe playing the cello, Brad emphasizes the fulfillment he finds when he expresses himself in his music making. The stories that Sharon shares about her experiences making music highlight the “performance front” that she takes on. For this facilitator of community singing and elementary general music teacher, experiences of making music provide her with the feeling of being “on” and the opportunity to adopt a persona.

As the musician-teachers in this study spoke about themselves and their work and told me about what their experiences of making music are like for them, their ways of telling – the discursive practices that they used – provided powerful clues into what makes musical experiences meaningful and relevant to them. The third element of the dynamic framework that I have developed for understanding musician-teacher identity is the personal relevance that musical experiences hold for musician-teachers.

Personal Relevance of Musical Experiences

In an earlier study (Bernard, 2002), I conducted and analyzed intensive career narrative interviews with six elementary general music teachers in order to better understand the ways that music is personally relevant to them. Over the course of the investigation, I learned that the six musician-teachers in that study spoke about music in intensely personal ways. They each talked about the ways that music is relevant to them

as individuals, based on their own musical backgrounds and musical experiences, and they all emphasized that what they were telling me was deeply personal and unique to them.

In her essay, “Musical Idiosyncrasy and Perspectival Listening,” musical phenomenologist Kathleen Marie Higgins (1997) claims that individuals find their own personal relevance in the music they encounter. Taking on traditional musical aesthetics, Higgins instead advocates an “experientially based approach to musical aesthetics” that highlights the ways music is personally relevant to individuals (1997, p. 98). In her words:

The unique set of an individual’s personal experiences may influence which locations, categories, associations, reflections, and evaluations that individual will draw upon in interpreting music as personally relevant.

The personal relevance of music is a facet of its value that the objective emphasis of musical aesthetics does not accommodate. Yet music is important to human beings largely because they find it personally relevant. (1997, p. 97)

All six of the musician-teachers in this study talk about ways that musical experiences are personally relevant to them. The way that collaborative pianist and elementary general music teacher Anne characterizes her experiences of making music intersects most strikingly with Higgins’s discussion of personal relevance. In her interviews, Anne speaks about “living with music” and the various meanings that this phrase holds for her. For Anne, living with music means forging relationships with a piece of music and with other people so that the music becomes personally relevant. As a pianist, living with music has played out in relationships that she has created with her grandmother and with her musical collaborators, and as a teacher, living with music takes the form of the relationships that Anne and her students build with the pieces of music they listen to and learn about every week for a month.

For each musician-teacher, musical experiences are personally relevant in his or her own way, based on his or her background and experiences. From Sharon, for whom musical experiences are relevant because they are a context where she feels vulnerable in

public, to Brad, for whom musical experiences hold the relevance of being a way that he can express his emotions, to Lorraine, for whom musical experiences are relevant because they are a context where she can construct her identity as an agentive person, to Catherine, who finds relevance in musical experiences through losing herself in the music, to Peter, for whom musical experiences are relevant in the ways that improvisation is a saving grace, this emphasis on the particular, individual, personal relevance of musical experiences shines through the ways that all of the musician-teachers in this study speak about their experiences making music.

The descriptions that I present above of the ways that music is personally relevant to the six musician-teachers in this study are my interpretations, based on my analysis of the interview transcripts and the field notes from the observations. I would be quite surprised if any of the participants is aware of, or has even thought about, the ways that music making experiences are personally relevant to her. However, even though these personal relevancies are outside of the awareness of the musician-teachers, getting at them through my analysis of the transcripts and field notes enables me to develop a more nuanced understanding of the ways that the musician-teachers make meaning of who they are and what they do.

Together, the three elements that I have discussed – professional discourses about music teachers and identity, characterizations of music making experiences, and personal relevance of musical experiences – form a dynamic framework for the understanding of musician-teacher identity. Each of these elements has a mutual influence on the other two in a non-hierarchical, non-sequenced dynamic of interactions that plays out differently for each individual musician-teacher. In the next section, we will look closely at one of the participants in this study and use the framework to examine her musician-teacher identity.



Lorraine's Musician-Teacher Identity⁷

The framework provided me with valuable insights into the musician-teacher identity of pianist and elementary general music teacher Lorraine. Looking at the data from the interviews and observations through the three elements of the framework helped me to uncover Lorraine's thinking and understanding about herself and her work. Specifically, I learned that Lorraine resists the dominant discourse about music teachers and identity through her understanding of her music making and her music teaching as two professional activities in which she engages. I also came to understand that making music and teaching music are meaningful to Lorraine because they are contexts where she overcomes obstacles and achieves success through her own agency.

Professional Discourses about Music Teachers and Identity

At the beginning of her first interview session, Lorraine volunteered a story about a critical moment in her professional life. Ever since she was a small child, Lorraine had aspired to become a concert pianist. She began studying the piano at the age of five, and she entered her first competition at the age of six. For more than ten years, Lorraine had won first place in every competition in which she participated. At the age of seventeen, she entered the Young Artists Competition, and she finished in second place. Having failed to win this competition, Lorraine reconsidered her professional aspirations and decided to devote herself to teaching music, while continuing to perform as a pianist in concert settings. Lorraine's story about the Young Artists Competition and its aftermath is a narrative about overcoming disappointment and loss:

The competition was open to people age 17 to 25. And Virginia Verdi had won it a couple of years before. And Stasia [my piano teacher] thought that I would be ready for it. What we didn't take into consideration was the fact that my father became very ill and I was home taking care of him, practicing, running up to the studio, and trying to get – this is not an excuse, but it is a reason why I didn't do as well as I might have. Um, we had to play a Bach prelude and fugue. We had to play a complete Beethoven sonata, and we had to play something from Debussy on, contemporary literature. What they considered at that time contemporary literature. And I played the D major Prelude and Fugue from the

Bernard, R. (2005). Making music, making selves. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.4, #2 (September 2005). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Bernard4_2.pdf.

second book. I played the Beethoven Sonata, it's called the Tempest, Opus 31. And I played Debussy's Poissons d'or. And I had it won with the Bach. And I had it won with the Beethoven. And I didn't, I lost it with the Debussy. Um, they showed me sheets, and the judge had marked, there were three judges, and I went in fairly confident, but not as confident as I had entered other competitions and I had always come out on top. Um, the National Federation of Piano Teachers runs a competition, and I think I was one of the first if not the first student to receive 5 superior ratings in a row, year after year. Um, I could be wrong about that. Entered the Tournament, you know, Piano Playing Tournament thing. The highest number of points you could get was 111 and a half. And when I was 11 I got 111 and a half. So I was headed in that direction. And when I lost this competition, at first I was crushed. I couldn't believe it. Um, you know, when you're 17 and you've always been on the top of the heap, and you have a pretty high opinion of yourself as a performer, even as young as you are, um, when you lose to a 25 year old young man, it takes a while to realize that he had eight years of experience, strength, everything, on me. And that's OK. Um, I got home and my dad said, "How did you do?" And I said, "I lost," and he said, "What do you mean you lost?" And I said, "I came in second." And he said, "Did you do the best you could?" and I said, "Yeah, I think so," and he said, "That's all anybody asks of you," he said, "Now you have to stop and think," he said, "Do you want to try something like this again, do you want to put yourself through something like this again, or do you want to do something else?" And I said, "Well, I want to think about it." And I thought about it and I talked it over with him. And he said, "You know, everybody around you says you have a natural gift for teaching," and he said, "Why don't you think about becoming a teacher?" he said, "You can always give concerts, you don't have to have a big winner's medal to give concerts," he said, "You can play for people." And that's what I did. I went to, I applied to Lowell. I took a year off, because I was 16 when I graduated from high school, so I had taken a year off between high school and college, and applied to Lowell and was accepted there. And represented the university every time there was a, a thing. Um, the state of Massachusetts used to have, um, student night, student performance night, student musicians' night, or something like that. And representatives from the various schools would go, and we'd perform in Jordan Hall, or wherever, I can't even remember, I think it was Jordan Hall. Um, Kens Manzur who was a fantastic pianist, he and I were on the same program once, and we got to be good friends. He passed away a little while ago. We got to be good friends through that. And I would always represent the University of Lowell, State Teachers College. And, um, gave concerts there and gave concerts in Rhode Island, and you know, um, Bnai Brith would say that they wanted a, an entertainer, and one of my former students' mothers would bring me in, or I'd play for the Haddassah or, um, I'd play for the Guild of Catholic Women, or, you

know, anybody that wanted me to, I would play. Um, and so I did, I was able to continue. And when I graduated from Lowell I got a job in Rhode Island teaching junior high school and the next year I got married, so. And I still gave concerts. Um, I gave concerts until we moved to the Cape and that was in '71, and that's when I started working in musical theater.

In this story, Lorraine describes the devastating loss she experienced when she placed second in the Young Artists Competition. It was not just the loss of first place in the competition – this experience was a loss in terms of how Lorraine understood herself and her career aspirations. Having won every previous competition that she had entered, Lorraine understood herself as the first prize winner and as a future concert pianist. She was “crushed” by this experience because losing the competition also meant losing the way that she had understood who she is and what she would be when she grew up. Speaking through her father’s voice, she describes abandoning her aspirations to be a concert pianist and choosing to go into teaching and continue to play the piano in concerts. Invoking her father’s words, she also talks about understanding her piano playing in a new way. Up to this point, Lorraine had played piano in competitions and had won them. She played the piano to “have a big winner’s medal,” in the words she attributes to her father. By deciding to forge a career comprised of teaching music and performing in concerts, Lorraine’s music making would be to “play for people,” as she indicates her father having said. In this critical moment in Lorraine’s professional life, she came to new understandings about herself as a musician and about her music making as a pianist.

After her devastating second-place finish in the Young Artists Competition when she was 17 years old, and based on advice that she received from her father, Lorraine reconsidered her professional aspirations and decided to forge a career as a music teacher and to give concerts in her spare time. Her professional activities since that decision have unfolded in just that way: she has worked as a music teacher and has given concerts as a

pianist. Lorraine decided to become a music teacher with an active musical life as a performer, and she did just that.

In the interviews, Lorraine never spoke about her professional activities of music teaching and music making as different from one another or separate from one another. Nor did Lorraine ever talk about any kind of balance or conflict between her music making and her music teaching. Rather, she appears to consider both of these activities to be her work, just as she decided they would be when she was 17 years old. By creating a professional life that includes both music making and music teaching and refusing to separate the two when she discusses her work, Lorraine does not embrace the discourse of the field of music education about music making and music teaching in the professional lives of music educators.

At the same time, however, Lorraine's father's advice to her about reconsidering her career aspirations echoes the widely held notions about music teachers: the idea that "those who can't do, teach." Seeing his daughter fail to win the Young Artists Competition, Lorraine's father suggested that she consider seriously a career as a music teacher and give performances in her time away from the classroom. Lorraine had an experience where she couldn't "do" well enough to win the competition, and her father suggested that she "teach," instead. In this way, as Lorraine describes her father's framing of the music world, we hear reverberations of the professional discourse that music educators are failed performers. Yet by suggesting that Lorraine teach music and continue to perform at the same time, Lorraine's father does acknowledge music teachers' musical lives outside of the classroom, something that has been ignored by much of the literature, particularly before the 1990s.

Lorraine's story about the Young Artists Competition is not the only story about overcoming a challenge that she tells during the interviews. When she tells stories of her experiences making music, she characterizes those experiences as overcoming hardships.

Lorraine's Characterization of her Music Making Experiences: Overcoming Hardships

In the stories that she tells about her music making, Lorraine overcomes difficult situations of various kinds through her own efforts, talent, and knowledge. This story about a time when Lorraine was playing the piano in her father's band is typical:

I got my start as a popular pianist, you know, and singer, with my dad's band. He (laughs), he said to [the pianist] one night, he said, "[Pianist]," he said, "sit down," he said, "Lorraine, get up here." I was probably 12, 13 years old. And I said, "What?" and he said, "We're going to play *I'm in the Mood for Love*," and I said, "Where's the music?" and he said, "use your ear." And we played *I'm in the Mood for Love*, and I was fine. I, I was able to, because of my experience with harmony, able to hear the chords ahead. And all of a sudden we finished the song and he said, "Back to the bridge and up a half," and I said, "Ah!" But I did it. And that was my introduction to, to playing by ear.

Throughout the interviews, Lorraine told numerous narratives in this genre. As she characterizes them, her experiences of making music are occasions in which she overcomes a challenge or hardship of some kind through her own efforts.

As she tells me these stories about her music making, Lorraine makes claims about her identity and provides clues into the personal relevance that she finds in her experiences making music. She presents herself as an active agent in her own life, who, when confronted with hardships, takes the steps necessary to overcome the situation.

The Personal Relevance of Lorraine's Music Making Experiences: Agency

In one of the stories that I cite above, Lorraine was faced with the challenge of playing music by ear for the very first time in front of an audience. Drawing on her experience and skill with harmony, Lorraine was able to meet this challenge and perform the piece correctly and successfully. Faced with being asked to play by ear for the first time, Lorraine succeeds through her own efforts, through her own agency. This story, then, is about Lorraine's success, and it highlights Lorraine's agency.

Narrative researchers take up the topic of agency by examining the ways that speakers position themselves in their stories (Linde, 1993; Luttrell, 1997, 2003; Riessman, 1990; Schafer, 1992; Skeggs, 2001; Van Loon, 2001). They argue that

speakers who portray themselves as “the source of motivation and initiative... a self-starter, the originator of action... the first-person, singular, indicative subject” who is “the subject of experience,” who “constructs and participates in an experiential world” are presenting themselves “as an active agency” (Schafer, 1992, pp. 21-22). Certainly Lorraine casts herself as an active agent in the story cited above.

We see a shift in the agency of the actors in the story that Lorraine tells about the Young Artists Competition. After she fails to win the competition, Lorraine’s father gives her advice, asking her to reconsider her career aspirations. At this point in the story, Lorraine’s father is the agent. He is the originator of the action. Lorraine is the object of her father’s advice. Later in the story, after Lorraine says, “And that’s what I did,” we hear about her as the agent, as she originates the remainder of the actions that take place. From that point on, Lorraine took various steps on her own to craft her career as a music teacher and concert performer.

The stories that Lorraine tells about her music making are all of the same type: stories in which she encounters difficulties or hardships and then overcomes them through her agency. They are also all stories about Lorraine achieving success. This notion that there are particular types, or genres, of narratives has been discussed by some researchers (Bruner, 1990; Linde, 1993; Mishler, 1999; Riessman, 2003), who argue that speakers sometimes draw on genres of stories that are common in their culture as they narrate their own stories. When she speaks about her music making, Lorraine draws on a story genre that is common in American culture: the story of overcoming hardships. As a group, those stories emphasize individual agency and success.

Lorraine tells the same kinds of stories when she speaks about her teaching. Here is a typical example:

Um, I have a little boy, oh, I have to backtrack here. I have a little boy in the second grade who is an elective mute, he chooses not to speak. And whenever his class comes in, whenever the second grade class comes in, I do a lot with the board so that, um, I’ll, we’ll do where’s the missing measure, and a kid comes up and puts it on the board, and another kid comes up and puts it, and this boy can

come up and put it on the board. He's a part of the class. He, um, when we're singing he will play, um, a bordoun or something on the xylophone to accompany us. He plays instruments. He has a wonderful time in the class, and I'm really excited about this – his mother asked me for my phone number, and he spoke to me on the phone. He doesn't want to speak to me in person, but he spoke to me on the phone, and she said he sings all the songs at home, he just doesn't want to sing them in school. That's his choice, and when he's ready, he'll do it. Um, and on his progress report I put it was great to talk to you on the phone, and I hope someday I'll hear you sing.

A student who chooses not to speak presents a challenge to Lorraine as a music teacher. As she describes it, the boy progressed as Lorraine incorporated him into class activities. Because Lorraine involved this child in her music class, she overcame the challenge of working with him, and he chose to speak with her on the telephone at the end of the school year. At the same time, over the course of the school year, the child overcame the obstacle of his choice not to speak by talking with Lorraine on the telephone. As Lorraine presents her story, she constructs herself as an active agent who achieves personal success, as well as helping others to succeed.

In my observations of Lorraine's teaching, I witnessed the unfolding of her stories of overcoming hardship in her classroom, and I noticed that Lorraine was the active agent in these stories, helping her students to succeed. While most elementary general music teachers begin a lesson with something that the students already know and can do and then make the activity more complex as the lesson progresses, Lorraine begins her lessons by presenting the students with a challenging activity or set of questions, and then she provides them with the help that they need over the course of the lesson so that by the time the lesson is completed, the students can perform the activity or answer the questions that began the lesson. One day, Lorraine was teaching her third graders a new song. She said to her class: "See if you can find a pattern in what I do. Don't do anything – just watch." Lorraine performed body percussion. She tapped her thighs five times. Then she clapped her hands three times. Then she tapped her thighs five times, and clapped her hands three times. Next she rolled her hands over each other forward, and

then she rolled her hands over each other backwards. Then she rolled her hands over each other forward and clapped three times. None of the students were able to respond to Lorraine's request for them to tell her about the patterns in what she did. Lorraine proceeded by breaking down the body percussion by numbering each part. She explained that number one is the five taps, that number two is the three claps, that number three is the rolling forward, that number four is the rolling backwards, and that number five is the rolling forward and the three claps. Next, she taught the movements to the children. She had them perform numbers one and two with her. Then Lorraine sang, "Sarasponda sarasponda sarasponda, ret set set." Then she continued, singing, "A doreo, a dore boom deo," and she executed the two rolling sections of the movements. Then she sang, "Adore boom de ret set set," and performed the rolling and three claps. Then she sang, "ase pase o," and put her hands on her shoulders, then her head, and then out to the sides. As Lorraine sang and executed the movements, her students did the movements along with her [but did not sing]. Next, Lorraine performed the song and movements another time through, and the students sang and moved along with her. After they finished, Lorraine asked, "What words do we clap on?" and one of the students responded, "Ret set set." Lorraine then went over to the piano and played the accompaniment for Sarasponda. She sang the song with her students, who sang and performed the movements all the way through.

The way that Lorraine presented the material and structured the activities in this lesson is her enactment of a narrative of overcoming obstacles. Lorraine began the lesson by presenting her students with challenges that were too difficult for them. As the lesson continued, she helped the students, providing them with support (deconstructing the body percussion and helping them practice the song and movements) so that they could learn how to overcome the challenges. By the time the lesson concluded, Lorraine's students had overcome the challenges, as they could perform the movements correctly, they understood the patterns within the group of movements, and they could sing the song and execute the movements successfully at the same time. The structure of Lorraine's lesson

mirrors the stories about that she tells about overcoming obstacles when she talks about her music making and music teaching.

This presentation of material is quite different from the way that most elementary general music teachers construct their lessons. A typical music lesson for young students begins with what elementary educators term as “activating prior knowledge,” or reminding students of something that they already know or that they already can do that serves as the point of departure for the lesson. Typical lessons then proceed gradually into less familiar territory, with a great deal of support offered to students along the way.

The framework I have developed for understanding musician-teacher identity has enabled me to develop a nuanced and rich understanding of Lorraine’s musician-teacher identity. As she talks about herself and her work in the interviews, Lorraine does so in relation to the discourse of the field of music education about music educators and identity. She has forged a career in which she has taught music and made music, and she does not speak about those activities separately when she discusses her work. At the same time, Lorraine’s presentation of her father’s words to her when she failed to win the Young Artists Competition demonstrate that, in the advice he offered his daughter, Lorraine’s father took on the common understanding of music educators as failed performers. When she speaks about her experiences making music, Lorraine characterizes those experiences in terms of overcoming hardships. Hearing the stories that Lorraine tells about her music making experiences, we learn about the personal relevance that these experiences hold for her. Making music is personally relevant to Lorraine because it is a context where she has the agency to overcome hardships.

Implications for Music Teacher Education

The dynamic framework that I have developed for understanding and examining the professional identities of music educators can dramatically alter the landscape of theory and practice in music teacher education. Each of the three elements of the framework

leads to a call for reframing music teacher education. First, rather than imposing a discourse about who music teachers are, what music teachers do, and what it means to become a music teacher onto pre-service music educators, we who work in the field of music teacher education should listen to our students' discourses about their identities, and we should recognize and celebrate the multiplicity of ways that our students understand who they are, what they do, and their individual processes of becoming a music teacher.

Second, I call on music teacher educators to acknowledge the centrality of experiences of making music in the ways that music educators understand themselves and their work. Rather than imposing curricula and programs with the aim of socializing musicians into teachers, we in the field of music education should provide multiple opportunities for pre-service music educators to ground their studies in the essential experiences of making music. Rather than giving lesser value to the music making of pre-service and in-service music educators and giving greater value to their teaching, music teacher educators should help their students to appreciate the importance of continuing to engage in music making experiences as music educators. In-service music educators would also benefit from giving music making a much more prominent role in professional development activities.

Third, where today's music teacher educators tend to privilege the aesthetic, structural, or conceptual aspects of experiences with music as a listener or performer, I urge music teacher educators to listen to and validate the personal, individual meanings that people bring to their experiences with music. For our students, as well as for our students' future students, music is meaningful because of its personal relevance. Creating opportunities for our students to think about and articulate the ways that music is personally relevant to them will better equip them to support their young students as they forge their own personal bonds with music.

Introductions, Revisited

When I am called upon to introduce myself at the conference dinner, I am asked to fracture my identity. Only who I am as a researcher matters in the introduction. All the other aspects of my identity – not to mention the fact that I conceive of my identity as ever-changing – are not acknowledged by the customary way that academics introduce themselves at events like the conference dinner. The whole person that I am and that I bring to everything I do is not relevant to the conversation. By bringing my conception of identity to the conversation in the field of music teacher education, I call for a reframing of music teacher education so that our programs become contexts where we can nurture our students as whole people who bring their whole selves to the craft of teaching music. I insist that our students be recognized and heard, and that the complexity of their identities, as well as of the identities of in-service music educators, be celebrated and supported. Rather than seeing our work in terms of socializing individuals from the “musician” identity to the “teacher” identity (Woodford, 2002), or “teach[ing] musicians to be teachers” (Roberts, 2004, p. 43), I advocate for conceiving of music teacher education as supporting individuals in the ongoing construction and examination of their musician-teacher identities.

Notes

¹ This portion of the article is adapted from a presentation I gave at the 2002 Ethnography and Qualitative Research in Education Conference at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA.

² In the US, each state’s department of education determines the qualifications for licensure to teach all subjects in the schools, including music. Requirements for licensure include taking approved coursework, earning approved degrees, and passing a series of state examinations. Formal schooling in the US begins with preschool at the age of three and/or four. At age five, students enter kindergarten. Each year in school after kindergarten is referred to as a numbered grade, beginning with first grade when students are six years old, continuing until seventeen- and eighteen-year-old students graduate from high school at the end of twelfth grade.

³ The phrase “musician-teacher identity” underscores the object of my inquiry: I sought to examine the ways that elementary general music teachers who are also active musicians understand their music making and music teaching in their professional lives. While, as I have noted earlier in this paper, all of us have multiple positions in our identities, this study was limited to the two positions of musician and teacher as part of the professional identities of music educators. Other aspects of professional identity, such as the ways that people are regarded by others within and beyond their professional communities, the effects of institutional structures on professional identity, and issues of tertiary socialization, were beyond the focus of this investigation.

⁴ All of the participants were elementary general music teachers. The sample did not include ensemble teachers. This distinction is important, as some ensemble teachers, in their job function as conductors of student groups, have been known to consider their music teaching to be an extension of their own performing (White, 1996).

⁵ Specifically, I have drawn on the traditions of narrative analysis (Reissman, 1993) and the cultural analysis of discourse (Quinn, 2003) in my analytic strategies. See Bernard, 2004 for a detailed discussion of the data analysis procedures.

⁶ Pseudonyms are used throughout the article to refer to the participants in this study.

⁷ I have chosen to focus this discussion on Lorraine because the richness of the interview and observational data that she provided brings the dynamic framework vividly to life. I do not intend to suggest that Lorraine represents a “typical case”; nor do I wish to generalize in any way from Lorraine’s example. In the tradition of ethnographic research, it is my intention to probe deeply into the particulars of each of the six participants with the aim of building theory that will contribute to thinking in the field. Working within this tradition, in this article I offer this discussion of Lorraine as an example of one way that the framework can play out when applied to a real, live musician-teacher, so that the reader can appreciate the insights that the framework can provide about an individual’s musician-teacher identity. In Bernard, 2004, I present all six participants through the lens of this framework.

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