

Action, Criticism and Theory for Music Education

The scholarly electronic journal of



Volume 3, No. 2
July, 2004

Thomas A. Regelski, Editor
Wayne Bowman, Associate Editor
Darryl Coan, Publishing Editor

Electronic Article

Who's in the Mirror? Issues Surrounding the Identity Construction of Music Educators

Brian Roberts

© Roberts, R. 2004. All rights reserved.

The content of this article is the sole responsibility of the author. The ACT Journal, the MayDay Group, and their agents are not liable for any legal actions that may arise involving the article's content, including but not limited to, copyright infringement.

ISSN 1545-4517

This article is part of an issue of our online journal:

ACT Journal: <http://act.maydaygroup.org>

MayDay Site: <http://www.maydaygroup.org>



Who's in the Mirror? Issues Surrounding the Identity Construction of Music Educators¹

Brian A. Roberts, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Introduction of the speaker by a local authority:

"I am pleased to be able to introduce to you today our guest speaker Dr. Brian Roberts who comes to us today from Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Dr. Roberts is a full professor of music education and has a worldwide reputation as a leading scholar in the area of the identity construction of musicians and teachers. In this regard he has published more than 150 articles and books on this and many other topics in the field of music education in many of the leading journals such as the International Journal of Music Education, Research Studies in Music Education, the Bulletin of the Council of Research in Music Education, the Canadian Journal of Research in Music Education and many others. He is a regular conference speaker and invited lecturer across Canada, in the United States, the United Kingdom, Austria, Germany and in Sweden. His doctorate in sociology is from the University of Stirling in Scotland. For 13 years he was the editor of the Canadian Music Educator and his contribution to Canadian music education was recently recognized when he was the recipient of a Lifetime Distinguished Service Award and honorary life membership by the Canadian Music Educator Association."

I am always so incredibly impressed by my introductions because you don't go around everyday thinking about yourself in quite this way. I can assure you that all those many claims are true but I would like *you* to think now a little about who you think I am. If you were to tell someone, about me – like " I went to this lecture with this guy from the

university in Newfoundland" – what would you go on to say about who you thought I was? How might you describe me?

You were given some hints about who I may think myself to be because *I wrote my introduction* specifically to tell you some particular things about me. It is, as Stone (1970) writes, an "announcement" which can take many forms. You might be more inclined to actually listen to what I have to say if you believed some of that information from the introduction. I've titled my talk today "Who's in the mirror?" because I am interested in exploring with you the nature of identity, in particular, yours. It's the person in the mirror we want to describe. Who is he (or she) and how did he or she get to be that person? I also want to try to convince you that it is important to know both who you *really* are and how you got to be that way.

From the introduction, you will already know that I have spent a considerable part of my life researching this issue called identity construction. If you have taken any sociology courses, you may recognize the term "construction". If you've taken some psychology courses then you will have heard of identity "development", a word that sociologists tend to avoid; I guess so we don't get confused with the other guys. If you want to know more about "development" rather than "construction" then you should go and buy a brand new book entitled *Musical Identities* (MacDonald et al. 2002). It's not that there is really that much difference between the sociological version and the psychological version of identity creation but both academic disciplines seemingly have their own vocabularies and if this book is anything to base an opinion on, the two disciplines don't pay attention to one another very much either.

I can tell you that I have spent a considerable amount of time zipping about the world talking with people about this topic and telling people, often like yourselves, about how we get to be a musician. But I am mostly interested in how a "musician" gets to be a music teacher. I am not talking about how to get to be a musician by spending more time in a practice room than anyone else but about how you convince yourself and others around you that you are a musician and how you convince yourself that teaching music is

a way that you would like to describe yourself to that reflection in the mirror and to anyone else who may show some interest.

People can be many things. This is an important concept. They also don't have to be all of these things at the same time. For example I am also a pilot and until recently flew my own plane, in fact, a Mooney, which is built just down the road here in Texas. Again, I could show proof easily enough because I could produce a pilot's license and a plane ownership certificate.

The sociologist side of my life is quite easy to claim. It is, for the most part, a claim of identity based on formal education including a PhD and a long series of publications that are all part of a public record that you or any of your friends can drop into a good library and find. So when I look into the mirror I can quite easily prove to myself that the person looking back at me is a sociologist. Since I can demonstrate to myself and others that I have done and am doing those things that a sociologist does, it's pretty clear that if I were trying to put a label on my identity that I could safely call me a sociologist.

I am also the father of an incredibly talented musician who is entering his final year of our music program at Memorial this fall. He is an award winning pianist and composer. He is an international gold medal winner for his piano performances and has won innumerable prizes and awards over his many years of performing. He even has a graduation diploma in piano performance from the Royal Conservatory of Music based in Toronto. We'll talk a little more about him later.

I make no apologies for standing here as a sociologist trying to convince you of these things because I now know from many years of experience that it is very important that you can willingly identify yourself as a music *teacher*. I know from experience, however, that most musicians tend believe only other musicians about musical things, so I'd like to start the day over if I could.

If you can erase from your memory all that has gone on so far (any *Star Trek* junkie will be able to offer you some advice here), we will begin again.

Second introduction of the speaker by a local authority:

"I am pleased to be able to introduce to you today our guest speaker Dr. Brian Roberts who comes to us today from Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Dr. Roberts took up his position at Memorial University more than 20 years ago after leaving a strong performance career as a concert and operatic tenor based in Germany. He has been invited to perform concert and operatic leading roles across North America, throughout Europe and in South America. Since taking on a more "academic" role in the university music school building he has continued to perform regularly and has performed more recently such works as Elgar's Dream of Gerontius, Bach's St. John and St. Matthew Passions, Menotti's Amahl and the Night Visitors, Orff's Carmina Burana, Handel's Messiah and Puccini's La Boheme as well as regular appearances on the concert stage. He can be heard frequently on the CBC radio networks and has recorded for EMI. Dr. Roberts hold his doctoral level qualifications in voice from the Hochschule für Musik in Detmold, Germany. Dr. Roberts is a frequent guest speaker and lecturer and works in the area of musician identity."

Who would have guessed? I'll just bet you have a completely different person in front of you now. If you had to compare these people, how would you make a case for supporting the identity of either person?

I guess I am a musician too. If you believe any of the information in this introduction (and it really is all true, too) then you would have to start at the very least with the benefit of the doubt. So let's look back at my son the piano player as an example of his struggle to become a musician – not to play the piano but to be accepted by everyone around him as *the musician he believes himself to be*; that is, as his *musician identity*. And at the same time, I can tell you that my biggest interest in all of this is how someone like my son, who may choose to become a school music teacher, can navigate his way through the music school as a musician.

First, we need to look at a few sociological definitions so we are all on the same page. We keep talking about "identity" as if we all knew what we meant. Well one of the first lessons in all of this sociology stuff I learned as a student of the discipline is that there are, in reality, very few concepts or constructs with a thoroughly homogenous, shared meaning. In other words, we often don't agree even though we use the same words. So how can we collectively understand "identity"? The best description comes from McCall and Simmons (1978) when they write that "identity"

may be defined as the character and the role that an individual devises for himself as an occupant of a particular social position. More intuitively, such role-identity is his imaginative view of himself *as he likes to think of himself being and acting* as an occupant of that position. (p. 65)
[*speaker's italics*]

The really big news, however, is that they go on to say that if a person does not actually claim "some social identity, other people will force one upon him" (p. 70). So you can see already that there are many sides to this question in my son's desire to claim an identity as a musician.

First, he is obligated to assert that he is, in fact, a musician. Secondly, we have to understand what sort of musician that may be, and thirdly, we also seem to have to convince everyone else around us that the claim is true. It all sounds like a lot of common sense to me. But it's a blast when you see how we get on with it because when we really begin to understand the construction of an identity we can begin to understand why it is important to construct it in a way that will offer us fulfilling lives in our careers.

McCall & Simmons (1978) also write that those identities (remember I said already that you could have many more than one) "most in need of support are more likely to be acted upon, for we strive always to legitimate our conceptions of ourselves" (p. 81). This is very important because in our face-to-face lives with other people we often have to assert something about our identity.

I want to reinforce the idea that Lofland (1969) made when he wrote that "for public purposes and on occasions of face-to-face engagement, one of the clustered categories [for us that's **role identities**] is singled out and treated as the most important and significant feature of the person or persons being dealt with" (p. 124). That's not really so hard to figure out if you just think about the last time you got sick and went to the doctor. Now the doctor might be a drag race driver, a stunt pilot, a scuba diver, father, or many other things; but at that moment what is important to you is that he can fix your broken arm. In other words, in this face-to-face encounter you are looking for a physician and really don't care at all that the fellow may be many other things to many other people at some other time and place.

In fact, this "most important" role identity or "pivotal category" usually begins to define "who this person is" (Lofland 1969, p. 124). Thus, acts consistent with this pivotal category become more than just acts; they become the people themselves. Hence, in the deviant field, acts of murder, rape, and robbery are perpetrated by murderers, rapists, and burglars. In our discussion today, acts of music making are seen as consistent with people who are "musicians". In the music education literature there is huge growing awareness of this relationship between music and identity. For example, David Elliott (1989) writes about musicians:

They fear that outsiders will not understand and respect them. In short, because music is, in essence something that *people make or do*, a people's music is something that they *are*, both during and after the making of music and the experiencing of music (p. 12).

Lofland (1969, p. 127) writes, "whatever is taken as pivotal *is* Actor – is his essential nature or core being" (writer's italics). This is a person's identity. In fact, this pivotal identity category can be so strong and prominent that other people will totally ignore any and all secondary categories of identity. Again, if we look at deviant categories we see really good examples of this sort of thing. When we look at a murderer for example, we don't see a father, a carpenter, a brother, a Knight of the Round Table –

we see a murderer. Hargreaves (1976, p. 204) once wrote, "instead of the act being just part of the person, the deviant act comes to engulf the person". Thus, the person comes to view himself as "centrally, pivotally, essentially or really deviant". For the music education student in the university music school, the desire to be viewed as centrally, pivotally, essentially or *really* a musician is the central point of our discussion today.

Much of "identity" is considered by many sociologists to be "imputed". Hargreaves, Hester & Mellor (1975) write, "the identity the teacher imputes to the pupil has important consequences for the analysis of the teacher-pupil interaction and the development of pupil career" (p. 140). In our case, the imputation by Others and Self-as-Other of a "musician" identity has these same consequences. This notion of imputation is derived from the *labeling perspective*.

The University Musician World

Now I'd like to talk *about you* just a bit, but a little like you weren't here. Music education students typically view themselves as belonging to a specific social group on campus. Depending upon the particular university, they typically refer to themselves as "music students" and as belonging to the "Faculty", "School" or "Department" of music. They display a sense of belonging, and group spirit. Most of their time is spent together as a group of music students and they share many of the same pressures and experiences, both academically and musically. The strongest perceived commonality, and often a source of irritation and tension among the members of this group, appears to be tied to the music-making demands in the music school.

For the purposes of our discussion today, the term "music school" will provide the global boundaries for the inclusion of those students studying music and about whom we are going to talk. Music students appear to develop a strong sense of isolation from the rest of the campus and most seem to focus their attention on the social action within the music school; it appears to them as an "insider group". They often refer to others who

pass through the music school or drop into *their* cafeteria as "outsiders". The musician's world seems contained within the walls of the music school. Community membership appears quite strong and students report that membership is virtually granted instantly during the "froshweek" activities or other such "welcoming" events. It is a form of social ritual that confers music student status on the newcomers and these students report that, once so inducted, they immediately are able to join in the activities as "insiders". At several universities at which I have conducted much of my research, the students often talked about the physical separation of the music school from the rest of the campus. At one music school, the building was physically at the bottom of a rather steep hill and all other campus activities came to be known to take place "up-the-hill". This comes to be symbolically referent to all activities outside the confines of the music school as well as literally to activities that really do take place on the main part of the campus.

The notion of "group" is used here because it will be shown to be important that there is a central or core membership as well as a periphery membership among the music students. Despite the tendency of modern sociology to abandon the acknowledgement of simple structures, the students in my research showed a strong sense of social bonding – in the basic ways described – with both benefits and obligations, yet without a necessary commitment to agreement.

Aside from the more obvious "structural" group boundaries, i.e. those bound to official university structures such as academic year, academic major, applied major, or assigned ensemble, I am talking about a construct that "community" is a *symbolic* structure where the participants perceive the,

reality and efficacy of the community's boundary – and, therefore, of the community itself – [dependent] upon its symbolic construction and embellishment" ... "Community is that entity to which one belongs, greater than kinship but more immediate than the abstraction we call 'society'. It is the arena in which people acquire their most fundamental and most substantial experience of social life outside the confines of the home (Cohen 1985, p.15).

Several other sub-groups have importance to this analysis. Some of these sub-groups are structurally bounded, such as the "music education majors". These are students in the music school who have indicated, at least formally, that they wish to become school music teachers. The other important structurally bounded sub-group is the group of students referred to as the "performance major". Other less structurally bounded sub-groups appear to be based around academic year, instrumental major, and particular performing ensembles. Of course, there are sub-group formations that are of no immediate importance to our discussion today, but it is perhaps worth mentioning that the music school is a complex group of students with many varying sub-groups that have overlapping boundaries, both structurally and symbolically.

The music school can be perceived as a social world having a variety of pushes and pulls, a variety of actors, a variety of settings, a variety of outcomes. Descriptive studies, such as Casey (1986), provide quantitative data on almost every possible parameter imaginable for these variables just enumerated; but after digesting every fact, every chart of analysis, one is left with the feeling that one is no closer to an understanding of the social dynamic of the students than one was before. Any comment concerning the interaction among the peoples of the music school both within and without is missing.

It comes as little surprise that from these early sociological investigations a tradition has developed from which field strategies can be selected with confidence and assurance. There is no longer doubt that the legitimacy of this approach brings us closer to an understanding of what drives a society. The following excerpt from Crossley & Vulliamy (1984) concludes this part of my argument: "It is argued that meaning is derived from social interaction, that subjective meanings are a legitimate focus for study and that naturalistic research must be conducted in social context"(p. 194).

My comments and analysis today flow, therefore, from data provided by interviewing more than 100 students and also from participant observation. I only mention that because I think it is important for you to know that this is not "arm-chair"

theory, but a reflection and consideration of real life experiences made through observation and interviewing those in this community. Whyte (1955, p.357) came to this conclusion about 50 years ago when he writes, "It was a long time before I realized that I could explain Cornerville better through telling the stories of those individuals and groups than I could in any other way". I'll press on now with a little more about the nature of this closed world of the music school.

The view of Others as outsiders to the music school leads a like-minded collection of people, the "group", to consider themselves as "insiders" while the rest of the world is viewed as outside of this its "group boundary". Although the term "group" enjoys a popular usage, I employ it here in a specific way to identify those groups of students who view themselves *as* a "group" and that this "group" is perceived as distinct and separate from the rest of the academic activity on campus. I have described the world of university music students as a "community", largely because it displays characteristics of groups that students perceived as "insulated" within a geographically separate unit on campus. In fact, the music community on campus fulfils almost entirely the criteria of the "total institution" from Goffman (1961), who points out that every institution has some claim on its members; but for the "total institution", their "encompassing or total character is symbolized by the barrier to social intercourse with the outside"(1961, p.15).

Music education students make regular claims to this sense of barrier from outside social interaction. Of Goffman's five rough categories, the music school can best be viewed as type four, that is, as an "institution purportedly established the better to pursue some work-like task" (p. 16) (*so, it is not totally like a prison, except perhaps towards the end of term*). Music education students frequently report that their life is totally encompassed within the music school building. While some leave the campus to sleep, and others merely go to their on-campus residences, they report almost universally the breakdown of the independence of "sleep, play and work" (p. 17) where they spend so much of their time at the music school with friends from only the music school and where "play" of the non-musical variety seems hardly possible except on rare occasions and

then typically with others from the music school. Thus, most of their day is conducted in the same place with a regular group of others, which is stable in composition and subject to the same academic regime. The scheduling for these students is imposed by officials, all to the end that, as Goffman writes, "the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfil the official aims of the institution" (p. 17).

Of course, the degree of split between the "officials" – that being, one might suppose, members of the Faculty, and the students as "managed group" – I'll leave for the moment until the discovery of "significant others" is explored later. Of course, it would be incorrect to lead you into an impression that there is something sinister in this implied great plan. Music schools are designed specifically for their own purposes. Music education students, however, are often the victims as well as the heroes of that music school "community". The "community" is composed of music students, faculty, and staff and others associated within the general boundaries of the music school and, for our purposes, the "music school" will be used to identify this social world. Within the music school, other distinct groups form, with their own social boundaries; and these "sub-groups", such as the music education students, are often seen by the students themselves as "marginal-insiders", that is, as music students but not always as members with full community privileges.

This self-contained unit on campus, where people with a strong common interest come together, could certainly account for these perceptions. In fact, this sense of "commonalities" was a critical concept for Rue (1988) in describing a campus community. The many shared experiences that members of a class have, as well as an unusually high degree of time spent together certainly makes a difference. But here's the rub, so to speak.

While students generally describe the music school as a very friendly place where like-minded people are gathered, it is a well-established sociological tenet that in homogeneous societies, *differences between members are* stressed rather than

commonalities. Thus, differences in performing ability can be exaggerated and confounded by additional institutional social strategies. For example, it is common knowledge among the students that where the student population is banded into official academic streams, such as musicology, music education, or performance, that performance majors will be the superior performers *by definition*. In the case of voice majors, a typical world standard seems to be that of all voice majors; the opera class is the socially defined superior group. In fact it is not uncommon in many music schools around the world to find the "opera school" isolated physically as well within the music building complex. In fact, when I was invited to lecture in Göteborg, Sweden, this was the first comment made to me about the "opera school" folk when I suggested that I drop in and see the "singers": They had totally isolated quarters at the back corner through double doors that no one outside the opera group wanted (or perhaps dared) to enter.

This has serious ramifications for students in the other streams trying to construct identities as superb performers, which in many cases they are. It is often difficult to justify being able to perform well with a desire to study musicology, composition, or school music (music education). This is taken as a sign of not being really a serious musician. This, by itself, has further consequences because students report frequent examples of members of faculty treating those "non-serious" students with disdain or worse. Hence, it is significantly more difficult to be accepted as a superior performer in any of the other academic streams than performance, despite one's ability to play or sing really well.

Parental concern

Students who come to the music school more often than not come without much parental support. This places yet another common bond in their path. Students report that their parents do not see much, if any, occupational security in a music career. Parents also complain to students about low pay prospects and an education of little "use". This negative reaction occasionally even extends into the music education field as well. One

student reported that his former secondary vice-principal has said that teaching was "the last resort for the weak intellect" (Interview M2-6: 16). Most parents support the post-secondary, degree-getting component of the music school on campus but many would be happier with a different major for their children.

Students also report that both parents and other outsiders often comment that music is easy and/or frivolous, confined to the fun of playing a bunch of instruments, which is obviously easy for the talented few that are admitted. So you can see why there is a common bond of understanding and like-mindedness that strengthens the social rules in which music students get to live.

Deviance

Another bonding condition that is often reported is that students claim that outsiders, frequently including even their parents, often see the music community on campus as weird, different or otherwise deviant. Becker (1963) writes,

From this point of view, deviance is *not* a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an "offender", the deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label (p. 9; italics original).

In fact, it was Becker (1963) who first developed the notion of *musicians* as deviant. In his *Culture of a Deviant Group* he describes the perception of dance musicians as deviant: "Though their activities are formally within the law, their culture and way of life are sufficiently bizarre and unconventional for them to be labelled as outsiders by more conventional members of the community" (p. 79).

Becker begins by pointing out, "the musician is conceived of as an artist who possesses a mysterious gift setting him apart from all other people" (1963, p. 86). All students seem to feel the abnormal nature of their musical studies in university life. Aside from many other considerations, music students feel that their workload sets them apart

from other students as well. There is much support for this and the additional responsibilities of long hours of practice and ensemble rehearsal makes the claim appear to be veridical. Music students tend, therefore, to hang around with other music students and most university friendships seem to come from within the music school community. Even when, for a brief time, friends are found outside this community, further inevitable interaction by the friends with other members of the community will usually send these outsiders running.

The Day-to-Day Life in the Community

Goffman (1967), in his *Interaction Ritual*, studies the ways in which people manoeuvre to "make points" in everyday interactions. In the search for analytical categories and their properties in the music school, it is useful to investigate several typical ways in which music students collect their "status points" in order to construct an acceptable identity for themselves within the music school.

Becker (1963, p. 103) reminds us that musicians typically "conceive of success as movement through a hierarchy of available jobs". Many of these affiliations can be compared to academically created "jobs", each with its own socially determined place in the hierarchy, thus providing a different level of point gaining opportunities for each student involved. There are, in fact, at least eight major categories that students regularly use for point gaining in the social construction of a musician identity. Each of these categories, and their sub-sets, cut across the entire music school community with amazing complexity. You may recognize yourself here.

1. It is important to acknowledge that marks (i.e., "grades") count in a university music school. Students use marks as currency (money) is used in the outside world (Becker, Geer & Hughes 1968); *more is better*. But within the music school, marks seem always to play more of a structural role. This means that certain levels of mark getting keeps students in the program of their choice and later makes getting into other programs a higher probability. *Marks, on the other hand, do little for the problem of constructing*

an acceptable musician identity either inside or outside the institution. In fact, once a musician reaches the real world, no one even cares whether you graduated or not! You just have to play the fiddle better than anyone else does who shows up for the audition. The notion of a professional school offering degrees that are all but totally ignored by the profession is another but nevertheless interesting talk.

2. In comparison to marks generally, where they originate does have some considerable significance. The reputation of the institution plays heavily on the point getting opportunities. Students seem to have an *a priori* knowledge of which are the best music schools, particularly where there is some choice of institution within a reasonable distance. Several major universities try with little success to promote themselves as *the* national (or world) standard. The reality seems to be that for many, although not all music students, an undergraduate degree is typically sought closest or at least within reasonable proximity to home. While some schools promote themselves as superior, it is clear from the entrance results that the majority of admitted students today would get into almost any institution if they so wished.

Music schools have some distinct staffing problems that can affect their ability to accept all students they might like to have. Faculty workloads allow for only a certain number of applied students in any given area. Thus, it is possible for a student to be rejected simply because the institution has no teacher space available in a particular year. Therefore, the competition to enter is always a factor of being best suited to a given number of places, which can change quite dramatically from year to year. Music schools still like to think that they select the best candidates in any year. However, in some years these candidates are not equally as strong as in other years, so that the overall standards in performance vary considerably within the school at any given time. The point getting opportunities are socially constructed myths that tend to apply to all who are accepted within the institution generally.

3. One of the most important point gaining factors is the type of music one associates with in the music school. Elsewhere I have suggested that the entrance

protocol is used to make clear the intent to focus on classical music. Since the students obviously buy into this social rule, the hierarchy of classical music in the music school also plays an important role in the establishment of a socially constructed identity as a performer.

First, then, it is important to reiterate that only an association with classical music can get a student points. In practice, known association with certain type of non-classical music such as pop and rock can actually cost students points. In fact, this is one of the few areas where negative points can be added to one's account. Jazz in certain institutions can offer points to those in the jazz studies program only. Others would typically be advised to keep clear of that sort of music. Students often try to get a better deal from the institution for jazz but are usually rebuffed by the faculty. This varies considerably from place to place but remains to some extent still a "rule of engagement".

It is not just a matter of "just" classical music either. Within that broad category, certain types of music are significantly more powerful in the point getting challenge. Modern, that is weird music, as the students say, attracts few points – much to the chagrin of the composers on faculty. It is also important to point out that students in any given institution seem to have learned what the hierarchy of music is for their individual instrument. This varies from place to place, showing that there is no "master list" and strengthening the notion that this world is a socially constructed one. The higher on the list of literature, the more points one attracts. Since this is well known in the community, students are occasionally seen carrying around, on the top of their pile of books, pieces high on the hierarchy list but which are not currently being studied in any serious way. In fact, these pieces are quite likely not possible to play at all for any given student at the time of this point-attracting theatre. If caught at this deception, the standard and acceptable defence is to say that you are simply "reading through" some or all of it. On the other hand, points are awarded for just knowing the hierarchy; so by catching someone at this deception, by having a feeling for how well the person plays, and the level of the piece, you can elevate your own point count for the day. This cat and mouse

play goes on continuously. It also leads to many students practising while other students' ears are placed firmly on the door of the practice rooms. The little windows in the practice rooms are always covered over to protect the anonymity of the person practising.

4. Senior students sometimes enjoy certain privileges. Academic year is also relatively easy to determine since most students in the program move together through the years taking relatively large numbers of classes as a group. Opportunities for point gathering are better known to more senior students simply because they know the community better than new students. There are, however, certain situations that cause some frustration amongst the students. The most common is in competitive music performance situations where senior students are given advantages because they will be leaving soon. Senior students generally like this and junior students, particularly those who fancy themselves as outstanding performers, generally do not. There is often a great deal of competition for chairs in ensembles or in some cases for entrance to certain ensembles at all where the institution has a variety of ensembles of differing quality. This notion of reserving or giving preference to senior students is based loosely on Turner's "sponsored" or "contest" models (Turner 1960).

This type of junior/senior sponsorship also seems pervasive between major streams in the music school. Performance majors are regularly sponsored into leading chairs, ensembles, or opera roles, while other music students in musicology, theory, or music education are more typically not. There is substantial evidence to show how this leads to frustration by music education majors who, in many instances in some music schools, are not allowed to be sponsored into certain chairs or ensembles. This results in an inability to collect the much-needed points for constructing a superior musician (as performer) identity. Interference with the purely contest model, by offering selective opportunities to any preselected group of students, is perceived as a negative force by those non-eligible students seeking higher status as a musician.

5. Because the music schools have various performing groups to provide educational opportunities for students, it is clear that where certain types of instruments

(or voices – tenors being the most obvious) are in rare supply and nevertheless in critical demand, in order to constitute such performing groups, the perceived level of performing competence or other criteria more generally applied throughout the music school may be compromised. Students who play rare instruments such as oboe, bassoon or viola get bonus points just for doing so without regard for how well they might play them. They also get opportunities to get points more easily than other students because they get to play in the best ensembles. The "average" piano major can be more or less ignored. The "average" oboist (or tenor) may be the only game in town.

6. Yet another anomaly for music students is the selection of teachers for undergraduates. Few first year English majors would be able or are likely to presume to influence the selection of their English professor in any way. Music students, on the other hand, regularly go so far as to select an entire institution solely based on their applied major teacher. There are many ways in which the reputation of the "best" teacher is constructed but each student will typically claim that he or she is absolutely studying with the "best," even when both teachers may be in adjacent offices. Many attributes can be claimed, but the two most conflicting ones remain – "mine can teach" or "mine is a great performer". Fortunately many, although not all, applied instructors are substantially able in both areas. Kingsbury (1984, p. 111) writes, "the fact that teachers' prestige is augmented by their students' success is mirrored by the fact that students draw status from association with a prestigious teacher".

So everybody's happy! Applied teachers control the social reality of the music school more than any other group in it. When they hire colleagues, they process the applicants in a manner similar to the audition used for students, which prevents any influence that does not support *their own value system* from gaining a foothold in the institution. Each new appointment is used to support the investment made by the group already in place. Thus, the more closely candidates can align themselves with the belief system already in place the more likely it is that they may find a way into the society. The process of delaying tenure for a number of years ensures that newcomers maintain that

status until they buy into the system and have personally invested into it totally. Most faculty members have spent their lives perfecting, to whatever level they are able, performance skills applicable to classical music. They are not about to let in through the front door any new faculty member who does not honour that investment. To somewhat the same extent, this also applies to the students they select for their studios. The more closely aligned the student's goals are to supporting the valued investment made by the faculty member the better off the relationship will be. This selection of teacher is so important for many students to the process of coming to music school that a number of social strategies have become common to ensure that the outcome is achieved. Students will typically have their current applied or schoolteacher make early contact with their university instructor of choice. Students will attempt to study privately with their teacher of choice in advance of university if they are close enough to do this, thereby letting free enterprise rules give the advantage to instructor selection.

Part of the talent show of the audition is for the selection of students by applied teachers (Hopper 1971, p. 94). This allows for the pretence that such teacher-student pairings are fair, and the selections are formalized through this process despite the fact that many have been made through sponsorship in advance. Various teachers seem to offer a different number of status points to students despite the obvious conflict in how the values are constructed.

7. I mentioned earlier that some "chairs" and ensembles offer more points than others. In fact, this is a very important process, particularly in larger music schools where there are many ensembles from which to choose. For some ensembles, an audition is required. This, by itself, will increase the point count. In bands and orchestras the "chair" is also an important point determining factor, so much so that students often must make a decision about playing first chair in a lower ranked ensemble instead of playing a lower ranked chair in a higher ranked group. When sponsorship for a certain academic year or programs comes into play, this can become a very vexing difficulty for students who are actively seeking points. It must be pointed out that the quality differential is often

appreciable between these various performing groups; and the members of faculty also compete severely, just like the students, for a place in front of the "best" groups. This has a reciprocating benefit in the community since faculty gain points based on the ensemble they direct and association with these faculty members in other venues can affect students' point-gathering opportunities.

Performing ensembles can develop very specific and unique cultures. At one music school in the study, the members of the top choir became self-acknowledged elitists. The members ate in isolation from all others in the cafeteria and hardly talked to anyone outside the group anywhere in the music school itself. Certain other ensembles were considered the "dumping" ground for the weak and feeble players unable to find a more prestigious group in which to perform, and performing in them could actually lose students points! The normal defence for having to play in such a low status group was that the sponsored model of selection made it imperative since the student may only be in first year, for example. Students commonly refer to playing in such low status groups as "sentences to serve". It is clear that the point gaining opportunities for these ensemble "jobs" is so great that one can clearly understand the aggravation that accumulates when sponsorship models dictate which opportunities are available instead of the application of a purely competitive entrance model. This plays an even more predominant role in the social construction of an acceptable musician identity for groups such as music education majors since sponsorship is often attributed first to performance majors.

8. Because the institution uses sponsorship so readily academic programs – particularly the performance stream, which most closely support the faculty's investment – points can be gathered simply by being in such programs. Other streams, such as music education, offer few points to students. The ultimate irony, of course, is that with the generally low opportunity for classical music performance in society in general, it is much more likely that music education graduates will actually be the ones to go on to make music with their school ensembles and thereby replicate the process in the music

school where they had such difficulties gathering sufficient points to construct an adequate musician identity in the first place.

Many other minor point-gaining opportunities occur on a less frequent basis than these eight. Scholarships and competitions both inside and exterior to the institution are used. External opportunities to work in classical music venues help also. Special workshops with famous musicians or teachers are used. Certain music school courses have points attached and are open only to certain academic streams thereby making it impossible for other students to avail themselves of the points. Some music schools even have tried to assign specific practice room space to performance majors on the dubious claim that, for example, it is only reasonable that piano performance majors should practice on grand pianos while students in other streams can do quite adequately on uprights.


All point gathering eventually takes on the appearance of a series of status passages where students see each passage as desirable but often lacking in clarity. As Glaser and Strauss (1971) point out, where insufficient notice by others is taken of these various status passages that individuals can be led into, the result in some cases can be what these authors describe as a crisis. They write, "a status passage may tend to be so competitive that it blots out, if only temporarily, the priority claims of other passages"(p. 144). Thus, some students appear to seek competitive entry into certain performing ensembles, into certain teacher's classes, and into certain academic programs only for the purpose of gaining the points and achieving a status passage without much forethought as to the long-term consequences of such actions.

The apparent theory is that the greater number of available rewards, the greater is the likelihood that conflict over those rewards will arise. Since the institution offers all students large numbers of performing opportunities, conflict for asserting one's place in the scheme of things is often severe since most students can claim to be eligible for some or all of the opportunities on some basis. Scholarships play a significant role as status rewards because they can be assigned criteria that make them musical awards rather than

academic awards. Because music making is an academic exercise in the music school, there would appear on the surface to be little conflict; but students report that scholarships are used to "buy" necessary ensemble instruments (like oboists) from among applicants, as well as students of high musical potential rather than just high academic potential. Students also saw scholarships as faculty tools to "buy" loyalty both to individual faculty and to the school itself. My studies found that, in some instances, even university rules, regulations, and academic standards had been changed or ignored to accommodate students who performed really well or played "rare" instruments. While sensitivity to students' needs is always the official response, more often than not it is the institution's needs that are being most flagrantly promoted, instead.

In summary, the availability of point gaining opportunities is of the greatest importance to music school students in ensuring a successful series of status passages into the acceptable musician identity each student is wishing to construct. The conflict between competitive and sponsored models creates the most tension in this community.

The Music School "Musician"

 To be a music student is to be a performer. Despite the many other things that are contained in the curriculum for music students, the single socially required identity is that of a performer. In my interviews at a larger Faculty of Education,² on the first day of classes, all students' self-descriptions were as an instrumental appendage: "Hi, I'm John and I'm a trumpet major!" or, "Hi, I'm Amy and I'm a soprano!" What was interesting in this is that all of these students were recent graduates of a music school and were now registered in the Faculty of Education with the express purpose of becoming teachers. In instances where a student is unable to construct a satisfactory *performer* identity, an attempt to create a more generalized identity as a *musician* is substituted. This latter category tries to take into account the more general or broader view of what it is *to know* about music. It does not, however, equal in any sense the performer identity. In this connection it is also very important to reiterate the limits on the kind of acceptable

musical literature which allows the satisfactory collection of sufficient points to enable a student to achieve an acceptable socially constructed identity as a performer. Students do not typically agree with this position but nevertheless come to accept these conditions during their time in the music school.

It must also be noted that the music school requires all students to perform. While these are generally understood as "opportunities", for those students less inclined toward constructing an acceptable performer's identity, these opportunities are viewed more often as torture. Thus it is that you either construct an identity for yourself or others will do it for you!

There has been considerable research showing that this cultural hegemony continues into the music education arena in the lower schools as a direct result of teachers' education in the university music schools (e.g., Rose 1990). Students in the music school who are really successful can garner the support of like-minded professors who provide letters of recommendations for the advancement of students' careers. Students who do not bend to the party line are viewed as non-serious musicians, inept musicians, or worse.

There are many challenges presented to students in their search for a performer identity. It may be incorrectly considered that I, like Goffman before me, can be criticised for attempting to portray, in my case, the music schools, inappropriately. Concerning this line of criticism, Giddens (1987) writes:

Goffman is thus held to portray an amoral social universe, in which everyone is busy trying to manipulate everyone else. But this is far removed indeed from the main thrust of his writing . . . If day-to-day social life is a game which may be on occasion turned to one's own advantage, it is a game into which we are all thrust and in which collaboration is essential (p. 113).

Music students choose to go to university music schools. No one forces them to attend and they can always leave. In my account thus far, however, it may seem as though the students merely produce their little social plays and then their success in the construction of a musician identity is assured. You may also have come to the conclusion that these strategies are "obvious," as they may seem as though they always work and that they are fixed in their ability to offer a given number of points. Unfortunately, life is not that simple and these strategies do not always work. In order to construct a "grounded theory" (Glaser & Strauss 1967), one must take into account classes of social action which might be explained by the theory. Yet, because students who are engaged in social episodes using the strategies that the theory has unearthed can still be unsuccessful, the theory appears not yet to be fully unpacked. Social action in the music school is not confined to "presentation" strategies. It is neither the "presentation" (Goffman 1959) nor the "announcements" (Stone 1970) (like my introductions today) that ultimately count but, rather, the "ratification by significant others" (Foote 1951, p.484).

The music school is a very competitive place. In fact, music students describe the music school in the first instance as a competitive environment. Kingsbury (1984) writes about his encounter in the conservatory by acknowledging an "ever present weave of intensely competitive social relationships"(p. 11). There are, of course, real competitions for scholarships and solo opportunities (although many are confounded by faculty sponsorship), but it is the general tone or atmosphere of competition pervading the music school that cannot be explained away by the few real competitive opportunities. There is a great deal of petty backstabbing and an overwhelming focus on oneself. One does not simply attend classes in the anonymity of the back corner of the room. You are constantly on display in a day-to-day battle to get, and to keep, a reasonably decent view of yourself, almost exclusively through various performing opportunities (obligations). What seemed good yesterday needs reinforcement or confirmation today. There is always the threat of identity demotion. Students are also forced into the role of critic when they are required to comment after concerts they are obliged to attend. It is important to remember that

some sort of musician identity will be forced upon the student (McCall & Simmons 1978, p. 70) in the absence of a strong self-made alternative by a claim or announcement to the contrary (Stone, 1970). We are reminded of Elliott's comment that "a people's music is something they *are*" (Elliott 1989, p. 12). Thus, when the "musician" enters this identity competition, it is "self" that is dragged kicking along behind. This can translate into "I am a bad singer = I am a bad person".

The music school society is organized socially in ways to both promote this competition and to help protect students from this same competition. "Sects" develop based on shared instruments, teachers, years, ensembles, and other options, and these are useful for promoting the interests of both the sect and the individuals within it, often to the detriment of others in the community.

Faculty members are willing partners in this social order and do much to promote and continue the *status quo*. Their own personal professional investment as a classically trained and classical performing musician needs much of the same negotiation and validation as that of the students, albeit on a different level. Nevertheless, faculty have as much of "self" at stake in the music school as performers and are regularly seen in public concerts or in front of students performing. They, too, must seek "valued others" to validate their own claims. In addition to peers, these "valued others" also include their students. They require the same support for their identity constructions as their students and they suffer from many of the same challenges, for their world is also a highly competitive one.

In the end, the primary operational reality of the music school becomes the reproduction of a cultural reality in which the social investment as a classical performer by the members of faculty is protected, supported, and enhanced. This turns out to be the main delimiting factor in what kind of music is valued, and taught to be valued; and it is subsequently the defining basis for the incompatibilities between credentials and need concerning the "musician" identity on the part of school music teachers.

Musical skills from other venues of world musics, including other forms of popular Western music – pop, rock, jazz, etc. – are typically more than missing from the university music school; typically they are actively demoted as of little or no value, or hidden away in some corner and program such as "jazz studies", and thus kept out of the mainstream of the school. This is one area that in recent years is showing some considerable improvement, but we are not close to any sort of social integration yet.

While it might be kind to suggest that the presence of composers and ethnomusicologists on university campuses might ameliorate this situation, they do not. Chris Small (1987) says it best when he writes,

The majority of university music departments are still stuck in an exclusive concern with the past . . . Like all institutions, universities on the whole tend to be intolerant of genuine innovation . . . Tame artists, in fact, make good pets for university establishments as long as they do not attack their masters (for real at any rate). (p. 176).

The Next Part

The purpose of my on-going research has been not only to display the contents of this social world, but also to develop a theory to account for the social action of music education students in the music school, and it is to this goal that I now turn.

Theory of Social Action of Music Education Students

It may be of some use to state briefly just what a sociological theory might be. Perhaps the shortest definition is offered by Denzin (1978, p.47) for whom theory is *explanation*. One might pursue this notion of explanation by unpacking it. Chafetz (1978, p.2) would have us believe that theory can be described as follows: "Once something is established as existing, theories constitute systematic attempts to answer the general question "why". However, "why" is not the only question that might be asked. In fact, it

may not always be very salient at all. The most important explanation may have more to do with the "how". Thus we return to Denzin (1978, p. 48) who develops his concept more generally by explaining that theory "permits the organization of descriptions, leads to explanations and furnishes the basis for the prediction of events as yet unobserved". One is led eventually to see that the socially created "what" is concerned with the processes of students constructing a "master status" (Hughes, 1945) as a musician. By carefully examining the *what*, the question becomes more centrally one of discovering how these students are able to establish an identity (McCall and Simmons, 1978) as a musician in their social world.

I am going to limit my discussion now to the exposition of *substantive* and *formal theory*, and as Glaser and Strauss (1967) write, "often the substantive and formal theories are formulated by different authors"(p. 80). One does not begin each analytical exercise in theoretical vacuum, however; nor is it possible simply to borrow formal theories and show how they may apply as a demonstration of theoretical validation. My research is not about theoretical validation but about theoretical generation.

Sometimes the clues pointing in a certain theoretical direction lead the researcher into places that are totally unexpected at the outset; and, of course, one does not "prove" the connection with any grand theory. Clearly, the link with "grand theory" is impossible to "ground" in the same sense. One tends to merely add to or subtract from its plausibility. This is not surprising since much grand theory is incapable of verification in the same way.

I'll offer an example. In the world of music, perspectives are often changed to relocate the audience's attention. One not so common but nevertheless adequate example is found in the operatic setting of "La Boheme". Most people having a passing acquaintance with opera will recognize the story of Rudolfo (tenor) and Mimi (soprano) falling in love and their ultimate separation and her untimely death. This is Pucinni's perspective. In the background, the story of Marcello (baritone) and Musette (contralto) continues as "fill" for the main action presented down stage. But for Leoncavallo, who

also set an almost unknown version of "La Boheme," the real action was in the story of Marcello (tenor) and Musette, while the Mimi and Rudolfo (baritone) action is set in the background. It is as if one were viewing the same opera, but watching from different sides of the stage.

While this detour into opera may appear somewhat removed from the present issue, it is precisely this radical change in perspective that pointed to a workable starting place for the unpacking of the "how" in the generation of my theoretical position. For example, the *labelling perspective* in sociology is well known in the study of deviance. It is argued, however, that deviance is a relative thing, and as Furlong (1985, p.126) writes, "labelling theorists argue that people break the rules of society in minor ways all of the time".

As outlined by Furlong, this position is a typical formulation in the literature to account for the relative stance that the social acts themselves cannot account for the identification of a deviant because many people who break the rules of society simply never become known as deviants. In fact, the labelling perspective seems obviously more about the Actor than the Act. Kai Erikson writes (1962) that "deviance is not a property inherent in certain forms of behaviour; it is a property conferred upon these forms by the audiences" (p. 308). It seems a moot point to argue that an Act is or is not deviant when the focus of the labelling perspective is more appropriately directed toward other things. Therefore, if the processes of labelling are to withstand the test, the issue of the deviant act is redundant. In its purest sense, the labelling perspective provides a way of explicating forms of social action. In fact, Plummer (1979) writes that, "labelling theory is, in principle, applicable to any area of social life, deviant or non-deviant"(p. 108).

It is to his perspective that I now turn. Plummer (1979, p.86) argues that the labelling perspective is one "whose core problems are the nature, emergence, application and consequences of labels". At this level of abstraction, there is no mention of deviance.

By way of an introduction, it may be useful to show how a deviant perspective found in the labelling literature came to be viewed as a source theory for my analysis of

the social world of music education students. The labelling perspective seems to concern itself with groups of people who are viewed in a common sense way as deviant; hence the often graphic titles in the literature such as Liazos' *The Poverty of the Sociology of Deviance: Nuts, Sluts and Perverts*. This view, suggests Becker (1973), makes it difficult to study these groups because "they are regarded as outsiders by the rest of the society and because they themselves tend to regard the rest of society as outsiders"(p. 168). But much of what counts as deviant in a common-sense understanding is less than clear.

While one might jump at the opportunity to claim that murder, the premeditated killing of a human being, may be taken as a clear case in point, we are reminded that, in many cases, killing someone is not viewed in a way that might gain one the label of "murderer" at all. If one's life is threatened and one reacts to defend one's own being, then society seems more willing to accept the act of killing someone else in this case as legitimate in the form of self-preservation. Society has developed categories to render the act of killing safe from labelling consequences. Society seems prepared in practice, rather more than in theory, to assess a social act within the context of social meaning established by a society. In legal terms, pornography is often defined by community standards. Thus it is left to a group of people, typically judges and juries, who, at least symbolically (Cohen, 1985), represent the collective meaning for the interpretation of a social act. Cohen (1985) writes,

the quintessential referent of community is that its members make, or believe they make, a similar sense of things either generally or with respect to specific and significant interests, and, further, that they think that that sense may differ from one made elsewhere (p. 16).

Therefore the label and socially applied meaning can be legitimately claimed to belong to the music education community, and that the understanding and use of the term by that community will be reflected in their social action.

Hargreaves (1975) describes a group's culture by suggesting that, when we consider the culture (or ideology) of a group, we are mainly concerned with the fact that groups have values,

beliefs and norms. The focus is on the homogeneity of the members; we are stressing what they share in common. A group's values are the over-all guides to group behaviour, for it is the values which express what the members regard as good, ideal and desirable (p. 90).

We can therefore expect to see evidence in the social action of the music education students of such homogeneity with respect to the meanings assigned by this group to the label "musician".

In fact, it appears as though a group, or Cohen's symbolic community, need only express its cultural values, beliefs, and norms. In the case of the legal interpretation of pornography, communities have taken the position that they have this right and it is not uncommon to hear of cases in the courts. Therefore, definitions of deviance – or for that matter, varieties of conformity – can easily be shown to be at least partially dependant upon a community position. Consider, for example, Erikson's (1966) interpretation of the Puritans as a rather powerful example of such definitional action by a community. He writes, "many sociologists employ a far simpler tactic in their approach to the problem – namely, to let each social group in question provide its own definitions of deviant behaviour" (p. 6) and this stance is the one adopted with respect to the meanings attributed to the label "musician" by the students in my research.

I would like therefore to stress once again the point that the music school is a "closed society" in which operational rules are determined within that society alone. This means that a lot of common-sense answers outside such a closed society simply don't apply and you must look to the social rules within the particular closed society for meanings and norms.

I want to move back to identity again now, simply because it would take several hours to move step by step from this point in theory development to actually get back to the essential issue today.

The labelling perspective has given some prominence to the notion of identity. Hargreaves (1976, p.201) discusses four factors he considers important for a pupil in the

acceptance of a label "as part of his identity". Later in his paper Hargreaves focuses on the more central issue for music education students when he writes, "instead of the act being just part of the person, the deviant act comes to engulf the person" (p. 204). This construct of engulfment, or from Hughes (1945), of "master status", appears to best describe the pivotal importance that music education students place on the performer label as their identity in the music school. This is perhaps required because of the immense amount of general musicking that takes place in the music school. Thus, public exposure of a successful labelling becomes even more important where the validating act is so commonplace. As an aside, this social process also seems to explain the apparently frequent need of some teachers to reinforce the "musician" label by promoting the 'public' social act of conducting school ensembles as opposed to other curricular needs, especially of students not in ensembles.

The most significant departure in the application of the labelling perspective to explicate the social action of music education students rests with the reversal of the typical attitude of the recipient of the labelling. The labelling perspective has been criticized because it is seen as directing its efforts towards fields which are "in fact commonly recognized as deviant" (Plummer, 1979, p. 97) and it is also seen as useful in studying the helpless or powerless, the "underdog" (see Gouldner, 1968). We are reminded of this most crudely when Plummer (1979, p. 89) cites Akers,

People go about minding their own business, and then 'wham', bad society comes along and slaps them with a stigmatising label. Forced into the role of deviant, the individual has little choice but to be deviant (Akers, 1973, p. 24).

Music education students could never wish for a more perfect world than one where bad society could just come along out of the blue and slap them with a musician label that would stick. In the absence of this perfect world, they engage in *interactional strategies* specifically designed to bring about this labelling. The question in my analysis can also be formulated from the reverse perspective: What happens if a person seeks to

be labelled as a particular type, that is, seeks overtly to develop an identity as a musician based in large measure upon the societal reaction by Others?

Music education students *want* to be labelled a "musician". The labelling perspective has been criticized strongly because it is seen to ignore the sources of deviancy. It appears not to concern itself with the original motivation for the first deviant act (Gibbs, 1966). But much of this concern centres on the social problems of deviancy rather than the sociological problems. It is perhaps of some importance to the social problem of killing someone to determine the motivation for the original act because we find murder socially offensive. But hardly anyone could be expected to find social offence in wishing to become a school music teacher!

In fact, it is not the first act as a musician that holds much interest at all. It is as the secondary-deviant (see Hargreaves et al. 1975, p. 5), that is, with the continuing search for affirmation as a musician that my research concerns itself. Of course, musicians have been studied as a deviant group before. The most significant for this analysis is Becker's (1963) essay on the "Culture of a Deviant Group", which, as mentioned earlier, uses dance musicians in Chicago as a case study.

We turn now to the criticism that the labelling perspective is a vacuous tautology when it suggests that things are as they are, simply because they are defined so by others. Saragin (1967) notes that,

Becker's statement is not a definition and should not be confused with one. It merely delineates the self-process by which the labelling of a person, or a group of persons, in the category of deviant is made, but fails to note the characteristics that deviants have in common, and those which are utilized by oneself and others to give persons that label (p. 9).

Therefore, as Plummer (1979) writes, "it is possible to say the same things as Becker about almost any other form of behaviour: conformity is behaviour that people so label"(p. 95). But without trying to question any validity in this criticism that may be legitimate, when the very essence of the labelling perspective as a form of identity

construction is taken, it might very well be reasonable to assign criteria to labels. This could make it possible to use the labeling perspective to explain the identity construction with any form of "master status". In fact, Friedson (1965) suggests that "sociologists might profit from paying more attention to the aggressive aspects of the labelee' s role in the process of label designation . . . the general tendency of labelling studies to concentrate on the passive rather than the aggressive aspects of the labelee, on the 'coerced imputation' of a label rather than the 'chosen internalization' of a label"(p. 98).

The notion that an individual can *seek* to be labelled as a particular type of person, for example, the music education student seeking to be labelled a musician, appears to be not so fundamentally incongruent with the labelling perspective after all. Erikson (1968) writes, "a person can 'engineer' a change in the role expectations held in his behalf rather than passively waiting for others to 'allocate' or 'assign' roles to him"(p. 338). Thus, it might be expected that music education students engage in theatrics that seek labelling from others in order to validate their claim on a musician identity.

We now turn to the notion that Hargreaves (1976, p.204) develops when he writes of the engulfment of the person by the deviant act. The concept of identity as "master status" (Hughes, 1945), seems most appropriately borrowed from the literature on deviance.

In order to focus our attention on this pivotal identity component, we need only remind ourselves that the questioned music education students insisted they wished to be seen as good musicians over all else! While Hargreaves, Hester & Mellor (1975) write that the labelling perspective considers the process of naming or typing in a particular way, they continue by noting that the process,

asserts that the naming of certain kinds of persons "deviants" – and the treatment that often accompanies such naming, can have particular consequences . . .and paradoxically, these consequences can reinforce, strengthen or increase the deviant conduct which labelling is perhaps intended to punish, diminish or remove (p. 144).

But if the labellees, the music education students, are out in their social world looking for someone to label them, there is every reasonable expectation that such labelling would in fact increase, strengthen, or reinforce their perception of themselves and their identity as a musician. Hargreaves, Hester & Mellor (1975) suggest that teachers type or categorize pupils in several stages. The final stage is *stabilization*, which the authors describe as the point "at which the teacher has a relatively clear and stable conception of the identity of the pupils" (p. 145). But for the music education student, the process of developing a truly stabilized identity appears almost doomed from the start. When, as we have seen, music students elect to proceed in the music education rather than the performance stream, and still search for an identity as a musician that they seem to define as a performer, and when they elect to proceed in the music education stream, thereby not electing the performance stream, they work directly against the most obvious clue as to their idealized identity. They cannot simply assert their identity effectively because they perceive that they have structurally denied it. Thus, to preserve and capture labelling opportunities in order to sustain such an identity as a musician, they see the need to seek to be labelled and to seek ways to disassociate themselves from the music education stigma.

Hargreaves, Hester & Mellor (1975) write, "it is through the stigmatization that the labeller's conceptualization of the pupil as a deviant person comes to make its impact on the pupil's identity"(p. 204). The data in my study clearly show that the music education stream in the music school is viewed by students and most faculty as a stigmatised group! In consequence, as a strategy for developing *dis-identifiers*, music education students seek what Goffman (1963, p. 43) refers to as prestige symbols rather than the stigma symbols. That is, not seeing many positive identity constructs in the music school for the music educator, they seek to be seen as performers and thus dis-identify themselves with the music education world in favour of the more prestigious performer identity.

The tradition within social science originating in the labelling perspective thus provides a source position to elucidate the social actions of the music education student wishing to construct an identity as a musician for himself. For the identity of this student rests on his ability to see himself and be seen by others as the musician that he wishes himself to be and that he sees the music school appearing to foster. When the student is successful enough in dis-identifying from the stigmatised group, it might be suggested that his wish to become a music teacher is at best a neutral identity component; and in many cases this is perhaps even a strongly negative identity component for those who appear less able to engulf themselves in the musician identity.

Cultural Hegemony

Now we can go back to where we left off earlier and finish up with a brief look at why all of this is important anyway. The cultural hegemony propagated upon all potential music educators by the university music schools is appreciable. Barrow and Milburn (1990, p. 249) make one of the most successful attempts to chase the definition of "profession". The authors are no doubt right when they suggest that "professional" is a "hurrah" word for teachers. But teaching is a profession to the degree it relies on the fact that there is a substantial body of professional knowledge required. Unfortunately, the music schools in almost every university are solely responsible and empowered to provide a significant amount of this knowledge base, often both musical and educational. Thus, the real needs for the teacher's musical self are not being met through the exclusive cultural hegemony of the music schools. These gatekeepers control the pool of all applicants for music education degree programs and they control the orientation and value set associated with the types of music that will ultimately form the basis of the professional knowledge that the teacher takes into the classroom. Furthermore, if they are compared as discrete sources of knowledge, the course load of education studies represents a miniscule percentage of a music teacher's knowledge base in comparison to the overwhelming proportion of music studies. Of course, unaddressed here is the reply

that this situation simply fits the general thesis of most university professors that the ability "to do" the subject is not only a necessary but also completely sufficient condition for teaching it. This is just generalized to public schools – and increasingly so by conservatives for all subjects of study – on the argument that to "teach music" you must be a "musician," the final rite of passage of which is often giving a formal graduation recital.

After all of this you might wonder what the point is. Music education students go to university and "learn" to construct an identity as a performer. They have little or no choice in this. In fact, to some degree the process has already begun beforehand, which is both how and why they have gained entrance to the music school in the first place. The socially constructed tools that students learn to do this with are available in abundance in music schools and, from the institutional point of view, while it might be nice to share some other concerns about their future lives in a classroom, for the moment at least, life can happily move along with everyone sticking to their musician self.

After graduation as a music teacher, you move into a professional life in school where you will find little or no socially constructed support for your "musician-performer" self. There is considerable support for a "teacher self" in a school. While this may not come as a huge surprise, it comes with a big price for music teachers who are still tied to their identity as a performer. Again, as I hinted at earlier, teachers conducting ensembles continue this public identity for reasons and consequences that are often quite apart from – and, some would argue, contrary to – larger curricular matters affecting all students, not just the selected few. An identity is very hard and frustrating to support without the ratification of others. Identities sought but not supported can lead people into considerable personal distress. While the school system will acknowledge your musicianship (in fact it might even demand it to get the job in the first place), it is not equipped in any real sense to support it in the socially constructed ways that you have become used to.

It is for these reasons that every effort must be made within the schools of music

and education at the university to help you create firstly an identity as a *teacher* who, secondly, happens to have, and teaches on the basis of, an extraordinary and highly developed musical skill. If that can be achieved, music education students can learn to live happier lives within the music school *and* prepare themselves for a fully socially constructed support of their essential "educator" identity when they graduate and enter the work place.

So after all that has gone on today and after the earlier enlightening introductions, I ask you again: Who am I? Well, *I teach musicians to be teachers*. My background allows my students to accept what I have to say musically because they understand that I spent a considerable amount of my life as a professional performer. In the end, my experiences teaching and supporting teaching as a positive source of 'self', or identity are the focus of what I try to provide my students. It is like a war, where the teaching self and the musician self battle it out for control over the person. Unlike most wars, however, 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.

Notes

¹ Editor: This paper is based on a guest lecture at Richland College, Dallas Texas, April 8, 2003. Given the nature of the content, the student audience, and the strategy of its delivery, the original informal tone is preserved. The opening format, citations, and certain other modifications have been made for the purposes of publication.

² Editor's note: In the system in question is often referred to as the 4+1 qualifying path, since students first attend a music school and obtain a music degree, then study one year in a Faculty (or School) of Education to obtain teaching skills and credentials.

Note: sections of this lecture have been previously published.

References

- Akers, R. L. (1973). *Deviant behaviour: A social learning approach*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Barrow, R. & Milburn, G. (1990) *A critical dictionary of educational concepts*. Toronto: Harvester Wheatshead.
- Becker, H. S. (1963/1973). *Outsiders: Studies in the sociology of deviance*. New York: Free Press.
- Becker, H. S., Geer, B. & Hughes, E. (1968). *Making the grade: The academic side of college life*. London: John Wiley & Sons.
- Berger, P. & Luckman, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Casey, D. (1986). "A profile of undergraduate music majors at Northwestern University in terms of attitude, demographics, self concept and personal orientation", unpublished EdD dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- Chafetz, J. (1978). *A primer on the construction and testing of theories in sociology*. Itasca, IL: Peacock.
- Cohen, A. (1985). *The symbolic construction of community*. London: Tavistock.
- Crossley, M. & Vulliamy, G. (1984). Case study research methods and comparative education. *Comparative Education*, 20/2.
- Denzin, N. (1978) *The research act*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Elliott, D. (1989) Key concepts in multicultural music education. *International Journal of Music Education*, 13, 11-18.
- Erikson, K. (1966). *Wayward Puritans*. New York: Wiley.
- Foote, N. (1951). "Identification as the basis for a theory of motivation". In Stone, G. & Farberman (Eds.) (1970) *Social psychology through symbolic interaction*. Waltham, MA: Ginn-Blaisdell.
- Roberts, B. (2004). Who's in the Mirror? Issues Surrounding the Identity Construction of Music Educators. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.3, #2 (July 2004). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Roberts3_2.pdf

-
- Friedson, E. (1965). "Disability as social deviance". In Sussman, M. B. (Ed.) *Sociology and rehabilitation*. American Sociological Society.
- Furlong, V. J. (1985). *The deviant pupil: Sociological perspectives*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Gibbs, J. (1966). Conceptions of deviant behavior: The old and the new. *Pacific Sociology Review*, 9, Spring.
- Giddens, A. (1987). *Social theory and modern sociology*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1971). *The discovery of grounded theory*. New York: Aldine.
- Goffman, E. (1959, 1969). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Goffman, E. (1967) *Interactional ritual*. New York: Aldine.
- Gouldner, A. (1968). The sociologist as partisan: Sociology and the welfare state. *American Sociologist*, 3.
- Hargreaves, D. H. (1975). *Interpersonal relations and education: Student edition*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Hargreaves, D. H. (1976). "Reactions to labelling". In Hammersley, M. & Woods, P. (Eds.) *The process of schooling*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Hargreaves, D. H. (1978). "Whatever happened to symbolic interactionism?" In Barton L. & Meighan (Eds.) (1978) *Sociological interpretations of schooling and classrooms: a re-appraisal*. Driffield, England: Nafferton.
- Hargreaves, D. H., Hester, S. & Mellor, F. (1975). *Deviance in classrooms*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Roberts, B. (2004). Who's in the Mirror? Issues Surrounding the Identity Construction of Music Educators. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.3, #2 (July 2004). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Roberts3_2.pdf

- Hughes, E. C. (1945). Dilemmas and contradictions of status. *American Journal of Sociology*, 50, 353-359.
- Kingsbury, H. (1984). *Music as a cultural system: Structure and process in an American conservatory*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, Indiana University.
- Lofland, J. (1969). *Deviance and identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice - Hall.
- Lofland, J. (1978). *Interaction in everyday life*. Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.
- MacDonald, R., Hargreaves, D. & Miell, D. (2002). *Musical identities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McCall, G. & Simmons, J. (1978). *Identities and interactions*. New York: Free Press.
- Plummer, K. (1979). "Misunderstanding labelling perspective", In Downes, D. & Rock, P. (Eds.) *Deviant interpretations*. Oxford: Martin Robertson.
- Rose, A. (1990). Music education in education: A critical analysis of reproduction, production and hegemony. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Rue, H. E. (1988). *The identification of components of community on the college campus*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park.
- Saragin, E. (1967). Voluntary associations among sexual deviants. *Criminologica*, 5.
- Schervisch, P. (1973). The labelling perspective: Its bias and potential in the study of political deviance. *American Sociologist*, 8.
- Schur, E. M. (1971). *Labelling deviant behavior*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Schutz, A. (1964). "The stranger", In *School and society* (1971) Milton Keynes: The Open University.
- Small, C. (1987). *Music of the common tongue*. London: Calder.
- Stone, G. P. (1970). "Appearance and self", in Stone, G. P. & Farberman, H. A. (Eds.) *Social psychology through symbolic interaction*. Waltham, MA: Ginn-Blaisdell.
- Roberts, B. (2004). Who's in the Mirror? Issues Surrounding the Identity Construction of Music Educators. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.3, #2 (July 2004).
http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Roberts3_2.pdf

Tönnies, F. (1887, 1991). *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Turner, R. H. (1960). Sponsored and contest mobility and the school system, *American Sociology Review*. 25/5.

Whyte, Wm. F. (1955). *Street corner society*. Chicago. IL: University of Chicago Press.

Roberts, B. (2004). Who's in the Mirror? Issues Surrounding the Identity Construction of Music Educators. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol.3, #2 (July 2004).
http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Roberts3_2.pdf