

Preface

I am a musician. As a child, being a musician meant being a performer: a soloist, or (failing that) a member of a string quartet, orchestra or chamber ensemble. Teaching was a second-rate occupation upon which one would embark only if performance opportunities were insufficient. This meant that one's attention should focus on the acquisition of an elite level of technical skill and a repertoire that could be played from memory at a minute's notice. How different was the reality that I faced as an adult. I was fortunate in that performance work was plentiful; however, nobody prepared me for a life away from home and the long-term isolation of travel and hour upon hour of individual practice. Later, as an orchestral musician, I discovered a much-needed collegiate; but I was unprepared for a life devoid of artistic decisions and my own creative identity. What is more, I quickly found a love of teaching, arts management and research. I resisted telling fellow performers about these newfound passions as though I were having a secret affair! In a way, I was; the new activities offered variety, independence, creativity, a sense of identity and a whole new perspective on my life in music.

Almost twenty years later, I came to realize that the hierarchy of music careers inhibits today's new graduates just as it did my own generation. The hierarchy contributes towards much of the angst experienced by intending performers who feel an agonizing sense of failure when non-performance roles are required to keep the bread on the table or to meet the responsibilities of having a family. This sense of failure contributes to attrition from the profession, and it contributes greatly to the unfortunate perception of music teachers as lesser beings. It occurred to me that the term *musician* is still used to mean *performer*. Thus used, where does it leave the majority of musicians, whose professional identity is far more diverse and complex?

To sustain their careers, musicians have to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex and competitive cultural environment. Musicians are not simply performers: a musician is someone who works within the music profession. Is success the achievement of a top solo career? To some people, absolutely; however, that does not define success for the profession. Success as a musician is marked by the achievement of sustainable practice, which requires musicians to break down attitudinal and hierarchical barriers. Success should be based upon personal career satisfaction rather than a pre-conceived hierarchy of roles, and the possibilities are endless.

I am a musician. I play, research, teach and enjoy music. No one task is more worthy than another, and I look forward towards many more years of discovering what else the profession of music has to offer.

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