

CAREER CHOICE

The voices of music students

Edited by
Taryn Arnott
and Louise Saunders

**AFRICAN
MINDS**

Published in 2008 by African Minds
for the Centre for Indigenous Instrumental Music and Dance Practices of Africa (CIIMDA)
32 Fifteenth Street, Menlo Park, Pretoria, South Africa

www.africanminds.co.za

ISBN 978-1-920299-30-9

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Designed and typeset by Greymatter & Finch

www.greymatterfinch.com

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Foreword

Professor Wim Viljoen

The Department of Music, University of Pretoria, South Africa, like any other music department anywhere, admits students on the basis of set criteria. The essence is to ensure that students, upon admission, can successfully cope with the demands of an area of study. This book is a welcome addition to the literature, especially as it relates to students' experiences of the topic.

It is not usual to investigate how candidates applying for admission achieve the entry requirements or whether they have the necessary temperament, or background, demanded by the career options in the discipline of study. Some students may have the intellectual capability to obtain an academic qualification but lack the needed emotional and innate disposition to pursue a rewarding career in the disciplinary field.

This book is about young people talking about where they are coming from, and where they are aiming to go as responsible citizens whose ambition is to contribute positively to society and humanity in their chosen professional specialisation. It is also about young people making positive observations about their environment of intellectual grooming, such that would give them the knowledge grounding that is requisite for a fulfilling career. Although the self-reflective essays are specific to studying music, the principle and self-reflection apply equally to other disciplines.

Hopefully the accounts contained herein will resonate appropriately with career choice and career-forming issues at tertiary institutions. The book also makes the point that our students are capable of making the

mature decisions that are needed to undertake the disciplinary challenges of independently editing and introducing a specialised book such as this. We as educators and mentors encourage professional projects such as this; the experience, competence, expertise and enterprise practically gained and manifested by students working with peers endure and energise the drive for original accomplishments in the professional arena.

It is my sincere wish that this book will inform and enrich many prospective students' lives!

Professor Wim Viljoen
Head: Department of Music
University of Pretoria

Foreword

Professor John Hinch

What would motivate anyone to suggest writing a major undergraduate essay on such a nebulous topic? Any topic that brings into the spotlight the multitude of questions that surround ‘the meaning of music’ must surely result in vague, complacent inexactitudes with little intrinsic meaning. And then compiling them into a book would surely and necessarily evoke scorn and derision from a variety of sectors. However, these young, second-year music-students-turned-essay-writers have obviously not considered the task in these terms and have generously poured out their inner thoughts and feelings in a rainbow of insights as seen through their individual prisms of experience. It’s apt, coming from this ‘rainbow nation’ and all the more apt, as it is the universality of their insights that shines through.

To state that ‘I am a musician’ is as unenlightening as stating ‘I am a sportsman’! It proffers limited information, and begs a host of questions. Similarly, ‘I am a music student’ is not a definitive statement. But here, these often beautiful, always thought-provoking essays show the many faces of the ‘music student’.

There are two oft-quoted statements that point to a myriad of misconceptions about this thing called ‘music’; innocent, quasi-philosophical traps for the unwary young essay writer. Firstly, ‘Music is a universal language.’ Music may well have the inherent possibility (task?) of transcending many

global boundaries, but does music ‘say’ anything? Many of these essay writers appear to believe so. If so, what message does it convey? Again, these young music students render many versions of the ‘message’, some delightful, some enlightening. Is any one more valid than the next? Does it matter? Each version, as portrayed in these essays, is necessarily unique, and the validity thereof is inherent in the aggregate of each individual.

Secondly, ‘Music is the language of the emotions.’ Clearly it cannot be, but these essays often allude to the students’ ‘love’ of and for music, and their involvement with it. Time and again their emotional link to music surfaces and soars above their more mundane explanations for music’s role in their lives. While music is obviously not the emotion itself, it certainly seems to massage their emotions in some inexplicable way. To misquote Marshall McLuhan,¹ it appears that, to these young music students, ‘music is the massage’.

How many students (and how many parents!) have asked the perennial question ‘Why study music?’ Career paths in music are crowded. Specifically, those that lead to professional, performing careers are inundated with pilgrims seeking the musical grail of self-expression through musical performance. Now that, increasingly, a degree with Music Technology gives entry to the vast world of the music industry; the stampede has begun. Then there are the two types of music teacher: those who choose to teach as their first priority; and those who wander from the performance path, who (hopefully) will discover Tryon Edwards’ maxim, ‘If you would thoroughly know anything, teach it to others,’ taking no cognizance of George Bernard Shaw’s oft-quoted, maligning statement that ‘He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches.’

Yet these essays portray many students who view a bigger, brighter future with increasing possibilities offered by the electronic age. And others who view the essential truths of the past as being still valid today, to form the cornerstone of their careers, wherever and whatever those may be. Many essays espouse elements of both of these views.

These students have – probably unbeknownst to themselves – fallen into step with Shaw, when he (benignly, this time) stated: ‘You see things and say “why”; but I dream of things and say “why not”?’ Indeed, why not a career in music!

1 www.quotationspage.com <accessed 3 June 2008> is the source of all the quotations in this Foreword.

These essays are littered with beautiful, insightful statements and phrases, many of which will resonate with those lucky enough to pick up this tome. Many will linger on in my mind. All praise to the two undergraduate editors and their perspicacious mentor Professor Meki Nzewi.

Professor John Hinch
Department of Music
University of Pretoria

Foreword

Professor Meki Nzewi

Academic studies in tertiary institutions aim to equip students with the required disciplinary knowledge and appropriate degrees and certificates that would qualify them to embark on specific professional careers. Departments in tertiary institutions prescribe matriculation subjects, grades and other knowledge backgrounds for admitting students. The human and social backgrounds, and the self-assessment and visionary factors that influence a prospective student's career ambitions, and which in turn help a student decide on a discipline of specialisation, are not commonly known. These personal histories impact strongly on a student's focus and performance in academic studies as well as post-graduation career practice.

Disciplines in academia are primarily concerned with the issues of lectures, research and the grades earned by students. Attention is seldom directed towards the critical but non-academic human and social backgrounds that discretely impact students' devotion to studies, their failures and successes, their career decisions and fulfilment in the field after graduation. It is of central human concern that academia should stimulate students to aim for attaining job fulfilment in their chosen careers. This is predicated on constant self-reflection and self-assessment that would enable a suitable choice of areas of specialisation within broad disciplines. Measures that would engineer such constant self-reflection and self-assessment along with intellectual capability should be built into students' professional training.

Self-understanding coupled with confidence in the knowledge gained could obviate the possibility of suffering frustration in a career, as much as in life generally.

I joined the Department of Music of the University of Pretoria in 2000 to take charge of African music studies. In my second year of teaching, I decided that to gain insight into what motivates students to choose music as an area of career specialisation could be instructive in designing an appropriate African music studies programme that would adequately balance the other disciplinary modules available. I was also convinced that it is important to listen to what the students had to say about institutional experiences basic to their respective motivational backgrounds and career ambitions. It then became imperative that the students should be coerced to reflect, subjectively as much as objectively, and make their voices heard regarding their expectations before admission, their institutional experiences and their career prognoses.

An essay : 'My ambition for studying music', was designed and built into the second year course requirement in African music. The students were required to write in narrative style within a given topic framework. Narrative ignites deep self-reflection and fluency in self-expression. When an original story is freely narrated, the heart reveals how it feels. The students' stories about their journey into music as a field of specialisation were very sincere and instructive. The essay became a basic module requirement, and has continued to furnish musical journeys from babyhood to institutions of higher learning. The students' voices would inform study design sensitive to adequate intellectual and practical grooming for fulfilling professional practices. The stories about the career journeys of the music students were such that they needed to be shared because of their potential to guide prospective students in opting for a career discipline. Deep reflection on one's background – academic, social and human – as well as vision of self, would enable the choice of a rewarding and fulfilling career field.

The Centre for Indigenous Instrumental Music and Dance Practices (CIIMDA) has an inclusive approach to musical arts education in Africa. Most of the students' stories in this publication are about classical European music backgrounds that have inspired decisions to study and practise music as a career in contemporary Africa. This publication has relevance for the objectives of CIIMDA because it presents an aspect of the milieu of which academic musical arts studies and professionalism on the continent must be conscious.

Since 2002, more than 150 second-year students have written narratives about the career visions that prompted them to study music and to do this at the Department of Music, University of Pretoria, South Africa. I thought it would provide further empowerment for students to introduce their own stories. I announced the intention of CIIMDA to publish samples of the stories of the second-year African music students up to 2007. I asked for volunteers from the 2007 class who would read, select and edit the book of narratives. Two students, Taryn Arnott and Louise Saunders spontaneously took up the challenge. They collected the scripts, and over the university holiday following the second semester, read through, determined criteria for selection and grouped the narratives. They also conducted the necessary follow-up research, and proceeded to edit and introduce the collection of narratives, as well as to write the introductory chapter and the concluding chapter on retrospective research. Professor John Hinch was the Head of the Department of Music when the publication was mooted. He approved and supported the idea of a book and volunteered to write a preface. When Professor Wim Viljoen became the substantive Head of Department in May 2008, he immediately endorsed the students' book project. Many students are creative and have background competence to enable demonstrative capability, initiative and leadership with regard to academic issues when given the chance. I am proud of the task Taryn and Louise have accomplished independently and confidently. On behalf of CIIMDA and the Department of Music I commend them for discharging the task in their spare time. I expect that the varied road maps to choosing a career, which the music students' voices relate in the book, will be both instructive and useful to prospective university students, lecturers, researchers, students in all disciplines, parents and the general reading public. Every human life is an informative story that could guide and inspire other lives; but alas, only a few get told.

Professor Meki Nzewi
Professor of African music – Theory and Practice
Department of Music
University of Pretoria

INTRODUCTION

The investigation of music's sociological, cultural, artistic, historical, ethnological and, in some cases, entertainment value is an increasingly noteworthy area of intellectual enquiry. Seldom, though, do authors delve into the purpose-driven choices made by students to enter into fields of musical study, or other fields for that matter. It serves as a significant social study to identify why students opt for academic disciplines of specialisation when pursuing university education.

In this publication, music students have been chosen as the focus group for identifying the reasons why prospective university students opt for particular scholastic directions.

The ever-growing importance of music within societal and cultural spheres as a result of mass exposure through television and radio media, as well as with regard to its aesthetic value as an audible art form, gives music a rising position as a field of academic study. Although this is the case, the possibility of entering into specific occupations within the musical realm, outside the performance and teaching spheres, is considered to be risky (as demonstrated in the essays) and the perceptions of emerging vocations in the industry remain vague and unsure. Thus it is of significant worth that we investigate the motivating factors that inspire this particular choice of learning in the face of hazy identification of the available professional careers.

It is necessary, before embarking on the study, to recognise the distinction often made between the study of art music and its 'academic value', and the

role that music plays in 'everyday life', as described by John Shepherd (2003: 70). In this study, we draw upon the influences of the 'everyday' social context as described by the writers of the essays, and the implication this has as a factor in choosing to study music. The recent trend towards studying the creation and value of music is to explore the social, anthropological and cultural aspects that influence musical creation, performance and reception. Through the application of these factors throughout musicological studies we bear witness to the 'emergent paradigm for the cultural study of music' (Shepherd, 2003:71). It is with this principle in mind that we investigate the movement of students (who will inevitably contribute to the future core of composers, performers, music academics and musicians) towards the academic discipline of music studies. The role of music scholars is reflected in a discussion by Jason Toynbee (2003) on creativity, who plainly remarks that 'music is fashioned by those who design and perform it'. It is thus imperative to examine the journeys taken by these creators to reach the point of creativity. Once again, the academic study of music plays a significant part in this journey, as does the road to this academic study.

This publication presents accounts given by second-year music students studying at the University of Pretoria during the 2005 to 2007 academic years, offered in the form of essays written in the Music Ethnology class. The essays on the prescribed topic, 'My personal ambition for studying music', offer considerable insight into the backgrounds of students, and the progress from interest in music to specialisation in the field.

The publication explores the decision taken by aspiring scholars to continue their musical studies in an undergraduate institution, with particular emphasis on the motivating factors behind this decision.

The essays chosen for this publication were determined by the ability of the writers to adequately express the influences, events and motivations that led to the decision to study music. The editorial commentary within the publication, furthermore, is by no means a philosophical or psychological analysis of the personal views expressed throughout the essays. It merely highlights noteworthy aspects observed regarding thought processes and events culminating in and involving musical studies, and discusses trends within the movement towards musical studies.

Although different aspects of the theme are reflected in the essays in this publication, they have been grouped into chapters according to the particular characteristics observed in the writings.

As many of the essays express, the background circumstances of the writers play an important part in the ideals behind music studies. A significant part of this background that must receive due regard is the influence that various people have had on the students. Essays that indicate the influence of specific individuals in the writer's environment are included in Chapter 1.

The common thread running through these essays is the resolute passion shared by all the students who have chosen to study music. No student in the study has indicated otherwise, and it is thus possible to presume that this passion for music plays a crucial role in the decision made by students to enter the field of music. As Clarke mentions, 'most people engage with music because they, in some way, find it meaningful, rewarding or exciting – whether from an aural perspective or some broader behavioural or social point of view' (Clarke, 2003:113). Those essays that specifically articulate this meaningful appreciation and passion are included in Chapter 2.

It is apparent that specific cultural traditions and practices mentioned in personal accounts by the students have often encouraged curiosity with regard to music. Furthermore, the social environment of the writers, including school, community and relationships, has also affected the choice to pursue careers in music. The sociological factors evident in the essays mirror De Nora's definition of sociology's 'core concerns' – 'social structure, consciousness, and social difference and division' (2004:52). Many of the students demonstrate understanding of the social milieu in which they gained musical experience prior to musical studies, and display different interests as a result of the diverse forms of exposure to social structures. This 'social difference' thus seems to impact on the appreciation of specific musical genres, styles and traditions. The social and cultural factors guiding the decision to study music are discussed in Chapter 3.

The investigation of the process 'under which careers are forged and styles developed and changed' is an important means of analysing the production of music (De Nora, 2004:43). Likewise it is vital to examine the route taken by music students in order to reach their desired careers, as music is such a field-specific area of study, influenced largely by the cultural and social milieu of musicians and composers.

Through analysis of the essays, it is evident that certain students identify future career prospects within the music field, and thus academic music studies serve as the natural stepping stone to such goals. Career ambitions for these students with visionary purposes include music therapy, music

technology, music journalism, music education, musicology, ethnomusicology, performance, accompaniment, church musician and participation in chamber music. Some of these essays are presented in Chapter 4.

The accounts offered by certain students were particularly introspective and shed light on the visions and thought processes involved when entering into academic pursuits of different disciplines. Chapter 5 includes those essays that reveal meditative insight into such thought processes guiding music students.

Many students describe music as a means to transcend cultural and social barriers, and have thus sought to pursue music in an attempt to inquire into music's ability to do so, as discussed in Chapter 6.

In many cases, students expressed doubt with regard to the possibilities of obtaining adequate employment within the music field, as discussed in Chapter 6. This discussion further examines students' perceptions of competitive music, an exploration of the different music styles appreciated by music students, the cultural implications of music studies, and the shared passion for the aesthetics of music held by those who pursue this academic career.

Chapter 7 records research conducted a few months after the essays were written. This is particularly compelling when considering students' changing perceptions over time.

The discussion of the essays revolves around a primary aspect relevant to the study of individual circumstance – that of identity. A reflection of personal identity results from the exploration of biographical details and perceptions of art in the face of culturally specific upbringings. This can be characterised in terms of 'personal identity, group identity, national identity, or cultural identity', as described by Smit (2006:69). Identity can be defined as a 'response to something beyond an individual' with its origins in 'philosophy, psychology and cultural studies' (Beard & Gloag, 2005:87). This explanation of identity is relevant when determining the factors contributing to individual ambitions in studying music.

It is thus also pertinent that we mention the fundamental existence of ambition within the essays. All the authors have recounted experiences and visions contributing to their drive to achieve. From the analysis of the essays one can explore whether ambition

- is ingrained in the individual as a part of their purpose in life;

- stems from encouragement from family and through cultural upbringing which would infiltrate into their personal interests as a 'way of life'; or
- arises from necessity, where the individual recognises his/her own aptitude for music and therefore embraces it as a successful or promising career choice.

It is interesting to question whether the ambition of these students is innate or learned behaviour. Whatever the case may be, it is evident that this ambitious behaviour aids the individuals in self-development and discovery. Philosopher Thomas Nagel states (1987:101):

Many human efforts, particularly those in service of serious ambitions rather than just comfort and survival, get some of their energy from a sense of importance – a sense that what you are doing is not just important to you, but important in some larger sense.

The study provides frank knowledge reflecting the pursuit of academic careers given by music students themselves, and gives a clear inside perspective informing readers of particular aspects influencing academic preference. As students operating within the realms of an academic institution, and with the tools of personal experience, and raw, honest accounts of the journeys of peers and past students into their academic careers as students of music, we hope to offer a distinctive perspective on the motivating factors influencing scholars when choosing fields of specialisation.

CHAPTER 1

Human factors influencing choice of specialisation

With many students who have chosen music as a field of specialisation, it is evident that the input provided by parents, family, friends, teachers and other individuals played an imperative role in the decision to study music, as is explained in the following essays. It is evident in these essays that such human inspiration provided a foundation on which musical passion could flourish, and aroused the writers' desire to be immersed in musical studies as a discipline of specialisation.

Essay 1.1 tells of parents who listened to music, which inspired the writer's interest in the saxophone. In this case, the parents' suggestion was to study music, a field in which the author would be '[surrounded by] an academic environment' while still allowing for growth in an area in which she felt passion and motivation.

The writer of Essay 1.2 comments on the role that the home environment played in her decision to study music. She was inspired by musicians in the family to excel in a similar field. This did not, however, serve as the sole influence on her chosen field of specialisation. She experienced music as a form of expression through which communication can take place between musician and listener. The desire to serve others through music was also a reason for choosing to study music.

In Essay 1.3, it is evident that the writer's original exposure to different musical styles was a result of interaction with family members and the exposure to new music resulted from involvement in his school choir.

This, and the writer's interest in popular genres, as influenced by the media through television and radio, sparked interest in the various elements of music. It was with this interest, and the desire to express himself through the 'powerful means' of music, that the author chose to continue undergraduate musical education.

In Essay 1.4, the writer writes about being surrounded by music whilst growing up. This, and her parent's love for music, inspired her personal passion for the art form. It is only through this passion, evoked by the human influences around her, that the writer felt she could reach fulfilment, which could be experienced in its ultimate form by studying music.

1.1 Madaleen Botha (2007)

Imagine yourself sitting on a bench next to a busy street. But imagine this in absolute silence. You can hear nothing ... Then gradually add the sound of the wind blowing; the singing of the birds; the rhythm of footsteps; the pitch of a car's horn blowing; the tonal colour of two people having a conversation. Everyday life contains different elements of music. My life without music would be like sitting all alone in absolute silence next to a busy street.

One of my first memories as a child is [of] where I sat at my father's feet while he played the classical guitar. I remember that I thought he sang so beautifully. I tried to sing along, but didn't know the words to the English folk songs. So, instead, I hummed the melody. This was my first encounter with songs like *Amazing Grace*, *Morning Has Broken* and *Greensleeves*.

I remember when I was older, standing next to my grandmother in church, while she sang at the top of her voice. I loved it. At the age of six I looked forward to going to church just to hear her singing her heart out. But the music in my life did not stop within the four walls of the church. On Sunday afternoons my mother would put on some swing music, and dance while she washed the dishes. She said that music can lighten up everything – even tasks as boring as washing the dishes. Through these dancing and

dishwashing afternoons I made contact with the saxophone – an instrument I would insist on playing years later.

Over the holidays, our housekeeper would bring her nine-year-old daughter along to work. Being the same age, we enjoyed each other's company thoroughly. Every day I would ask her to sing and dance for me. The stamping of her feet, the different rhythms that she clapped with her hands, the percussive sounds she made with her mouth and tongue, and the sweet Sepedi melodies all captivated me.

Then there were the visits from my grandfather's brother. He talked a lot, but played the piano even more. He loved to play Mozart's sonatas (he had a great admiration for composers like Mozart and Schubert).

I am privileged to have had a childhood filled with a variety of music genres.

In my life, music has always been a form of enjoyment – something that I turn to for relaxation. It has always been an inspiration for me. When I started formal music education, I was never pressurised to be the best. I was never forced to practise more or harder, and my parents never looked over my shoulder while I was playing my instrument. I dealt with music on my own terms. I started with the piano at the age of nine and the saxophone at the age of 11 – both at my request. I sang in the school choir from the age of seven until I was 18. I played several Unisa exams and performed every year at the local eisteddfod. I took music as a school subject until I matriculated.

At the end of high school I still [felt uncertain about] my future. I didn't know what I wanted to study and thought of working in Europe for a year. My parents suggested that I should surround myself [with] an academic environment by studying BMus and then decide later on what I want to do with my life. I agreed to their suggestion and a year and a half later I am still not sure about my career plans, though I am at least doing something constructive in the meantime.

Every morning when [I wake] up, the first thing I do is turn on the radio. I listen to three different radio stations: Highveld Stereo, Classic FM and Tuks FM. Highveld Stereo broadcasts all the mainstream chart-topping songs and I am therefore aware of the many new artists and songs that are entering the music scene. I always look forward to Sundays when Tuks FM plays jazz and swing music. Classic FM offers a variety of music, and it is on this station that I was first exposed to Ladysmith Black Mambazo's partnership

with the English Chamber Orchestra through the song *Dona Nobis Pacem*. My CD collection contains a great variety of music: from Johnny Clegg to Enya; from Karen Zoid to Tracy Chapman. There are styles of music that I do not favour. I do not listen to heavy metal. I experience this type of music as an angry genre with people screaming instead of singing, and there are no definite harmonies. This music is noise to me. Another genre of music that I dislike is *Boeremusiek*. Maybe my judgement regarding this style of music is unfair, but I associate it with middle-aged men sitting around, talking about rugby and drinking beer. This image causes personal irritation and I therefore avoid this music.

Being a saxophone student, I have contact with jazz repertoire. I enjoy this genre thoroughly – mainly because of the amount of freedom that it gives one with improvising. I like the fact that one can truly express oneself and show a bit of individuality through improvisation. Jazz relaxes me, and that is one of the main reasons why I have chosen the saxophone as my first instrument. Piano, as my second instrument, allows me to have contact with the impressionist composer Claude Debussy. He is my favourite composer because of his lyrical and flowing approach to music and the calmness it creates within me.

If I do follow a career in music one day, I will consider specialising in music technology, music journalism or music therapy. I feel that it is important to keep up with new developments and therefore think that music technology – which is a new and fast-growing field – is a great direction to specialise in.

I have always had a passion for languages and I read a lot. I am currently taking German as an extra subject. Music journalism would be an applicable career as it is a combination of two of my greatest interests: music and language.

Growing up with parents who are both medical doctors, I am used to an environment where healing and knowledge of the human body is an essential part of the environment. Therefore I would consider a career as a music therapist, which would entail treating disabilities through music.

The term music is a very broad one, one that includes genres from folk to jazz; African music to music of the Baroque. Being a student in the art of music, I feel that it is important to have contact with as many of these genres as possible. I do appreciate the University's attempt to cover a variety of music, as I have already had contact with music from the Baroque, the

Classical period and the Romantic period of the nineteenth century, as well as African and Indian music. I hope that the variety of music will continue in the syllabi of the next five semesters of my BMus degree.

Many of my fellow students will one day have to stand their ground in the music industry. Therefore I would suggest maybe including some kind of business subject in the syllabus – a subject that will teach us more about how to start one's own business; the rights of an artist; what is illegal and what is not in terms of copyrighting, etc.

No-one likes being criticised, but I think it is important to listen to other people's advice and opinions, and make the necessary changes if they are for the better. In that case I would suggest a less formal approach regarding performance classes. I am aware of the fact that the current approach to performance classes is preparing students for formal examinations and concerts, which is a positive point. In that case I would [suggest] a second class, one which has a more relaxed atmosphere and is not compulsory for all students. This class must take place in a smaller room where the student would play and the rest of the class would comment afterwards. This will teach the performing student how to handle critique and advice, and will offer the listener the opportunity to master the art of giving constructive critique.

People have often asked me why I study music, or what made me decide to play music. I still do not know the answer to that question. Maybe there is no right answer. It could be to broaden my horizons or to entertain others. Maybe it is because I did not know what else to study, or that I wanted to please my parents. I like to think that it is to open other peoples' hearts, and to show them something of the sublime. Above all, I want to create beauty, or rather be the messenger of an art that has been composed by the Creator of all beauty. I have to agree with Friedrich Nietzsche's notion, that without music, life would be a mistake.

1.2 Amoré Dippenaar (2007)

Everything that I have [striven] to excel in thus far in my life is from what I experienced at home. Thus, music, something I am striving to excel in, started at home. I remember seeing and hearing my mother play the organ and asking her to teach me to play. She taught me chopsticks and the musical alphabet on the organ. From there on I kept on asking and begging to learn how to play the piano. I wanted to play the piano because many of my friends were taking piano lessons. So, at the age of nine, I started taking piano lessons. Before I started my piano lessons, I had been taking ballet for two years. Thus, I had already been exercising how to express myself through music – I loved moving to music.

The church was our family's home away from home. My father is a pastor and my mother has always been very active in the work of the church. Therefore, we would be in church every Sunday. Being in a charismatic church, praise and worship was very important. At each service, the whole congregation would be led in praise and worship by the worship team. The worship team consisted of the worship leader, who sang and played the guitar, two or three singers, a Hammond organist, a pianist and a drummer. If my mother wasn't playing the organ, she was singing, and my father always sang.

At special church functions my parents would sing duets. My mother would [play the accompaniment] and my father would freely harmonise. If I had to be the judge of it, I would say my musical talent comes from my father's side of the family. My father's cousin was the worship leader. He could play the guitar and saxophone and all his children learnt to play musical instruments. Like my father he could also harmonise freely. Their fathers, who were brothers, were also ... worship leaders.

The music that I heard in church therefore formed part of my life. I would sing the choruses at home. Jimmy Swaggert is a name that comes to mind. He was a gospel composer from America. My parents had all his songbooks and the duets that they used to sing would come from them. The structure of his songs would usually be verse, chorus, verse, chorus, and then the chorus was repeated. Harmonically it was not difficult. He used mainly the primary chords and the relative minor, and he almost never modulated.

As my piano-playing skill improved, I became eager to play the songs we sang in church. Nobody in the worship team played [from] sheet music, but they played from chord charts. Therefore I had to figure out the melody by myself and this helped me to practise my ear. I will always be grateful for the skill I learnt from playing a song without having the music.

I started taking piano lessons at my primary school. It was a relatively small school with only two music teachers. Nonetheless, it was an important part of the school. We used to have an hour in a week where the whole class would go to the music class to sing.

As I showed talent in playing the piano, my teacher [entered] me for Unisa examinations. These exams taught me how to play under pressure. They helped build my confidence and the report given afterwards helped me to improve ... my skill.

... I had to play four pieces in each [Unisa] exam. These four pieces had to be from four different periods. Through these exams, I learnt about the Baroque, Classical, Romantic and twentieth century eras. From early on, I had a greater interest in the Romantic era.

The fact that I needed to practise to receive good marks and to make progress in my skill taught me discipline for other aspects of my life as well. It taught me to keep on practising, even if it seemed as though I wasn't getting anywhere. The satisfaction that always followed after I mastered a piece was also worth all the effort.

After two years of lessons we moved from a small town to Witbank, which was much bigger. This meant a new teacher and more possibilities. Here I participated in the annual arts festival. I learnt to play in front of many people and I loved performing. I also started flute lessons with this particular teacher, played Unisa flute exams and played in an ensemble. The ensemble played background music once a month in the theatre. The teacher had a hall at her house and she organised many musical evenings. She encouraged me to perform and especially to compose, even though my compositions were very simple. Lessons with her were never torture, and my love for music just grew because of her influence.

I always wanted to be a concert pianist, but in my first year of high school we moved again, to a town called Ermelo. Though it was smaller than Witbank, it had a better music centre. The school had its own auditorium [and employed] ten music teachers. Here I started lessons in the violin as well.

Very soon all my time was consumed by musical activities: lessons, ensemble practices and, as I loved singing, choir practices.

Every second year the school [presented] a production of an operetta, using the pupils from the school. When I was in Grade 11, the school [produced] *The Sound of Music*, and I was given the leading role. The experience was unforgettable and for the first time I put aside my dream of becoming a concert pianist and had a new dream of singing on stage. This is still my dream today. Therefore this school was a very important part of my life.

My love for the piano did not subside though. In my matric year I finished my Grade 8 Unisa examination. At this school I also finished my Grade 7 Unisa examination in flute as well as Grade 5 Unisa examination in violin.

As I am studying music, I am surrounded by classical music daily. I hear it in the practice rooms, in every subject and then also at home where I myself listen to or play music. I seldom [listen to] classical music on my radio though.

I listen to gospel music all the time. I like listening to any kind of gospel genre, but mostly ... love listening to praise and worship music. I like listening to Hillsong, a gospel group from a church in Australia. Go to any charismatic church in Pretoria and you will find that songs from Hillsong are being sung and, as previously [mentioned], the church is very important to me, and therefore the music as well.

I live in a residence, House Erika, at the University of Pretoria. Here there are many cultural activities to participate in. Currently I am singing in our residence's serenade group. We have to work out a programme of 15 minutes according to a theme, and we will ... be judged in the residential competition. The material that we use is from a variety of genres of pop music, classical music and traditional music. It creates [an] opportunity to be very creative when arranging songs. It is a good learning experience for me, as I can use my classical education to use good harmonies, and I can help the girls to sing effectively by teaching them the right singing techniques and to sing musically.

I have a few friends in House Erika [who] are very musical, but they don't study music.

We often like to come together to make music, to sing and to harmonise together.

I study music because, first of all, I love it. I excelled academically and

had the grades to study anything from accounting to medicine. I knew, though, that I wouldn't be happy doing anything else but music.

When I came to university I didn't know for certain what I would do when I [finish] studying. Today, being in my second year, I still don't know exactly where I will end up. What I do know is that I love being on stage. I enjoy entertaining people. When I am on stage I want to take the audience on a journey with me, and at the end of my performance I want them to leave with their lives enriched.

I love classical music. I am here studying it and perfecting my skill in it. If I want to 'speak' to audiences throughout the country, though, I would limit my options if I just used classical music as a tool. Rather, I want to combine different genres of music. I am still here, studying classical music, because I believe classical training is the best training. With it as a foundation, one can build anything upon it.

Apart from performing, I would love to be involved in the school structure. It has been my experience that music teachers struggle to get support from other teachers. Yet, I also find that some music teachers do not appreciate the other teachers. I would like to bridge this gap. I want to be the kind of music teacher [who] loves her subject and keeps it alive, but I also want to realise that I need to show my support [for] the rest of the school.

My greatest dream is to one day compose gospel music and to sing it to the world. Whether I [will] do this by touring the world or making recordings of my music, I do not know yet.

With regard to the music department, [I was] overwhelmed [by it] in my first few days at the university. I was amazed at all the opportunities available. The university has some of the best lecturers in the country, and we have a music library that has a wide range of audio recordings, books and other facilities. What I like about our faculty is that we are all familiar with [one another]. One knows everybody in one's class, and even the students in the third- and fourth-year groups.

The department is very classically orientated. I feel, though, that the department must become more aware of the music that is part of [present-day] life. I would suggest the inclusion of a subject on modern music.

The performance classes are also a point of concern. They seem to be dominated by piano recitals. Students dread the classes. It would be good to put in more colour, by having students play ... other instruments. I, for one, have never heard a clarinet player play in the performance class, or a

harpichord player. If every instrument that [is taught] at the university is given a chance to be performed in the performance class, it would already be a great improvement.

Overall I enjoy ... studying at the faculty and appreciate everything [that is done] for us.

1.3 Lesego Mosupyoe (2005)

In this essay, I discuss my personal definition of music and give an account of my experiences with music, starting with my early childhood. I also discuss how these experiences, as well as other aspects of my life, have shaped my ideas and goals. In the final part of my discussion, I state problems facing music students and offer solutions.

I find it necessary to give my personal definition of music, as it plays an important role in shaping my ideas and goals. In my opinion, music can be defined as a means of expression through sound, using whatever materials are available and/or preferred. What I mean by 'materials' includes both media (instruments), as well as compositional techniques.

I have observed that all musicians, both performers and composers, regardless of the milieu in which they operate and the kind of sounds they produce, have the following in common: they all seek to express their ideas and emotions through their art. The type of music produced by a musician is influenced by the materials found in his environment. In some cases, a musician has a limited choice of materials. A young boy living in a rural African village, for example, will seek to express himself through song and with traditional or handmade instruments. As his contact with non-traditional music is limited, the sound he produces will be derived from the music of his culture. A young boy living in a city, on the other hand, will have a greater variety of sound worlds to choose from. He may choose, for example, to study European classical music or to play in a rock band. The sound he produces will show the influence of a greater variety of music types. The above definition is the result of my exposure to many different music

types. In retrospect I realise that, throughout my life, I have found music a powerful means of expression and have sought to express myself through various styles and genres. During my early childhood I sang lively church and wedding songs to express joy. In my early teens I turned towards popular genres such as kwaito and hip-hop to guide me in the search for a personal identity. My exposure to various styles and genres will be discussed in greater detail later in the essay.

During my early childhood I was exposed to a variety of musical styles and genres. This was largely as a result of growing up in a large family of individuals with different tastes. I was introduced to traditional songs (most of which were wedding songs), church music, as well as various local and international popular genres. The latter included jazz, soul and *umbaqanga*. These genres are represented by Abdullah Ibrahim, Aretha Franklin, and Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens respectively. I became acquainted with these genres mostly through television, radio and recordings. Except for weddings, I have no recollection of attending live music performances. During my preschool years, as well as during my first three years of school, I became acquainted with Tswana children's songs, as well as with contemporary choral music. This exposure was the result of classroom activities, playing and participation in the school choir. Social functions such as weddings and parties also played a role in my musical upbringing.

A turn of events is marked by the period which began roughly in my eleventh year. During this period, I began searching for the genres which appealed to me the most. My guides were television, radio and recordings, which I began to collect on audio and video cassettes. My search led me to both local and international popular genres. Among the former, kwaito was the most prominent. I enjoyed, among others, the music of Arthur, Mdu, Mashamplani, Tkzee and Trompies. My favourite international genres during this period were rhythm and blues (R&B), rap and rock'n'roll. These genres were represented by Keith Sweat, Tupac Shakur and Elton John.

I began my formal music studies in 1999. I was offered the opportunity to take music as a subject and, as I had always longed to learn an instrument, I accepted. My studies included music theory, history and piano, and the basis of my studies was Western classical music. Prior to this, I had had little exposure to this style and had little interest in it. This is due to the fact that little of it was played in my family and at school. During 1999, Western classical music, perhaps as it was new to me, began to dominate my musical

tastes. I began listening to as much of it as possible and reading avidly about it, especially about the lives of well-known performers and composers. In 2000, I began studying a second instrument, the flute, and my relationship with classical music grew.

In 1999, I already began considering entering into a career in music. To prepare myself for this, I began performing as often as possible (mostly at school functions and eisteddfods) and began to try my hand at composition and improvisation. In 2003, after having been exposed to a variety of fields of study, of which criminology, politics, languages and ecology interested me the most, I chose to pursue a career in classical music. By this time, music had taken on added meaning in my life, and my aim was to begin searching for ways in which I could use music not only to earn a living, but also to comment on and suggest solutions for social problems.

Furthermore, following a visit to Germany in June and July 2002, I became aware of the fact that I knew little about my country and continent. I began searching for an African identity, striving to absorb as much knowledge as possible about all matters African. Naturally, my search for an African identity became part of my musical activities. In 2003, I began listening to and reading about South African art music. Through the music library of the University of Pretoria, I became acquainted with the music of, among others, Arnold van Wyk, Hubert du Plessis, Stefans Grove and Alexander Johnson.

My search for an African identity through music began taking shape in January 2004, when I met Professor Meki Nzewi. This man introduced me to African philosophies of musical arts and life, as well as to neo-African piano music by Nigerian composers. I now use this knowledge as a basis for my search. Since January 2004, I have been involved in a quest for knowledge about African musical arts, cultures and languages. The search continues. My present activities include a study of African art music – piano music in particular.

I have, however, not lost interest in other music types. I still enjoy performing and studying Western classical music and have begun exploring jazz. Although my main area of interest is African music, I strive to acquire as much knowledge as possible of music in general. The other music types discussed previously now play a minor role in my life, although I still enjoy listening to them.

Although my interest lies mainly in performance studies and composition,

I strive to learn as much as possible about other fields of study. I live in a country full of opportunities and believe that I will only be able to use these opportunities well if I am armed with knowledge and skills. I believe that the University of Pretoria's music department is well equipped for training musicians for the new South Africa. The department's undergraduate courses are well balanced and serve as a good introduction to the world of music. The great variety of activities (for example, performance classes and research seminars), the facilities (for example, the library), as well as job opportunities (for example tutoring and research assistance) places students at an advantage. I therefore try to seize as many of the opportunities offered by the department as possible.

I do, however, experience problems with the department's syllabi. I find that, in some subjects, knowledge is imposed upon students and that tests and examinations do the students more harm than good. For History of Music, for example, one is expected to retain the great mass of information given in lectures and be able to reproduce it during tests and examinations. Furthermore, students are not allowed to choose their own research topics for assignments. This results in the student trying to memorise as many facts as possible instead of thinking critically about the issues being discussed. Secondly, the student becomes more concerned with doing 'what is right' in order to please the lecturer, and does not think about how the knowledge is relevant to him/herself. Furthermore, it hinders the student from investigating those aspects which he/she finds interesting. This could perhaps be remedied by replacing examinations with research projects and by allowing the student a variety of topics to choose from, or by telling students exactly what will be asked in the examination. Steps in this direction have been taken by some lecturers, including Mr John Coulter and Professor Meki Nzewi. I find the methods of these lecturers beneficial and suggest that they be further tested and implemented.

The statement of this problem is not to deny that students can and should engage in their own initiative, but is to bring to light the possible role that could be played by lecturers in assisting students to realise these initiatives.

Also problematic is the fact that most undergraduate modules place emphasis on Western classical music and that little provision is made for other music types. The solution for this problem lies with students. They should strive to integrate their study of Western art music with that of the 'minority subjects'. They should, for example, strive to learn about how

Western media are used in other types of music. An example of this is the drummatic piano style, an approach to piano composition followed by composers such as Joshua Uzoigwe and Christian Onyeji. Composers of drummatic piano music strive to give the piano an African voice by, among other things, using traditional African compositional theories and making the piano behave like African instruments.

In this essay, I have revealed that music has always been an important part of my life and that my musical tastes have been influenced by my environment. I have also revealed that my musical ideas and goals are continuously changing. Lastly, I have revealed that both lecturers and students can aid in fighting the problems facing music students.

1.4 Taryn Arnott (2007)

In my childhood home, there was always music. Whether the momentary goal involved travel, food, discussion or play, music was always there to serve as ... accompaniment. I count myself fortunate to have grown up in an environment where my parents' appreciation of music ... [allowed] me to adopt this absorption with music so naturally.

In all of my earliest memories, I can point out a familiar musical association which served as the backdrop for the occasions which were deserving of holding such a position in my mind. I recall Sunday dinners, which were never spent in silence, owing to the presence of the music which now serves as the source of my nostalgia. Leonard Cohen's ballads of heartache and war would steer us through the vegetables of the main course, and Ravel would carry us through the ice-cream.

The music that I was directly exposed to covered many genres, including old and new. My mother's interest in the Baroque, Classical and Romantic eras were complemented by my father's appreciation of popular and rock music of the 60s, 70s and 80s. It was my mother who exposed me to the Beatles – a defining act in the formation of my musical appreciation thereof, and my father who gave me a taste of the music of Mike Batt and Queen.

I remember days spent travelling, with Vivaldi guiding us as we drove. Indeed, this served to enhance every emotion which I experienced in those moments, romanticising my every observation of scenery and happenings along the road. Similarly, though, I remember this same tendency in my emotion and appreciation of the sounds of Bob Dylan and Jethro Tull. It is perhaps this that has determined a tendency in my nature to experience every emotion in its romanticised version, rather than facing the raw confrontation. The radically different connotations of these specific genres at the time did not prevent my overactive imagination from feeling parallel emotions when listening to both. My inability to distinguish between the radical differences in the music allowed me to experience it on a purely emotional level, rather than to cloud this judgement with any historical, theoretical or biased opinions thereof.

Perhaps it was the admiration for my mother, or even the approval I sought from her, that led me to bang out notes on my ouma's piano at every opportunity, until I progressed [beyond] the margins of *Chopsticks* and began piano lessons at the age of nine. In retrospect, I do not recall my love for this [particular] piano being in any way related to my love for music, though the fascination with both existed. Initially, I loved every lesson and moment spent playing, until the time in my young teens when playing the piano became work for me. I did, however, make up in my love for music what I lacked in enthusiasm for practising – an aspect which still continues to carry me through my musical career.

The decision to study music was not made immediately after graduating from high school. My initial move into a direction where career security was guaranteed was one that did not fulfil my emotional and spiritual values. My inability to eagerly immerse myself in the knowledge fed to me during my time spent studying for a BA Journalism degree allowed me to realise the true path I wished to follow. My dissatisfaction was only redeemable by the solace I found in the one [activity that ... gratifies] my emotional needs. Merely listening to music inspires my ability to convert experience into knowledge, and knowledge into my own youthful interpretation thereof, [which] may eventually lead to the formation of wisdom. My conclusion was that becoming engrossed ... in this field would ensure intellectual and, thus, spiritual contentment. My only hesitation was based on the idea that making music my sole purpose would cause it to lose its value.

This fear has, however, grown smaller, as the potential for diverse study

presented every day opens up many opportunities and ideas for [a future career in] music. Different fields of specialisation ensure a vast number of prospects to examine in the field of music. The foundation of my emotional understanding of music has become but one of the very many areas open for exploration that interest me. The varied field of musicological study offers me many opportunities for academic stimulation. Every day of studying brings about a new realisation of my own ignorance of the historical, ethnological, and practical applications of music. With this realisation comes the desire to overcome this ignorance, and so I continue to absorb as much knowledge as possible through my studies. When it comes to the practical aspects of music (perhaps the most time-consuming aspect of the BMus degree), I have found it important to maintain the spiritual appreciation of the music that is being performed, as the understanding of the performance of music brings with it the understanding of the quality and structural forms of music.

It continues to amaze me that sound can be manipulated and refined to such an extent that it creates the pure perfection that is music. It is baffling that such an apparently simple concept can indeed be so complex that it serves as a medium for expression and evocation of such intense emotion – only understandable to those who have experienced this overwhelming power of music for themselves. It is only music that has the ability to momentarily relieve its listener from the burdens of reality. It is only music that can offer such complete relief when used to express feeling. It is music that gives meaning to facets of life that would otherwise lose the significance that music is able to secure within them.

There is no doubt that the music which surrounded me as a child is the music that still interests me today. My personal musical taste now covers a few very different fields. The music of the Romantic, Modern, and Post-modern eras interests me for the foundation it has created for current music creation and composition. The music of modern-day obscure and popular culture, as well as the revival of folk music and the creation of original pop and rock music in the 50s, 60s and 70s, from which this music originates, interests me. I may never be sure [whether] it was the nurturing of my musical knowledge and appreciation by my parents that cultivated [my] appreciation for this art, or if it is the product of my nature – the nature which is essentially a product of their natures. Nevertheless, the force of appreciation is strong within me.

Looking back, I am able to identify one relevant point when examining

my childhood musical tastes that remains relevant in my current field of study. I am unable, though, to decide whether it was the aesthetic and emotional value of the music that induced such joy in ... moments, or that [those] moments gave the music joyful connotations ... Whatever the conclusion, it is sure that the [joy in] the two – the experiences accompanied by the music, and the music – [is the fundamental link] when examining the spiritual value of music in [my own] growth.

In examining the [nature of my current] education in music, I realise the absolute importance of examining the historical foundations upon which all music is built (one cannot accurately view modern culture without first understanding its origins), though I feel it is only logical to use this information as a foundation for the creation of new theories focusing on new fields in musicology. I find that it is pertinent to focus my attention on the spiritual, social and aesthetic relevance of popular and folk music to modern Western culture.

While the teaching of knowledge and theories involving historical music to scholars of music is relevant, [this becomes part of a 'regurgitant' cycle with scholars refining] these, rather than creating new theories. I feel there is a desperate need for the investigation of more recent music and culture in the study of music. Although [literature on the origins of the popular and obscure music of recent times is available], there is an absence of academic literature ... on the connections between this popular music and modern society. I believe that the two are highly significant to one another and should ... be studied together. The creation of this music should be considered within its historical and emotional contexts, and with the implications that this music has [for] society. I aim to explore these fields [from] an academic perspective, and create more much needed literature on this subject. Thus I aim to focus on a field that is relevant to the lives and culture not only of musicians and scholars of music but also of the layman, whose relevance in society is prevalent when determining cultural and sociological factors.

It would ... be beneficial if the Department of Music would encourage ... independent academic study amongst students. The infrastructure for this type of study exists within the department, though it is not promoted from an early stage in the BMus degree. Also, concentration on music studies within culture-specific and sociological spheres would aid this direction within my course, though modules offered on these aspects are few.

I am yet to discover the exact direction my interest will take, as I still

require a sturdier foundation for the task of developing new and different theories in musicology. Should this not be the path I follow, I hope that my musical career will lead me into music journalism.

My current goal is ... to fulfil my insatiable desire for the pleasure that music brings me. Whether it is this music that [defines] my personal ambition, or my ambition that has created my intense [approach to] the study of music, I feel confident that my current position in studying music will lead me to an ultimate destination. I have accepted the importance of music in my life as both comfort and inspiration in my reality, and thus the many discoveries I make in my engagement with it is satisfaction enough.

CHAPTER 2

Academic fulfilment through musical exploration, and music as a lifestyle

There are some writers whose essays express the role music plays, not only as their field of study, but also as a way of life. For these students, there was never any other choice but to study music, as they express that their lives exist merely to fulfil the purpose of musical exploration and practice.

Expression, whether through performing, composing or writing, is one of the most creative and mysterious experiences a musician will conjure. Those who claim that music defines their lives are not being completely unrealistic. They are people who find their purpose in expression. Music is central to their lives. Their decisions and life prospects are dominated by their music.

One interpretation is that life can be seen as one of two things and lived in one of two ways. Firstly, life can be experienced simply as a capability for growth, functional activity and continual change until death. Secondly, it can be the way in which the individual strives to give life purpose and meaning. The first way suggests mechanical existence and the other way is life lived with human sensitivity.

As humans, we feel or we choose not to feel. A musician without feeling would cease to make music. When music is central in the lives of such feeling people, they surely choose to feel, express and provide the world with the music to which we all can relate.

Philosopher Thomas Nagel states (1987:96): 'If there's any point at all to

what we do, we have to find it within our own lives.’ Nagel then goes on to rationalise this statement to conclude that one’s existence is somewhat insignificant. It is enticing to take this statement and rationalise it from a different standpoint with reference to the essays in this chapter.

The writer of Essay 2.1 realises that the pursuit of a career as a concert pianist could be seen as a lonely one, but he knowingly chooses this path for its suitability to his nature. He uses performance to express his love of music. He then goes on to say how he lives for and loves the stage. It is evident that he indulges in performance and finds solace and meaning in life through this practice.

The writer of Essay 2.2 describes her instrument as a companion and her music as a life-altering force. She uses her talent to realise the possibilities that music presents.

The writer of Essay 2.3 describes how music has an effect and affect in many areas of his life. He does not experience any stimulation equal to that of his joyous experience of music. He feels that the diverse field of music provides him with opportunity without sacrificing life fulfilment.

In Essay 2.4 the writer mentions that the first way by which he learnt to express his sentiments was through music. He feels his purpose is to change the lives of those around him, using music as his tool. He has discovered the music he wishes to pursue and, although somewhat intolerant of other styles of music, he expresses and justifies his approach to music and life.

To find the correlation between music and most aspects of life is equal to using music as validation for meaning in life. The writer of Essay 2.5 illustrates this mentality throughout her essay. She desires education in music in the hope that it will provide her with depth as a creator of music and as a performer.

The writer of Essay 2.6 started exercising his talent early in life and unknowingly refined this talent throughout his early years. That his extreme focus on his career is driven by his love for music is evident throughout the essay.

From the essays presented in this chapter, it is obvious that all those who give music a central place in their lives feel a need to share their music. Thus it becomes clear that these individuals experience music as something far greater than many others do. The only way to sum up the role of music in their lives, without reiterating that ‘music is their life’, is by viewing music as a mystical experience for each of them and furthermore as an influential, intangible force which permeates every area of their being.

2.1 Gareth Edward Ross (2006)

When I was a child, I was not exposed to a variety of styles of music, as my family is not at all musical. I listened to the radio, and could say that I took hold of the pop music culture, even though I felt that it did not suit me. I had class music in primary school where we played on xylophones and other percussion instruments, but at that stage I was not interested in music as a hobby.

[Listening] to the radio (albeit infrequently), I had only known pop music until the age of 12 and since it was the only genre to which I was exposed, I enjoyed it in a sense. However, once I began piano lessons (inspired by a friend who also took piano), I soon realised that classical music connected with me in a way that no other music genre can. It is hard to describe this feeling, but when I play or listen to classical music, it feels as if I am reconnecting with something that I have lost and have not been able to find for a very long time.

I bought my first classical CD at the age of 11 and since then I have built up a large collection – close to 300 disks. I could never part with any of these CDs as each one has something unique and special which makes me value it. I have also learnt a [great deal] about music by reading the booklet notes contained in the CD case. For me, my CD collection is my treasure.

While I was buying all my classical CDs, my sister (who is four years older than I am) was buying what she called ‘normal’ CDs [recordings of music] such as pop rock, dance and alternative. Naturally, I also began to listen to her music, then later actually [came to like] it. With all this music happening between her and me, [my knowledge of music became] well-rounded.

I began piano lessons when I was 11 and was so keen and hard working that by the end of my first year of piano studies, I played [the] Unisa Grade 3 examination and passed with distinction. I remember that, in those early years, I had ... a passion for learning new pieces because I became bored quickly. I would practise for about two hours a day, which is a great deal for a child. I liked practising technical work, for example scales.

Because I did not like playing sports, the piano became an important part of my life. It was not a hobby for me, but something I felt I could not

live without. During break times at school, I would not go outside and play with other children; instead I went to my teacher's room and practised. [During] the next year I realised that piano would be my life.

My reason for studying music is because music is my life, my greatest passion and my reason for living. If I did not have the piano in my life, I would have absolutely no clue of what my choice of career would be. I realised this at an early age, and in doing so I found out what it takes to be a concert pianist: practice! The life of a concert pianist could be seen as a lonely one, always at the piano, day in and day out, but for me it is wonderful. I love sitting at the piano, working on something in anticipation of it being perfect. I cannot stop learning new repertoire which is something else I thoroughly enjoy. I was made for music!

I understand that balance is an essential part in anyone's life. I break away from classical music once or twice a week by going out with my friends to a club. At the clubs they play various genres of music, for example pop, funky house and dance, all of which I thoroughly enjoy. It is relaxing for me to dance and listen to this music as it does not require much actual listening. It is created for one to enjoy without much thought.

At this time in my life, I listen to many different genres of music, and within each genre, I find something that I like. While I will always love classical music the most, I enjoy taking a break from it and listening to Madonna, The Black Eyed Peas or even the Club Anthem's CDs. After [listening] to this commercial music and then [playing] a classical CD, I realise that, for me, classical music is true music. It never ceases to speak to my soul. As a performer, I play all genres of classical music. I can honestly say that I adore each genre from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. [I do] have favourite composers but [choosing] a specific genre is extremely difficult, as I enjoy performing works from all periods.

The career that I would like to [pursue after] my music studies is [that of] a concert pianist. I live for and love the stage. Every time I walk on stage, I feel as if it is my home [and] I feel totally relaxed and comfortable. Before a performance I am nervous but once I am seated at the piano, adrenaline kicks in and the nerves disappear. I realise that becoming a concert pianist is a long, hard and tedious process. I am more than willing to overcome any challenges that life throws at me. I feel that music is my purpose, and I know that my life is meaningless without it.

If being a concert pianist does not work out for me, I honestly have

no idea what I will do. Thinking about it now, I cannot imagine what career path I would follow, should performing not happen. The only other option that I would perhaps undertake would be [conducting]. Since I enjoy orchestral music and each of the various instruments, I think that it would be a good choice.

As I want to be a performer, I find that the University of Pretoria's Department of Music is far too focused on the academic work [rather] than ... performance practice. I feel that a subject such as Chamber Music should be compulsory in the first and second years as it helps students with [performing] in groups [and] repertoire knowledge and is a fun subject. I can think of no better way to have fun than when two or more musicians get together and make music.

A great aspect of the department is the performance class that [takes place] once a week. With these concerts, students learn new repertoire just by listening to the concerts [and having] the opportunity to perform on stage. This will help them deal with the pressures of performing in public and will hopefully make them enjoy it.

I wish the department could be split up into two different courses, perhaps a normal BMus degree and ... a performance degree. It would allow the students more options with regard to what they want to do with music. In the performance degree, one could have subjects such as Piano Repertoire (for pianists), [in which,] for a whole lecture [period], the class would listen to important music written for the piano, as well as hear different pianists from the older and newer generations.

[Such a course] could include watching DVDs of pianists, which allows one to notice [the particular] characteristics of each performer. Along with this, students could be encouraged to watch live recitals taking place at the time, and be asked to provide a critique of the recital. This would [require students to] listen to concerts and [become] able to report back on what they did or did not like, which could be applied to their own playing.

There could be lectures about [performance as such] that include: how to overcome nerves, how to prepare oneself before a concert, how to choose a well-balanced programme, the pressures of performing and different acoustics. These types of lectures would be invaluable to the performer. I still think that subjects such as History and Theory are important but in a performance degree these subjects would not contain large volumes of work. This would allow students enough time to practise.

While I realise that performing is not for everyone, there are people studying music [who] want to be performers. Having a performance degree that is offered from the first year [would be] an excellent idea, in my opinion.

In conclusion, I am extremely satisfied with the fact that I have chosen music as [a] career. It gives me great joy to wake up every morning [looking] forward to going to university, and even more specifically to playing the piano. [As] I have said, without music my life [would be] meaningless.

2.2 Yee Chen (Eriel) Huang (2005)

My personal ambition in studying music started with my first encounter with an Orff class at the age of two, banging away on percussion instruments [and] piano keys at the age of three, and sawing violin strings at the age of six. I started off ... wanting to be a ballet dancer, then an artist, but the wooden instrument found its way into my hand, and has remained there and in my life ever since. I can say it has been the most stubborn thing [besides myself].

Like every person in this world, I want to make a difference; like every artist in this world, I want to be recognised; like every musician in this world I want to be heard. And [this] is my personal ambition in studying music.

To tell you the truth, I dislike this place a great deal, including the people. But it is a place to get training – not the best, I believe, but sufficient to move along to greener pastures. So why am I here? I treat this place as a stepping stone, a toll gate to my next stop. What is my ultimate goal? I can tell you now, but I cannot guarantee that I would want to be doing the same after a few years. First, I wanted to be a child prodigy, then old age hit (or more the realisation of growing up and getting old). Then I wanted to be the next Vanessa Mae, and then I figured there can only be one Vanessa Mae in the world and she is it and good for her. Days went by, birthdays followed one another.

One thing ... never changed from the beginning: I wanted to be, and still want to be, a great violinist. Even though I was never a famous child prodigy, a dear friend of mine always encouraged me to be a prodigy in my own time. I want to make a change in history, I want to be a legend and I want to be a prodigy in my own time. And you will ask how will I get to do that? Honestly, I do not have a clue. It's like knowing your destination but you have neither map nor compass.

One thing I will be doing by the time I am forty is travelling and performing, and being a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations. That's [why] I say: 'Watch this space.' Both my violin and I will be heard because then people [will] listen. Then what they hear will sink in and that is when I can make a difference. Fame comes with power, influence and a huge baggage of responsibility. I can safely say I will not abuse that privilege because I have taken much from the universe for my human education, and the least I can do is return the gifts and skills that have been given to me all too generously, kindly and selflessly by all my teachers inside and outside the classroom.

Before then I will be working towards that goal. After that, who knows? Maybe I will still carry on being an active performer, maybe I won't. One thing is for certain, I will never cease being true to my art. May the music live on!

2.3 JvN (2006)

Music means different things to different people. For me, it is my life. Nothing even remotely compares to the joy I get from music. It calms me, provokes me, comforts me ... listening to it gives me an incredible amount of pleasure. It is such a diverse field with so many different genres, each genre an art form in its own right. It has always been in my life and always will be.

For as long as I can remember, music has been a part of my life. I started piano lessons at the age of five and couldn't turn back. I had various teachers,

some good and some bad, but all of them taught me an appreciation for the intricacies of the craft. Music was portrayed as a door to which they could lead me, but I had to open it. I was shocked when I realised the true essence of music in high school. It became my life and I spent every spare moment enriching my knowledge of music. My music taste has experienced some shocking moments, especially in the pre-teen years, but over all I listened to various kinds of music – from heavy metal to classical and jazz – and I have never felt that any specific genre is superior to the rest.

The question now arises: ‘Sure, you love music, but other people do too. Why study it, why not just practise it as a hobby?’ Normally when people ask this, one cannot get one’s thoughts together to express the reason. I welcome this opportunity to put my answer on paper.

It is difficult to answer this question without referring to ethics or religion. I feel that there is a reason that my life and music overlap so much, and that my destiny lies in music. Through this divine art, you receive an opportunity to touch souls, and it would be [shameful] to not use [such an] opportunity. In any ensemble, moments of harmony and oneness of souls is reached, and it is these magical moments I long for. I am especially addicted to choir life – the music, the people, the harmonies and all the nuances portrayed by different composers. I feel that I need to study this field in order ... to reach a [adequate] level of competence, and cannot do it just as a hobby. I also feel that I am privileged to be in a financial situation [that makes] it possible for me to study, and that I should use this to my advantage.

Excluding music therapists, most people who make a living from music are only exposed to the positive side of life. You get to work with the youth and, if your focus is in the right place, you may contribute to positive changes in their lives. You do not need to evict people, see to their divorces or taxes, transplant their organs or be overpowered by their problems. This makes life as a musician appealing to me. It might sound selfish, but music is a healer that does not need words or conversations, and, if it is of a high quality, it might just improve the mood of its performers or listeners. It has been said, ‘Music washes away from the soul, the everyday dirt of life.’ Another reason for studying music lies in my ethics. I am one of those unfortunate people who are never happy with their personal second-best. It is a belief of mine that one should choose something, work hard at it, and become a master of this field. In a sense, I am a perfectionist and I will never reach the levels of perfection [to which I aspire] if the best people do not train me. Thus, I owe

it to myself to learn from the best. This is the motivation for the choice to study this specific course at this specific institution.

It has been said that music, as such, is not a destination but a journey. This has proved to be true. One will never know all there is to know. There is always one more composer, or one more genre that one has not yet discovered. This quality of music entails being enthralled by it and continuing to learn from it until the day you die. This is a positive prospect for me and serves as an immense motivation for studying music. In a way I know that this journey has no destination. I will die knowing very little about this field as there is just too much to know. At the end of high school everyone reaches a stage [at which] they feel that they know everything. This led to much strife in my household, as it does in most houses where a teenager [resides]. Then I entered university.

The first thing you realise [at university] is that there are other people who share your enthusiasm for music and, unfortunately, your talent. [Then] it is ... up to you to invest [in] as much knowledge and experience ... as possible in these four, relatively easy, years. The harder you work in these four years, the better your chances will be later in life. My eyes [were] opened on the first day I set foot on campus. I learned of an academic world where good English grammar is sometimes more important than knowledge of music. My eyes [were] opened in lectures on African music, where I realised, more than ever before, that music is indeed the universal language and based on the age-old pulse and rhythm beating in our hearts, not theoretical principles or academic arguments.

I want, no, I need to be part of this magical art form. So what is my ambition? I want to be a renowned choral conductor. South Africa [has attained] a very high level where the standard of our choirs is concerned, as [the numerous] achievements of South African choirs in international competitions prove. We also have a unique opportunity to combine various cultures in South Africa in one homogeneous sound that reverberates and heals what was torn apart by racial intolerance in this country. I am aware that I will have to walk several roads to finance this passion. The inevitable profession is teaching. I am studying extra languages and world history to expand the areas I could teach. In addition, I am taking cultural history as an extra subject next year. I will probably teach piano. It is highly rewarding to nurture someone's talent and it is a way of thanking God for yours. I will also specialise in music technology at a later stage, which is by far the most profitable financially.

To succeed in having a comfortable life as a musician, one must be versatile and an entrepreneur. I will basically have the following weekly routine in the immediate years after university studies: Teach music and history in the mornings, give private piano lessons in the afternoons, conduct choirs in the evenings and do music technology-related things on weekends. Once I [have gained] a good reputation I [would be able to] stop some of these activities. However, I am a realist; I know it will take time and effort. To establish your name and a good reputation takes time. I cannot just wait for opportunity to knock – I need to go out and knock on its door.

I apologise for the amount of hyperbole, exaggerations and emotion in this essay but it is difficult not to think in such a passionate way about a topic so close to my heart. It is good for me to study a course which helps me to put these feelings into words and these notions into terms. I am very satisfied with the course given at the University of Pretoria.

Enough subjects that are practical in a modern context, such as music technology and music ethnology, are combined with the ‘hardcore’ BMus subjects. I feel [that] there is a good balance between the classical and contemporary sections of the department. The only suggestion I would make is to combine methodology with music education. This will enable students to teach in a group format and on an individual level. I still get excited when I walk into the Musaion and realise that this life of music, previously only an escapist dream that I could experience in movies such as *Shine*, is now mine. I am overwhelmed with joy that it was not my route to be in the corporate world, have the ‘nine-to-five’ job or live the ‘American Dream’. This road is narrower, full of stumbling blocks and sometimes difficult, but I know it is my destiny. I am so thankful for the opportunity life [has given] me to pursue this dream. Every now and then some truth is spoken in popular music. I would like to end by quoting the pop sensation ABBA as they managed to portray all my feelings in one song:

Thank you for the music, the songs I’m singing.
Thanks for all the joy they’re bringing.
Who can live without it? I ask in all honesty:
What would life be?
Without a song or a dance, what are we?
So I say – thank you for the music,
For giving it to me.

2.4 Matthew Hartdegen (2007)

This [essay is focused on] my life and my experience of music ... up to this point in my life. It includes my musical background before my formal training, [the things that influenced me] at that time, my formal training during my schooling ..., my motivation for studying music, the types of music that I listen to and [participate] in, what I like and what I do not like, my interests in a career and my alternative plan if that does not work out, my feelings about the university's music course, whether or not [we are prepared] sufficiently and suggestions for change.

It is evident that this assignment is [aimed at helping] students put their ideas for the future down on paper. It is almost a rough plan of our lives, from the beginnings of our music training, to where we eventually would like to [find] ourselves as musicians. Another possible use of this assignment is as ... self-assessment of our time in university thus far and as a reference for us in the future.

All in all, this assignment is a positive [piece of] work that I am putting out into the galaxy as a piece of me, a private look into my life, my ambitions and my love for music. Although I may never be a famous ethnomusicologist, any course must be designed with an outcome in mind and if this course does not add to my life in any way, at least I would have put a piece of my life down on paper.

I was born into an [artistic] family with my mother being a ballet dancer and my father being a creative director in an advertising company. They both studied their passions, [with my father's passion] being art and my [mother's] being dance. Both of my parents played musical instruments. My mother played piano from an early age and my father started playing guitar in his teenage years and still plays regularly. My father played at many different folk festivals. As a small child I would go on stage and sing with him. My father still performs. My mother, on the other hand, hurt herself doing ballet after I was born and could never perform again but still ... taught ballet. This is from where my interest in music ... developed at a young age. It is strange that my interest was spawned from contrasting [forms] of music and art.

I found that I was more attracted to the serious classical music found in

the ballet, [which] was further enhanced by my mother's large collection of classical music, which she played a great deal of. I did not like ... folk music as much because to me it seemed put on and fake. Moreover, I did not want to play the guitar but was interested in playing [the] piano.

I started ... formal music training at the age of eight, at ... primary school. I went to St John's College in Johannesburg. This is a traditional private school that has a heritage [extending] over 100 years ... Here I started with piano in Standard 1. My teacher was Claire Armstrong. By Standard 4 she had [began to take] an interest in me and began pushing me to compete for the available music scholarship. She urged me to start a second instrument and to get as involved as possible in the music at the school. In Standard 5 I won a music scholarship offered by the school. My formal training was aided by my participation in the choirs and the orchestras at the school. I studied music all the way through school, [doing] three separate instruments, [namely] piano, cello and voice. At the end of [my matriculation year] I did three music subjects: Music as a subject, Music performance and Composition. I was in the choir from standard two until the end of my matric year. In addition, I played in the string orchestra and in the jazz band.

The reason I chose to study music was not to become famous or to change the world, but because I love it. If I were to become famous through music, it would be an added bonus, but it is not my motivation or reason for studying music. It was the first way [in which] I learnt to express myself. Through this, if I were to touch anyone or change someone's life in the process, I would have achieved more than I ever dreamed. Arthur Rubinstein always said that if he had a thousand bad critics but could touch a child in the audience, nothing else would matter. Another reason why I chose to study music and not something else is because I wanted to study something I am interested in and something that I love. I would hate to wake up each morning and hate going to work. Why should we do something that is not truly satisfying, interesting and rewarding? The answer is we shouldn't.

I am Eurocentrically based as a musician as I am most interested in serious classical music. I am interested in many other kinds of music, but I only play classical music and jazz music. I listen to many different kinds of music, especially classical music, jazz music, film music and popular music, including rock, alternative, metal, dance and acoustic music. It is still strange to me how many students studying music with us do not listen much to any

popular music of our time, as the popular music of the time helps [to] define the era and world we live in.

This being said, I do dislike some types of music. Although every form of music has its specific place in this world, I would not choose to listen to [some]. These include R&B music, rap music, African music, Indian music and some avant-garde music. The reason I dislike R&B music is because, quite simply, I do not like the singing in the music. Rap music, to me, does not have a positive message and therefore I do not like it. I do not like African music because it does not appeal to me in any way. The music ... seems primitive with a lack of harmony and melody, which I crave. Indian music is similar; I do not like the non-European scales because I have been brought up in a traditionalist environment. I think that African and Indian music appeals to different people because some people can make the connection between music and the human through Indian and African music, while I cannot. This may be one of the biggest problems with European music because it creates an introspective non-open-minded person or musician.

I would like to be a composer, performer and a conductor because in each of these fields I would be able to express myself through music. I would do this because ... these careers work hand in hand. In the past, many have done this, for example Mozart, Liszt, Rachmaninoff and Bernstein. They were all successful in each of these fields, as well as truly remarkable people. If this [does] not work out for me, I would still compose for myself and teach music to anyone willing to learn. I believe an art form should be shared and should have a certain personal quality to it. If anything is created it is a reflection of its maker, and the maker's ideas and feelings at its time of creation. In this sense it gives the artist or a maker a certain godly quality.

The one [advantage] of studying music at a tertiary institution is that you ... graduate with a degree, which is a necessity in this world. A degree is like a safety net to catch you if things do not work out. Another [advantage] is that it gives music a structure and lets the students find out what works for them specifically. Although four years is not a [sufficiently] long time to know thoroughly what one wants, it does give an idea. Another [advantage] is that the environment is aimed at one main idea of making music. [One disadvantage of] studying at a tertiary institution is that there is a highly competitive edge that is destructive. Another [disadvantage] is that a degree moulds the student into something that may not be true to the student,

in this sense it is a form of indoctrination. A huge [disadvantage] is that a tertiary institution could create ... musicians that suit the institution. I do believe there is a level of this at our institution. A [disadvantage of] the environment that we are in is that of professionalism. The department is small and intimate and the lines of professionalism are often crossed, as there are no lines drawn between the student and the lecturer. It seems that everyone in the department knows everything about everyone. This, for me, is sometimes too much!

I do believe that we are prepared for the real world to a certain extent, but, still, one can never be sure, as no one can tell what the real world is like. Even the lecturers do not know this world well as the majority of the [staff of the] department is retiring. I am not saying that old lecturers are bad, but that new young blood should be brought into the department, as the older one gets the wiser one becomes. The only way to know what the real world is like is to experience it for oneself. Nevertheless the department does its utmost to create self-sufficient musicians with hopes, aspirations, ambitions and dreams. This department is optimistic at times, but still realistic.

If I [could] suggest any change to the department I would only suggest that the department begins to diversify and grow. There is not enough on offer to please all students and it will never [be possible to please everyone] but the department should [offer] more optional courses. If I [could] change anything, I would create five different degrees, a typical BMus degree like the one we have, the typical BA Mus degree that we have, and three new degrees. The first degree would be a performance degree. The second degree would be a technology degree. The last degree that I think should be added is that of an ethnomusicology degree. With this, everyone will be happier with the department.

I have found that by writing this assignment I have discovered more about what I like and dislike. It is really difficult to write about my feelings on music because I will always worry [about] how it will be received. Everything I create is personal and it has a part of me in it. My feelings and ideas may seem conservative, old-fashioned and traditionalist, but [this] works for me. And, more importantly, I am happy, and nothing will take away my happiness and love for music. As I put these words on paper, they become real and not just ideas and thoughts in my brain that have no substance, so that this has in itself become a work that I am proud of.

2.5 Jean-Louise Nel (2007)

Some people think to be passionate about something is a curse. Some people are so passionate about certain facets of their [lives] that they will sacrifice anything and anyone that stands in their way. I do not think that this is a curse but a blessing. If a person's talent and passion overlap it is a blessing and a powerful gift. I am blessed to have musical talent and passion for music. I am very lucky to have discovered this passion at a young age. I am driven by this passion and I cannot wait to spend the rest of my life perfecting my talent and living out my dream and passion.

From an early age, I was exposed to various genres and styles of music. My earliest memories are filled with music in the background, from Cesaria Evora to the Beatles to Vusi Mahlasehla to the Soweto String Quartet. I remember that the Beatles' music really appealed to me [because] I was fond of the idea of a band – a team of people who are like family and make music together. I also fancied a CD of Buddy Holly's music that my father had bought. Its cover of a man playing [the] guitar and singing appealed to me. I was also exposed to classical music, but the only significant CD I can remember was *Zebra Crossing* by the Soweto String Quartet. I believe that I was privileged to have parents who were open-minded about music and its genres, as this exposure to all [the] different styles made me develop a taste of my own, so that I don't have to just listen to what is being played on the radio.

I started doing ballet, modern dancing, hip-hop, Spanish dancing, jazz and contemporary [dance] at the age of seven and only gave up at 16 when I had to choose between dancing and music. I believe that [the] dancing improved my sense of rhythm and musicality.

Being the youngest of four children, the music that my brothers and sisters listened to also influenced the development of my taste in music. By the time I was nine, I did not listen to what other children were listening to – I was listening to the likes of Tracy Chapman, Counting Crows, Green Day and Portishead. It was [through] this encounter with the music of Tracy Chapman that I first noticed the singer-songwriter persona. When I reached age 11, my friends were listening to the Spice Girls and, though I did not like this girl group, I had begun listening to the chart shows on the

radio. One day I heard a song from an all-boy band called Hanson, and this boy band became my obsession for about one year.

This boy band consisted of three brothers – the youngest of the three being the same age as I was at the time – and it was not because of their image that I was so obsessed with them, but because they planted a dream inside my head, a dream of playing in a band and singing my own songs. They were as old as I was, singing songs that were written and played by them. I did not fit in at school and this was a classic example: I refused to like the Spice Girls because everybody was listening to them – they did not write their own music; they did not play instruments; they were just pretty, marketable faces and bodies. I can remember sitting in the back seat of the car listening to Hanson's songs and trying to 'analyse' their songs one by one.

At this point in my life I realised that I [wanted] to make music for the rest of my life. I had taken piano lessons earlier, but had quit before the age of 11. After my realisation, my father bought me my first guitar. I started teaching myself how to play and almost immediately started writing songs as I learnt the chords.

When I went to high school, I joined my first band – I was not good enough to play [the] guitar for them, so I only did vocals. We competed in our school's Battle of the Bands, and won. We also played at the Aardklop Arts Festival in Potchefstroom. We did opening shows for the likes of Beeskraal and Karen Zoid. The band consisted of four boys and me. They were all three years older than I was. When they finished high school and left for university, they were not at all interested in continuing with the band. I was very upset because we were a family and I thought that we (the band) had something very special in our sound – now I laugh about it because we sounded like just another high school band, but back then it meant the world to me.

When everybody left, I persuaded the lead guitarist to stay and start a new project with me. I had started writing and by this time I had improved and was confident enough to perform my songs to the public. I also started playing the guitar in this project. Again we entered the Battle of the Bands and won. Gallo records started showing interest in us, but before anything could come of it, this project also [came] to nothing.

I took a few years off and started studying music at the University of Pretoria. I chose this career path because I could not see myself doing anything else for the rest of my life. After the previous band project, I [felt]

hurt by various comments that some of my friends and other people had made. In the middle of my first year I slowly started writing songs again. I decided to do a solo project and pay some good session musicians to play in my band. I persuaded some of my musician friends to play for me for smaller session fees. Now when I am performing with my band, I feel so happy and at ease with life and myself. It is truly where I belong.

Though this project of mine is my first love, I also started doing session work on the side from age 17. I started playing the violin when I was 11 and crossed over to viola when I was 14. I taught myself to improvise and started playing at different churches. This was a great learning curve for me as I got to work with really good musicians who have been in the industry for a very long time. Once I had met them, they would book me to play in their bands outside the church.

It was through playing at the churches that I realised doing a degree in music would strengthen my theoretical background, which would help my improvisation. Furthermore I came to the conclusion that studying music would give me depth as a musician and performer. I feel that the course could be a bit more focused on the practical and performance side of music or that it could cater more for students aiming to [become] performing and session artists. I also think that there should be a subject that deals with the business side of music and how the music industry works. My main argument for this is that [many] of my peers are brilliant performers but do not have [the] business savvy to go into the industry and get gigs and jobs. I constantly read books about the intricacies of the music industry, networking, and how to sell myself, not as a product but as a musician. Being active in the industry has also helped, but I feel that if someone had taught me [the] things I had to learn on my own, I would most probably [have come] even further.

I also feel that, as we are studying music, we should be accredited for our performances outside the Musaion. Furthermore, I think we should be obligated to play a certain number of gigs each semester, so that students are forced to create opportunities to play and so that they can get used to strange working hours. These performances should be accredited, whether it is [a] classical, rock, pop or any other style [of] concert, because, even though we are studying a mainly classical course, the world outside our BMus does not just consist of classical music, and we should be taught how to deal with this.

After my studies, I, ideally, would like to [perform] full-time with my band and do freelance session work. I know that being a musician is a touch-and-go [profession], thus I am prepared to face the reality that it might not be [possible], but it is only because I've worked in the industry for a brief period that I can face this reality. Luckily, being a musician is not about having the ideal life or lifestyle, it is about doing what you love and that makes it so much more fulfilling.

2.6 Matthew Lombard (2007)

My ambitions in music started from a very young age, without me actually [recognising] it at the time. This essay highlights the elements in my life that caused the passion I have for music to come to life. I set out to investigate the process of coming into contact with music through [the earlier part of my] life, drawing conclusions from my life and experiences up to now. I shall also focus on my ... ambitions [for] the future.

Due to the normal hazy memory (or even the lack thereof) of the earliest years of one's life, a person can only make an estimated attempt at sketching out the events of his/her life in those years by means of records [kept] by parents, photographs, videos etc. I can [therefore] only give a ... rough idea of what my infancy was like. What I do know, however, was that [I, quite] ... early (I am not too sure when exactly, but within the first three years of my life) developed an interest in an electronic keyboard (a very small children's one) which must have been given to me as a gift. It was the type of interest that involved 'messing around' with the [pleasing] sounds, and apparently (according to family) getting out simple tunes, perhaps of whatever music I had been listening to at the time.

The influences as to what type of music I listened to as a child were not varied. Coming from a family of not particularly musical people (with the exception of my grandmother on my father's side), the main exposure to music I might have had was to whatever was [heard] on the radio, or whatever music my father was playing on the record player at home. Other

than those influences, Christmas songs and the usual ‘festival’ music, tied in with typical Christian Sunday School music were the only other influences I got. The only opportunities I had ... to participate in any way [involved playing] on my little keyboard, and singing along to the music (those child-like fantasies of being a rock star).

I went through primary school finding my way around that same little keyboard, and when my parents noticed that I had some sort of talent, they invested in a piano for me. This was one of the best things that could ever have happened to me. I started playing by ear (as some people call it), merely playing whatever music I had in my head, figuring it out as I went along. This lasted through primary school, and when I got to my Grade 7 year, I managed to convince my parents to [let me have] private piano lessons. My piano teacher was a very nice woman who, by the end of Grade 7, gave me advice [about] whether or not to [continue] music in high school. At that stage I grew tired of piano lessons (I preferred to play [in] my own way, as opposed to the formal way), and stopped formal piano training (even though I [had not progressed] very far).

My piano teacher suggested that I take music as a subject in high school (the choice was [between] art and music, and I had no interest in art). One of her other previous pupils had the same dilemma the year before. He started [studying] the saxophone in high school. The idea of playing the saxophone appealed to me and, to be honest, it was that suggestion that motivated my choice of instrument in high school, [but this] was more of an excuse not to do art, [although it] was also a choice that I would later prove to be very grateful for Half way through my Grade 8 year, one of my teachers noticed talent with the saxophone in me, and ... suggested [that I start studying] the French horn as a second instrument (there was a shortage of good horn players). I decided that it was worth a try, and struggled my way through matric. Ultimately, this would also prove to be a good decision.

My saxophone playing took off in Grade 10, when I played ... Grade 7 and 8 practical exams in one year, passing the Grade 8 [examination] with a very high distinction. It was then that I started to take music a little more seriously than I did before. It was in [that] year that my life started changing drastically, for the better. I had started to make important decisions, like what I was going to do with my life one day, when school was over and even when I finished studying. Music seemed to be my primary goal, I wanted to become a concert saxophonist and I started to work towards it seriously. In

my matric year, I entered my first music competition. I have never worked as hard to achieve anything in my life. I went into the competition with very high expectations from all sides: my family, my friends, but most of all, my teachers. To be perfectly honest, I did not expect to win, just to gain experience, even though my focus was to try and win. Quite unexpectedly, I won the woodwind section prize; and I was one step away from being the winner (nationwide) of the competition. This competition confirmed my thoughts: not that I was better than anyone or anything silly like that, but that I could make it as a musician if I really tried hard.

After matric, I started ... formal studies in music at the University of Pretoria. My first year at the department was a very eventful year, and not just because of my studies. I was enjoying the life [of study], studying only what I really loved studying. I had developed a passion for music and had finally been assured that it was what I was meant to do for the rest of my life here on earth. Up until this first year, however, I was not sure precisely what I would do with music. On the one hand I had the saxophone, which I love and [which] is one of my passions to this day; on the other hand, I had the French horn, for which I did not have as much of a passion at that stage, [as it] was my second instrument and I did not take it too seriously.

At the beginning of my first year, my perspectives started to change. I got an opportunity that has changed my lifestyle completely (or at least that opportunity led to related opportunities which changed my lifestyle) and which I will never forget. I got a phone call ... from a professional horn player I had heard of before. He explained that they had a problem: they had a concert that evening and the player they needed ... [was on] a delayed flight from Cape Town. They wanted to know if I would sight read for them that evening in the concert. I was shocked. I was not sure whether or not this would be a good idea, as it would be my first professional gig, but I decided that it was my big break and I needed to do it. Under the circumstances, I did well, and thus broke into the professional world of horn playing. I must add that this was not what I had in mind when I thought of a career in music. But I was waiting for an opportunity like this one, and it had finally come.

From that day on, things started to change for me. Apart from studying full-time at university, I was playing every few weeks with this new orchestra, learning a lot of valuable things and getting more experience than I could get anywhere else at [the time]. I was introduced to the orchestral

musician's world, and I liked it. At one of the concerts, one of the cellists in that orchestra asked me to play for a run of *My Fair Lady* at the State Theatre later that year. It was a two-month run of seven shows a week, but I thought that this was my big leap into the professional freelancing world. I was more than excited to say yes. It was a big decision to make, as I was studying full-time and I knew things would not be easy to handle time-wise. At that stage I was also starting to teach saxophone at my old high school. So for those two months, my life consisted of music and not much else. I can now say that I might have over-committed myself (as a music student I was also obligated to play in the university's orchestra, so I was a little more than very busy). Despite the feeling that I was very busy, I knew that this was the kind of life I wanted to live. I finally felt like ... a real musician for the first time.

From there I went on to play any gigs that came my way. I must stress the fact that I do not necessarily play all these gigs because I am such a good horn player – there is a huge demand for horn players nationwide in South Africa. I became the person to ask for a gig when the usual players could not make it, and I loved being this back-up. Up to today I still play gigs where I am needed, and some months are busier than others. Because of my exposure in this orchestra, my preference of music has become Western art music.

Since the beginning of my studies at the University of Pretoria, I have been exposed to many different types of music, namely traditional African music, Indian classical music, Oriental music, as well as modern popular music and jazz (with its many subdivisions). I find it very important for a student studying for a music degree to study a wide variety of music, and not just typical Western art music (which music departments in general can easily tend to focus on). The term 'music' is not restricted to one style alone. I personally pay more attention to the styles of music that are most applicable to me; Western art music, jazz and modern popular music. I have an interest in traditional African music, which was only properly introduced to me at the beginning of my first year at university, and Indian music which was introduced to me this year. These two styles are interesting for different reasons. I find the historical aspects of traditional African music, and how it [is passed] down to younger generations by word of mouth fascinating. And Indian music is interesting to learn about, in that it is actually a very large culture, but it does not appeal to me as a South African.

My heart lies in Western art music, not because institutions all over the country focus primarily on that division of music, but because I am exposed to it on a daily basis and I love playing it and listening to it. It is for this reason that my envisaged career path lies (for the moment at least) in being an orchestral musician, freelancing as much as possible, with teaching as a sideline. These are my choice areas of specialisation, based on the exposure I have had to different styles of music, and the opportunities I have had to participate in some way in all of them.

Without a doubt, one constantly needs to have alternative career options in mind. I feel very confident that, no matter what I choose to specialise in, it will always have something to do with music. Obviously, my main focus and ambition in music at this stage is to be a performer of music, be it orchestral playing, solo playing, or even chamber music (which I have recently been given the opportunity to participate in more regularly, and [which] appeals to me). With the performance aspect, I find it necessary (but not particularly stimulating) to teach as well. My experience of these two facets of music [suggests that] I would be leading a fulfilling and enriching life. However, in the event of my dream not being fulfilled and my circumstances forcing me to find an alternative direction in music, I would have to consider something along the lines of music technology. Technology has always been a passion of mine (particularly music technology), and I would be quite satisfied (but not as much so as in my primary career choice) with running a studio.

In our music department, provision has certainly been made for gaining experience as an orchestral musician: the university's orchestra practises regularly and gives students opportunities that most of them will not get while studying, like playing in a symphony orchestra. This is a positive aspect of my education at the department, but at the same time, a negative one. As a music student playing an orchestral instrument, I am obligated to play in the orchestra at the university. The problem [arises] when music students get opportunities – like I have been getting – to play in professional orchestras and gain even more valuable experience there, and have to turn them down to accommodate the university's needs. I have a personal problem with this, and there are always many flaws in the system, but to me this is a negative point. Provision should be made for students with different circumstances.

The academic side of our department is great. We focus on a wide variety of work and cover many necessary subjects. This [will help] me in my prospective

profession in that I need the ground knowledge, and the knowledge of how to [do effective research] to do my job. In this respect, I feel that the university is doing a good job. We are receiving a well-rounded music education focussing mainly on Western art music, but not solely on it.

Career-wise, my primary ambition in life is to be a performer of music, performing as many types of music as I can handle. My current music education at the University of Pretoria is well rounded, but at times ... restricts my ability to gain experience where I need it. I look forward to a prosperous career in music, be it performing or [in] any other branch of it.

CHAPTER 3

Cultural and social factors influencing choice of specialisation

Cultural heritage and the cultural influence of others play an important role in forming a perspective from which music students can examine their personal interest in music. Many students have referred to a cultural influence on their musical outlooks, as well as to the role that eclectic musical views in modern society play in their own personal perception of this discipline.

Culture can be thought of as a series of procedures defined by the milieu which shapes the culture into existing as a united practice. Social behaviours function in different musical contexts and are significant when participating as either a musical performer or a spectator. It is important to note that diverse categories of music are enthralling to people of different social groups. Social factors such as prejudices pertaining to class, age and gender, in addition, induce the musical preferences of different cultural and social groups (Beard & Gloag, 2005:47-48; Davidson, 2004:57-71).

TS Eliot's theory of culture concerning the 'whole way of life' is of significance, as he clarifies that the individual gains identity through his or her cultural relations and socially distinct community in a specified culture. The cultural group, in addition, will possibly form identities through mutual benefits and issues (Beard & Gloag, 2005:47). This applies to the essays in this chapter when we explore the individuals in the context of their cultural exposure and social milieu. It is important to acknowledge the common factors that prevail in the behaviour and interrelationships of behaviours within

and across these groups. One does this by looking for aspects of personality that are common to different individuals and things that are atypical to each individual (Davidson, 2004:57-71).

Raymond Williams contemplates how a culture's past is applicable to the present. If any culture includes elements of its past, but their place in the contemporary cultural process is profoundly erratic, the question arises of how much influence and applicability cultural influence can have. It is significant, Williams says, that the cultural inheritance can be reconstructed in present-day society and be open to change, which allows the cultural context to remain applicable. Changes from the past cultural context to contemporary life occur mainly due to educational and technological advances. Such factors determine how the present cultural group operates (Beard & Gloag, 2005:47-48; Davidson, 2004:57-71).

An analysis of the essays allows one to conclude that social and cultural influences had an effect on the writers' decisions to study music as a field of specialisation. In Essay 3.8, the writer describes how her exposure to various countries and the cultures of these countries gave her a unique perspective on music. Something similar is related in Essays 3.5 and 3.6. The social experiences in the family culture of the writer of Essay 3.1 is of particular interest as she unexpectedly came to be performing in a band, as her father did. The writer of Essay 3.2 was greatly influenced by his social experience of singing in the Drakensberg Boys' Choir, while the writer of Essay 3.3 was socialised through music at a young age and this contributed to the choice of studying music as a field of specialisation. The writers of Essays 3.4 and 3.7 interestingly acknowledge their rebellion against their traditional cultural music. This allowed them to discover the music they enjoy and to pursue it as a career.

3.1 Sonia de Freitas (2007)

Music has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. I was introduced to music by my closest family members and gained more knowledge about it from teachers throughout my school career.

My father was a singer in a band named *Os Perlás* (The Pearls). His band was popular in the Portuguese community of South Africa. *Os Perlás* performed all over the country. They performed at weddings, 21st birthday parties and other *festás* (feasts). As a young girl, I was exposed to this music. I could hear the band practising at home and I would usually tag along with my father to these parties. I used to sit backstage and listen to the music. The band played music by artists like Roxette, Cat Stevens and the Beatles, which was popular at the time. Religious music and traditional Portuguese music were also [part of] the repertoire.

Since my father was a musician, he insisted that my elder brother and sister [take] piano lessons. My elder sister played the piano until the age of 16, but my brother carried on with music until the end of high school. It was by listening to his playing that I became familiar with the music of Satie, Chopin, Czerny and, of course, Bach, Beethoven and Mozart. I really admired my brother's pianistic abilities and wanted to play just like him. Finally, when I was eight, my father allowed me to take piano and music theory lessons at a local primary school.

I kept playing the piano throughout primary school, but it was not until high school that I became completely infatuated with music. I developed a great fondness for fourpart harmony and I had a gifted teacher who really helped my talent to blossom. I was exposed to African music for the first time in high school when I joined the choir. We would sing traditional African religious music. I found it fascinating that the music is passed on orally because I had become accustomed to having sheet music in front of me all the time. I was exposed to instrumental ensemble playing in the high school orchestra, in which I used to play the piano. I participated in a number of eisteddfods and attended several music concerts throughout high school. My passion for music only got stronger.

I always found music to be the best way in which I could express myself. My music can say a lot more about me than my words ever can. I find it interesting because it simultaneously inspires creative and logical thinking in any sphere, whether it is composition, performance or teaching. It is certainly challenging and I feel a great sense of achievement once I have completed something successfully.

The musical styles that interest me the most are Romantic and twentieth century music, jazz and alternative rock music. This does not mean that I discard all the other types of music; I just find myself more drawn to

the above-mentioned styles than [to] the others. And I cannot say that I absolutely love everything about these styles; there is always something that interests me or does not stir my interest in any type of music. For example, in jazz, I am not particularly interested in or fond of Dixieland jazz, but I do enjoy the blues and fusion jazz. And in twentieth century music, I do not understand some of the more conceptual music, especially by Scriabin, for example. All of these musical styles are present in my human environment. I enjoy playing expressive music and to me Romantic, twentieth century, Jazz and Alternative Rock music are great forums in which I can do so. I sometimes find Baroque music difficult because it is so rigid. I like making use of rubato, which is associated with romantic music.

Because of my ability to play the piano, I am exposed to piano music from the Baroque period to [the music of] modern times. I am also exposed to Western art music through attending various concerts. I recently attended the sixtieth birthday anniversary concert of David Helfgott, the famous pianist whose life is portrayed in the movie *Shine*. It is remarkable how much you learn from watching a live performance. He performed music from the Romantic and twentieth century periods. I enjoy attending rock concerts as well. In 2003 I attended a live concert of the band Live and I am a regular at the local restaurant Tings and Times, where all kinds of music is performed, from jazz to African music to rock'n'roll.

I sing in the university's choir, the Camerata, where I have become familiar with choral music from all eras and corners of the earth. Studying music makes plenty of genres and styles part of my human environment. African music, Indian music and Western art music are all [included in] my course. Once again my family plays a role in the music I am exposed to. My father and younger sister are part of the Portuguese folk group known as the *Reincho*, so I am familiar with traditional dances and songs such as the *Balinho do Madeira*. I am the keyboardist for the band *Pluto was a Planet*. We specialise in alternative rock music, [but] we incorporate many other styles, such as jazz, reggae, kwaito and Spanish dance styles such as the tango.

In my third year of music studies I would like to take the subjects: music history, music theory, methodology, piano as a first instrument and music technology. I think that these subjects will benefit my future music career. Music history and theory are, in my opinion, important to have. I do not think you can truly call yourself a musician [if you do not] have an understanding of the origins of music and [of its] different structures. How

will you compose or perform sensibly if you are not familiar with a variety of styles and genres? You can not [always] ‘play by ear’. By understanding the historical and theoretical background of music in general, your music will have an edge to it. It will be a step above the competition.

One of my favourite subjects is methodology. I think that it is an art to be able to teach ... music. It is beautiful to pass on knowledge. This was not always my view of teaching. Like a lot of my peers, I was not keen on the idea of teaching as a career. However, I have realised what a rewarding job it is since coming to university. I think plenty of people in this country have the wrong attitude towards teaching. I used to think that it was not challenging, I had the attitude ‘those who cannot do, teach’. I know that it is not the best paid job, but if you compare the financial rewards to the emotional and spiritual rewards, I think teachers are richer in a spiritual and emotional sense. I would be proud to [have inspired] the future [generation in] this country and I look forward to [teaching as] a prospective career for me. I will always keep up my piano playing. In my opinion, a musician has to be able to play an instrument. I have been playing piano for so long that I cannot imagine going without it for an extensive period of time. You learn the most about music by actively participating in it.

Nowadays, music technology is an important part of music. It will be a great help in composition, recording and theory. It is now part of the school syllabus and if I would like to get a job as a teacher one day, music technology will make it that little bit easier. It will open many doors of opportunity for me in the future.

I will teach because I want to teach, so if I do not obtain a position at a school, I will teach privately. I would also like to do recording. My brother has a lot of the equipment necessary for this as he is interested in it himself.

I am quite contented with the information and the way in which the information is presented to me at the university. I would like to have more real-world experience of music, for instance for methodology. I think it would be good to incorporate a financial subject into the degree, because some students are going to start music-related businesses such as recording studios or private teaching studios, so having some financial background would prepare a student for a working career.

I am happy to be studying music. It has become a big part of my life and I cannot imagine going without it. I cannot wait to apply it practically in a working environment. There is always something new to discover about

music, you are always learning. My high school piano teacher once said that musicians are the luckiest people, because they get paid to do what they are passionate about. I agree with that statement.

3.2 Michael J Barrett (2002)

My name is Michael Junior Joseph Barrett and I was born in Pretoria on 2 January 1983 at approximately 23h00 hours. My love for music began the very day I was born, when my father, Michael Senior, sang to my mother in the delivery room in order to keep her calm. My mother had sung to me while I was still a ‘bun in the oven’. She has said that I stopped kicking her every time she sang to me. My mother, Leonie, has a passion for music. She played the piano and sang at many weddings during her youth. I must have inherited my love for music from her. My father says that I inherited my singing ability from him, even though windows begin to shatter every time he dares to open his mouth.

Although my father was reluctant to name me after himself, my mother took the liberty of helping him along. There is, however, a deep religious story behind my being named. I come from a Catholic background and therefore was given a Catholic name. The name Michael means ‘one who is like God’! This is because in Revelations (the last book of the Bible) the archangel Michael was ordered to lead God’s army of angels and battle Satan and his followers out of heaven. Now the archangel is the angel of music. Whether this is coincidence or not, I will never know.

I grew up listening to nursery rhyme songs and ABBA, my favourite pop group of all time. It was, however, at the ripe young age of eight that my journey really began. After my parents had discovered my love for music (I always sang in the shower), they decided to take me for an audition at the world-renowned Drakensberg Boys’ Choir. I passed the audition, and was back a week later for a six-year stay away from home.

Although I began playing the piano at the age of five, my musical abilities were ... enhanced in the Drakensberg. I took private piano lessons as well

as singing there. My greatest love, without a doubt, was singing in the choir. The music that we sang ... was of great contrast. It varied from the most classical works to lighter pop and African music. On the classical side, I often conducted the choir, whereas I played the panpipe in the African music or led a gumboot dance. My love for music was shared by my friends and peers, which made making friends a piece of cake.

I toured the world with the choir between 1994 and 1997. In these four years, I toured five continents, visiting countries such as Mozambique, Botswana, Kenya, Egypt, Zimbabwe, England, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Holland, Italy, Hungary, Australia, Japan and the USA. In each of these countries, I learnt about their culture and music. I learnt many national anthems from these countries, as well as songs that are popular among their people. This was one of the greatest experiences of my life, which I thank God for every day. The fact that I was in a Christian school played a very big role in [forming] my ideas. Religion was not forced upon us. We learnt a lot about the Catholic religion when we went to Rome (Italy), Atheism in Amsterdam, and Buddhism when we were in Japan. This not only broadened our knowledge of other religions, but made us less naive and less critical.

The other musical highlight of my life thus far was singing in the Tuks Camerata. In this choir we mainly sing contemporary music. It is not the music so much that impresses me in this choir, but rather the dedication and devotion of the choristers. This type of music was also very new to me, and working under the leadership of Professor Van der Sandt was not only a tremendous experience, but also a privilege.

My dream is to become a choral conductor and singing teacher. I have always had great admiration for my choirmasters and what they achieve with their choristers. I love performing, and believe that being a conductor is performance on a higher level. I love masses and musicals. I also love performing in variety concerts, as well as in performances of modern music. I do not like solo performance for many reasons. Firstly, I was never good at solo performing and it does not inspire me. I have always preferred teamwork to solo work. To be very honest, I love conducting from the point of view that it gives power. I love the feeling of being in charge and in control. I currently have two of my own choirs and I am teaching singing and African music, all at DSG St Mary's.

My studies at the University of Pretoria are not what I expected them to

be. It is very classically orientated which, in my opinion, is very narrow-minded. Many of the students think that they are going to be the greatest pianists ever. They work very hard towards their dreams, but I feel that these dreams are too far-fetched. There are minimal opportunities for solo performers. Not having a backup is dangerous and, to a large degree, quite foolish. If I could criticise one thing about the university, it would be that lecturers have favourites among the students. There is nothing wrong with this, but the other students often miss out on opportunities to prove themselves. Just because you are not strong in practice, does not mean you are less of a musician than the practically inclined. There is more to music than performance. The sad truth is that performance is often very short-lived, and then teaching, for example, becomes a new reality. If I could change one thing at the university it would be to open the eyes of many of the students in this particular regard. There is nothing wrong with pursuing one's dreams, but it should however be emphasised that this is not an easy dream and that there is more to life than just performance.

The fact that I toured the world with music might seem enough reason to study music, but it was not. My motivation is quite simple. I love music! I have loved it since I was very young and I will always love it. I do not believe that God intended us to praise his name just by going to Church every Sunday. Every time I give a performance, I dedicate it to the glory of his name. That is the reason why I have been chosen to study music – to spread the word and love of our heavenly Father to all kinds of people across the globe. I would not trade my profession for all the riches in the world, simply because I have all the riches I need, inside my heart.

3.3 Eugene Joubert (2002)

My earliest childhood memories of music making [involve] my mother's preschool Orff ensembles in Pietermaritzburg. The children would flood our house every Wednesday afternoon to learn about music appreciation and music making. Everyone would participate, whether they could keep

a tune or bang a drum. I always played the glockenspiel or xylophone and we gave concerts everywhere. The classes combined outings such as train trips with eisteddfods, so music to me was always [associated with] fun and evokes happy memories.

Music has always been part of my life. Baby photos show me sitting ... close to the piano, listening, while my mother taught. I think that is why the piano and percussion instruments are so fascinating for me. When I reached primary school level, I attended the school where my mother taught. I always had Orff orchestras and performance as part of my life, as were piano lessons, Unisa examinations and eisteddfods. My mother favours musicals, music from films and choral music, but classical music will always be my favourite.

I think my most memorable experience as a child was hearing Magda de Vries, the percussionist, playing the marimba at a concert in Cape Town. Her technical skill and musicality were absolutely amazing! I never thought a percussion instrument could be so versatile, producing such tender and such robust sounds. Her performance got me hooked on the marimba and thus the next phase of my music development started. I started attending percussion classes from the age of ten at the Hugo Lambrechts Music Centre in Parow with the well-known Suzette Brits. From her, I learnt that the instruments must be handled with care in order to keep them in excellent shape, and that nothing equals perfection. This led me to spending hours practising technique and resulted in my taking part in competitions such as the Sanlam National Competition. She also brought me into contact with hitherto unknown Eastern and modern compositions, which laid the foundation for the works I like playing now.

We moved to Pretoria at the time when I started my secondary education, so it was logical to attend Pro Arte Alphen Park, the high school for the arts. I never envisaged any other career than music, so taking two music subjects was ideal. I started piano lessons with Claudine van Breda, who immediately put piano playing into another perspective, and the piano became my favourite instrument. With her, ensemble playing was very important and the duets, trios and works for two pianos we learnt were performed everywhere, [and were received very well]. The two-piano genre remains one of my favourite modes of playing. Fortunately there is opportunity for this at the university. With so many eisteddfods and so little time, we were constantly performing, moving from the one venue to the

next, which helped me cope with stage fright and memory lapses. There just wasn't time for jitters! Fortunately this rigorous training has helped me to learn and memorise new music very quickly.

During this time I started playing as a percussionist in orchestras, that is, the Pretoria Youth Philharmonic Orchestra at the State Theatre and the Concert Orchestra once a year during National Youth Orchestra courses presented all over the country. Master classes with David Gooding in Johannesburg opened new horizons and gave me the opportunity to play with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Standard Bank Arena. At the moment I have the wonderful opportunity of being leader of the percussion section in the University of Pretoria Symphony Orchestra.

A new avenue which has opened lately is that of accompanying other students in concerts and examinations. I find this very gratifying and stimulating, because ensemble playing has always been one of my favourite musical activities. Not only is this an excellent way to learn about instruments other than my own, but I find the interaction very rewarding. For this very reason two friends and I had formed a trio in my matric year (2000) which consisted of the violin, cello and piano. We enjoyed performing so much that we decided to enter in the ensemble category of the Prelude Competition in Bloemfontein, where we received a special recommendation and an invitation to participate in the Sixth National Ensemble Competition in Stellenbosch, where ensemble groups from all over the country competed in different categories. To our great joy we not only won our category, but were announced the overall winners of the whole competition. I also received a special prize for outstanding ensemble playing.

For a few years, since starting lessons with Professor Joseph Stanford and Doctor Alexander Johnson, I have had the opportunity to perform as a soloist with orchestras in both my instruments. This has been a wonderful way of combining my interest in a solo career with playing as soloist with an orchestra. In my matric year I had the opportunity, after meeting a Romanian pianist at the Ninth Unisa International Piano Competition, to participate in the Seventh International Music Competition, *Jeunesses Musicales*, in Bucharest, Romania. This was a wonderful opportunity to see the world and compete internationally. I was the only competitor from Africa and one of two from the southern hemisphere. I was also invited to perform on National Romanian Television. After two rounds, I was placed fourth in my category, a group consisting of 25 pianists. Indeed an unforgettable experience.

Studying at the University of Pretoria has given me the opportunity to participate in master classes given by many visiting professors. This has been very relevant especially for the past year, since Prof. Stanford was invited to join the staff of the *Advanced Piano Workshop* in Kromeriz, Czech Republic from 2001. As with the other lecturers, he is able to take a few of his students to join master classes and perform in various concerts. Apart from him, other lecturers include renowned pianists such as Joseph Banowetz and Adam Wodnicki. We will leave within the next five weeks to attend this year's course. Apart from all the music stimuli there, we have the opportunity to perform in the same venues that Beethoven and Liszt did, and we can buy sheet music and CDs at a reasonable price. Prof. Stanford is a renowned musician and respected teacher abroad. This has opened many doors for his students internationally. It is wonderful to know that we are receiving lessons from someone who is in touch with international trends and standards and that we can hold our own amongst students from other countries.

All in all I consider it a great privilege to study at this institution. Music truly is alive, well and practised at the University of Pretoria. There is so much going on and so many opportunities to further a career in music in whatever field one chooses, that I sometimes feel: 'So much to do, so little time!'

3.4 Kate Borthwick (2005)

My first love as a child was dancing. I started taking ballet lessons when I was five years old. Even before that I used to put on my mother's famous ballet music and work out my own steps. Having music to dance to was essential. I remembered that I was inspired to dance every time I heard a piece of beautiful music. My ballet teacher used to comment on the musicality evident in my dancing. When I was a little bit older I started showing interest in making music myself. We had no piano at home. The result was that every time I came across a piano at a friend's house or at school I spent all my time picking out tunes (I remember one of my friends

saying, “We don’t play when Kate comes to visit. She sits in front of the piano all the time!”). My mother finally bought a piano and I started taking lessons at the age of seven.

After a few years of music lessons, I became rebellious. I had been receiving only classical training. My feeling at the time was that I had no freedom to express myself fully. I was being told what to do and how to interpret the music I was playing; I hated theory and, frankly, classical music was boring. My interest shifted to music played in musicals (particularly *Les Misérables*, which we had on CD at home) and theme songs from Walt Disney movies. I loved working out these songs by ear and playing them while singing along. The songs moved me. They took me to a place removed from reality. The fact that I was something of a dreamer, often escaping into a world of my own, formed the basis of their appeal. My father’s music also influenced me immensely. He listens to a wide variety of music: the 60s rock music from the Beatles and Chicago, 70s disco, like that by Earth, Wind and Fire, fusion jazz like the Pat Metheny Group and standard jazz like Diana Krall’s music. I had never realised what impact this music had made on me until recently when I started taking jazz piano at the University of Pretoria.

As I grew older, my rebelliousness wore off and I accepted my mother’s advice that classical training would eventually pay off, no matter what genre I chose to specialise in. The struggle around this decision is evidence that I was already considering a career in music.

A breakthrough in my music education occurred when I left my previous music teacher at primary school. My new music teacher, Etrisia Labuschagne, opened up the world of classical music to me. She was a music teacher in the true sense of the word. My repertoire doubled the year I started taking lessons with her. She insisted that I take part in as many music festivals and eisteddfods as possible. When I reached the Unisa Grade 6 level, I was already playing pieces [prescribed for] the Grade 8 level. She also influenced my decision to take music as one of my main subjects at school. Her extra input (she often gave me extra lessons free of charge) raised my standard and I received distinctions for all my subsequent music exams. I loved being good at what I was doing.

Despite being relatively good at playing classical music, I wasn’t losing interest in lighter music. When I was 16, I begged my father to buy me a keyboard for my birthday. He gave in and bought me a good, second-hand Yamaha. This inspired me to compose pop songs and I formed a band

with friends from school. I played the keyboard in our school's successful production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dream Coat*. It was a thrilling experience to be part of a big orchestra and dazzling the audience with the magic of theatre. Being on stage had always been exhilarating – whether I was dancing in a ballet production or singing my own songs on culture evenings at school. Playing classical music in front of people was a different story. I have been and still remain terrified of making mistakes or having memory lapses.

I have always listened to lighter music in my spare time. My favourite artists were Alanis Morissette, U2, The Cranberries, Tracy Chapman and Aerosmith. Nowadays I prefer music that is less commercial, unpredictable and sophisticated. I am obsessed with Tori Amos. Her music reflects a lot of Native American, folk-like elements, is expressive, sometimes melancholic and very atmospheric. This music has been featured on numerous films because of its atmospheric qualities. Film music has recently become a source of interest to me. I dream of having the opportunity to compose music for epic films. I enjoy modern classical music that incorporates elements of jazz, such as the music of Ravel and Gershwin. Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring* is close to my heart and I also like the music of film composers such as Newman and Horner. To me, music has always been a means of expression, which is why I like music that evokes certain feelings. I approach composition in an intuitive way. I don't consider a piece's form before I start composing. The form gradually takes shape, as I compose.

The reason I chose to study music is that I believe (or rather, I hope) that I have something unique to offer the music world. I'm not planning on becoming a music teacher, therapist, classical performer or historian. My most important subjects are Jazz piano, Classical piano and Composition – the latter being a field of music in which I wish to specialise. I want to become involved in studio music production to earn my bread and butter. I am therefore planning to take music technology as a subject in my third year. Being the music director of a large-scale production such as a musical is another dream.

I do believe that it's important to let the art music of previous centuries live on and to have appreciation for it, but we are not considering the vast spectrum of other possible music careers at the University of Pretoria. The result is that we are ignorantly entering the music world, believing that we will all end up being music teachers or marrying rich men (in the case of

female students). I would like to see our department incorporating more business-related subjects, promoting experimentation and training us to become entrepreneurs.

3.5 Wonderful Modo Ndlovu (2005)

In this assignment I will discuss my musical interest and experience from when I was a child up until now. I will also point out my expectations for my future career in music. To drive my point home I will discuss the following issues:

- my childhood music experience;
- the beginning of my formal music studies;
- my interest in music studies; and
- the music education programme at the University of Pretoria.

I gained exposure to music so early in my life that I cannot recall the specific dates or year. However, still vivid in my memories are the following: singing in the Sunday school choir, saying praise poems for our bulls at the cattle posts, singing during school assemblies and in school choir. My interest in music was evoked by my participation in Sunday school, in fact, I did not know at the time that I would end up pursuing a career in music.

When I was young, all the children in the village were taken for Sunday school lessons which were conducted every Sunday at the local primary school. Parents wanted their children to attend Sunday school lessons as they believed that their children would be taught good morals and behaviour. In these lessons, children were divided up into smaller groups comprising of children of almost the same age. During these lessons we were taught songs and rhymes. Towards the end of the year, we would sing Christmas carols and be given gifts. This was a great incentive for me and it inspired me to continue participating in music.

I grew up in a rural village so there were few entertaining activities that

could be [enjoyed in] the evenings. Most evenings we used to sit by the fireside with our grandmother who used to tell us exciting stories. Usually the stories she told [contained] sections of singing and those were the parts I enjoyed most. Therefore, time and again, I would find myself humming some of the tunes I heard from one of the stories, even during the day. I proved to have a good ear for music as I was able to hear a song once and then [repeat] it later. This laid a foundation for my interest in music.

As I grew up, I started going to the cattle post to herd cattle with my older brothers. At the cattle post, especially when we had to take the cattle for water at the communal dam, we would engage our bulls in fighting with the bulls belonging to other people. In order to provoke the fight between the bulls, we would start whistling and singing praises to our bulls and the bulls would respond accordingly. The poems were meant to praise our bulls and this was an interesting sport. It showed some creativity and this, too, created great interest in me. The poems on their own showed a great talent in composition and creativeness.

When I was about ten years old, I started attending primary school. During those days, we did not have the luxury of attending preschool or nursery schools. At primary school, I enjoyed singing in assembly because I knew some of the songs sung there from my Sunday school lessons. This was indeed a great motivator. In my Sub-A class, we were involved in singing rhymes and poems. By this time, I had already developed a lot of interest in music and my teacher discovered that, and she registered me in the junior school choir to sing as a tenor when I got to Standard 1. I did very well and the choirmaster usually assigned me to sing solo parts. This also motivated me, but I did not think at the time that it would help in shaping my future career. Back then, there were no role models in music to look up to as they were considered illiterate and had low status within my community.

My participation in the school choir continued until I completed primary school. By then, I had won a few prizes during competitions, either as part of the school choir or as a soloist. During my days in primary school, music lessons were included in the school timetable but they were not really taught. Instead, we were asked to water the vegetable gardens, do general cleaning or complete our work in mathematics or English during the time slots for music.

Growing up [under the influence of a Western religious atmosphere]

nearly destroyed my interest in music. We were taught that styles of music other than the Christian style were ungodly. It was pressed upon us that only the Christian style would be tolerated. In my case, I was torn between two [styles of music] because I liked the traditional music of the Kalanga tribe but my religion was against it.

When I moved to secondary school (or high school in the South African context) I was more mature and I started to look at music from a broader perspective. Besides joining the school choir, I also joined the traditional dance troupe. As I was staying away from my parents and living in a boarding school, it gave me an opportunity to explore other styles of music. I developed a great deal of interest in African traditional music. Unfortunately, music was not offered as a subject in secondary schools. Therefore, I was not able to develop [proficiency in] skills such as music notation, writing and reading music.

During my time in secondary school, I also developed an interest in pop and reggae music. I drew much of the interest in these types of music from my friends who enjoyed listening to it. Even at this juncture, I did not know I would end up pursuing a career in music. However, during this period, I had, to some extent, learnt how to read tonic sol-fa notation. During the school holidays, I used to assist some choirs in reading tonic sol-fa notation, although I was not very skilled. At one point, I was even asked to assist the village health choir to prepare for the regional choir competition. This must have done some good because the choir attained second position amongst 18 choirs for the first time in its history. This on its own built up my confidence and morale. I began to gain some recognition in the village. For instance, I was invited by my former primary school to assist in training its junior choir whilst the choir mistress was on maternity leave. During the local competitions, the choir attained first position. From these experiences and gaining so much more confidence in my talents, I realised the need to study music and pursue it further.

After completing my secondary education, I was admitted to the University of Botswana to study for a Bachelor of Science degree, but I turned down the offer as I was interested in music. This did not go [down] well with my parents. Unfortunately, the university in Botswana did not offer music programmes at the time. Instead, I applied at the Molepolole College of Education [to study] for a Secondary Education diploma. I was offered a place to study science as my major subject and music as my minor

subject. My lecturers at the college wanted to discourage me because they said it made a poor combination of subjects as they considered the two to be incompatible. In fact, I was the first student in the history of the college to have such a combination. However, after convincing the head of the science department, I was allowed to continue with this combination. Music education was a brand new subject and the syllabus was not well defined but, due to my passion for the subject, I persevered and completed my diploma with a good grade.

Even though the type of music that most appealed to me was choral music, I was exposed to a number of music genres after [obtaining] my diploma. I cultivated an interest in other styles of music by attending music workshops – sometimes paying for myself because of my love for music. One of the most exciting workshops that caught my interest was the Botswana Music Camp. It was a music workshop that covered a number of activities including playing drums, the recorder and the marimba. Furthermore, there was singing and modern dance. I have made sure that I attend this wonderful music workshop every year.

After [obtaining] my diploma, I was posted to teach science at a secondary school. At the time ... music was not offered as a subject in secondary schools. Upon my arrival at this school, I immediately formed a choir and my school choir participated in a choral competition during that same year. At branch level, the choir attained first position and proceeded to the regional level where it attained second position. I started to help other local choirs in the town where I was teaching. Among the choirs that I assisted was the Crime Prevention Choir, which also did well in competitions. I started to gain a good reputation in the town, as a choirmaster.

During the second year of my teaching career, the Government decided to introduce music education in secondary schools. To start with, 15 schools were randomly selected [to be part of] a pilot project for the subject and my school, fortunately, was amongst those chosen. Teachers from these schools were taken for workshops to familiarise themselves with the syllabus, assessment criteria and the demands of the newly introduced subject generally. From that moment onwards, I have never looked back as I have had to grab opportunities to do what I love the most.

In my teaching of music, my pupils have done very well but ... I felt ... a need for more. I felt that I needed further training in the field. As I've mentioned countless times before, my passion lies with choral music, and

specifically with training and conducting choirs. My greatest ambition is in the field of composition and research.

I strongly believe that there is a lot of knowledge out there among the people of different cultures that needs to be tapped and shared with others. My interest is in ethnic music as I want to see the rediscovery of the rich diversity of our African music and culture [and want to see it] made popular because Western religion suppressed it for a long time, and has branded the practice of African arts and culture as pagan worship or has associated it with other negative connotations. The *Daily News* of 17 July 1970 quoted the late President of Botswana, Sir Seretse Khama, as having said that a nation without a culture is like a person without a soul. In reviving our African culture, I strongly believe that music should take centre stage as it transcends all boundaries. Furthermore, music can be used as a vehicle for promoting the ideals of the African renaissance to narrow the gap and bring Africa's people closer together.

From my experience of teaching music, I have discovered that much of the music taught in schools at present is pro-Western and very little is said about African music. This observation is also affirmed by Oehrle (1988) who states that

music education ... however, think[s] almost exclusively in terms of Western Music not for white students, but also for African, Indian and coloured students, The music education books which are now in the schools perpetuate the culture of the dominant white elite. This is not only an injustice to others, but it is also a disservice to whites.

[Because of the focus on Western music], very few teachers are capable of handling the different aspects of African music syllabi confidently. Consequently, this will need to be urgently addressed if our children, who are not currently exposed to their traditional music, are to become aware of it. By doing so, we would be preserving our culture of music for the enjoyment of ... generations to come.

In 2004, I was offered a scholarship (or bursary, in the South African context) to study in a degree programme at the University of Pretoria. I therefore enrolled to read for a Bachelor of Music degree. My area of interest is composition, performance and research. This is because I intend to conduct a great deal of research in traditional music in the future. I prefer

composition because it gives one the opportunity to express oneself and explore one's creativity. Research would help in passing the knowledge to future generations and provoke critical thinking. Although, these are my career preferences, I would explore other areas in music studies without hesitation if I get the opportunity to do so.

I think I have to work very hard to achieve my professional goals in music, as I feel that the music education programme at the University of Pretoria does not fully address my aspirations. I feel that the module that addresses African music is not sufficient considering that we are in Africa. I strongly feel that the programme for undergraduates is more Eurocentric and very little attention is given to African music. Anderson and Campbell (1989:1) assert that

[I]f students are to learn a multicultural perspective, teachers need to develop an educational philosophy that recognises the inherent worth of endeavours by different cultural groups. Multicultural education develops the understanding that there are many different but equally valid forms of musical and artistic expression and encourages students to develop a broad perspective based on understanding, tolerance and respect for a variety of opinions and approaches.

If Music Education (MPE) and Music Theory (MAM) are offered for the duration of the three years and are not optional for BA music students, African Music (MUE) should receive the same treatment. Furthermore, students are given exposure only to affluent, advantaged or former Model C schools as opposed to being exposed to rural, disadvantaged or township schools during teaching practice. I feel that the training environment at the university needs to be revised by improving certain aspects of it.

As a conclusion to this assignment, I strongly want to state my belief that, given the opportunity and a conducive environment and support, I will achieve my aspirations in my music career.

3.6 Marie-Victoire Cumming (2006)

For the requirements of this essay, I will be discussing the various factors that have influenced me in studying music since my childhood, and up to my current interests as a music student at the University of Pretoria. My different music experiences, motivations, interests, influences and many more appropriate issues will be referred to in detail.

If I were to think back to my early childhood experiences, different musical moments and experiences come flooding back to me. I was born in a small village in the southwest of France and grew up in a family that believed music to be essential and was very passionate about it. Both my grandparents and my mother took a liking to singing and often sang in various choirs in the village. Music evenings were frequently held, [during which] my family would sing songs from the Beaujolais region and entertain the guests. I can remember these family gatherings and functions where everyone would simply break into song and dance. These clearly were moments of enjoyment and laughter. Opera was definitely one of my mother's passions, and memories of watching video cassettes and listening to CDs with her stick in my mind. My grandmother played the violin for 15 years, and I was very lucky to [have this] handed down to me. Thus, my early experiences of music were of French folk songs, as well as all the French nursery rhymes that my mother used to sing to me.

The next stage in my life, after France, was the ten years that I lived in Zimbabwe. These coincide with my junior school days. My memories of this time are still vivid, and I can definitely say that it was through these school years that I realised music was my passion, and that I would one day end up studying it. The music I was exposed to here differed entirely from the more European music style that I had encountered in France. Emphasis on traditional African music was something new to me, but I soon became accustomed to it. I still have ... early memories of visiting the Victoria Falls, where the sound of the marimbas would echo in the streets. Even the atmosphere of the people singing and dancing in the markets of Bulawayo (where we lived) still lives in me.

At school, music was something that the headmaster and teachers tried to promote, and they thus offered a variety of musical activities [in which]

we could participate. I played in the music ensemble, sang in the choir and occasionally also played in the marimba group. The majority of my friends also took part in these music groups, which [obviously] influenced me even more in the enjoyment of it. What made it so different and special for me was the African flair to the atmosphere and musical groups. In the choir, we would not only sing the typical junior school choir repertoire, but also songs in different African languages. During those years, I was fortunate enough to take violin lessons at the Academy of Music where many concerts were held.

At the beginning of 2000, our family moved to Pretoria. Coming from my school in Zimbabwe (where music formed such a big part of my life), I was thrilled when I found out that I could take music as a subject in most South African secondary schools, and enrolled myself at St Mary's DSG in Pretoria. I found this wonderful and convenient as it included all the subjects (music history, theory, aural) [that I liked]. Various choir concerts, drama productions and orchestral concerts were held at the school and the children were encouraged to take part in these cultural events.

My experience of playing in an orchestra flourished during my high school career. I played in the Tshwane Youth Orchestra, Simfonia Juventi as well as the school orchestra. In these orchestras, I [was exposed] to a strong classical music influence, often playing repertoire by the likes of Beethoven, Mozart, Dvorak, Mendelssohn and many more. Back at home, orchestral and solo violin music thus became the main types of music that I, along with my mother, would listen to. My mother enrolled herself in the Pretoria Bach Choir, so I would often attend her concerts too.

Specifically with regard to the Tshwane Youth Orchestra, various experiences opened my eyes to other styles of music and opportunities available in the music industry. Highlight of my experiences and journey with this orchestra are the two festivals that we attended and performed at namely, the Grahamstown National Arts Festival and the Music Festival held in Kimberley. The incredible atmosphere and the wide range of music performances at these festivals made me realise some of the possibilities that can be achieved as a group. I was impressed by how, for example, people would form their own music ensembles or groups, using instruments made by hand with the materials available to them, and play music traditional to their culture. [Participants] would range from children aged about seven years to adults.

My second highlight involves the jazz playing that I was lucky enough to be a part of.

Regarding this, the Tshwane Orchestra took part in three concerts with the jazz musician and composer Johnny Mekwa. His jazz ensemble consists of highly talented players from Soweto. The opportunity we had to play with them was something special for me, as I had never played in a jazz ensemble. The new concepts of rhythm, melody and especially improvisation proved to be something totally different to what I was used to in ... other orchestras.

The third and final highlight deals with the outreach programmes that I was fortunate enough to take part in. The first one was the Tshwane Metropole Cultural Development Programme, held at the Community Centre of the Walter Sisulu Primary School. Here, we were divided into groups and gave small workshops to the children, showing them our instruments, letting them play on drums, tambourines, etc. The second outreach programme was similar, but was for the children of Shoshanguve. With this programme, the children were more involved and actually participated in our orchestra, with most of them playing the violin.

These outreach programmes [kindled my awareness] and sparked [a] new interest, an interest that still inspires me. This interest is music therapy. I have always known ... that I would one day ... study music, but was just never sure of the angle I wanted to take. The idea of music teaching had crossed my mind, and this would probably be my alternative should music therapy not work out for me, but after participating in these outreach programmes, I realised that there are different ways to use one's music talent, and in what better way than to help needy individuals.

Thus, I have [been interested] in music therapy right from the start of university studies and studying music at the University of Pretoria, specifically, therefore felt necessary for me. As a student, I am still interested in orchestral music and ... jazz. Having been away from France for many years now I do not listen to as much French music as I used to. I find it difficult to classify the different music types that I like, as I am not very fussy and take a liking to most music. I am always open to listening to different styles of music from different countries, as I believe that there is much that one can learn in terms of culture by listening to the music. Perhaps music by modern composers, [for instance] Stravinsky and the like, could be classified as my least favourite style. I often struggle to communicate [through] this

music and do not feel that I can relate to it very easily.

Regarding my envisaged career in the music profession, the University of Pretoria has definitely [presented] positive opportunities, the main opportunity being that this is the only university (that I know of) that offers music therapy from the fourth year. However, my one recommendation would be that we get some kind of introduction to it, what it entails, etc., from the first year of studying. It would not have to take up much time during the week, and could simply [comprise] one lecture per week. Another positive aspect regarding the university is the fact that we are given the opportunity to study African music and drumming, as I believe [that it] is highly necessary and important for music therapy.

My journey through music has ... been one of excitement, pleasure and thrill. The journey still continues and, in many respects, this is only the beginning of what lies ahead! I look forward to the many challenges ahead, and truly believe that whatever music career I end up [following] will be something passionate to me, as my ambition to study music has grown from when I was very young to my musical interests of today.

3.7 Andrie Drent (2007)

I hear classical music and my heart is at rest. I hear rap and my heart cringes. I hear rock'n'roll and my heart rolls along. With opera, I don't understand it all. I hear gospel and I cannot wait to hear more. What influenced me on my road towards studying music? At times in my life I have wondered [about this]. Let me explore that now in the following writing.

My parents played a big part in my music education. I was exposed to classical music from my earliest days. While I lay in my crib, Mozart gently laid my soul to rest. Beethoven played when I took my first steps. Brahms calmed me down when I threw a fit. All of the great composers were with me every step of the way.

I never liked *Boeremusiek*. Everything sounds the same – from *Oom Pietie se roosterbrood* to *Tant Sannie se breiwerk*. This music [upsets] my spirit's balance.

I do not like [it] and never will. I honestly cannot say [that it played a role in influencing] me to study music or to understand music. I want to get away as far as possible from it.

Classical music was my main influence. It encouraged me to listen to other types of music as well, to hear what other types of music sound like and how [they differ] from classical music.

As technology changed, so did my music style. I never knew what rock, hard core or any of the 'lesser-known' music styles were. I come from the countryside. Only a few of the music styles are known where I come from. I became curious about these other styles and wanted to find out more about them.

I went to high school and there I discovered the wonder that is rock music. It changed my life significantly. At first I hated this newfound style, but, like olives, you ... learn to enjoy it. Linkin Park was the first rock band I liked and from there [my liking of rock] grew to magnificent proportions. I began listening to a greater variety of music. I learned that life does not consist of classical music and *Boeremusiek* only. There is more to it. During my five years in high school, I lived in a hostel. There I heard a [great] variety of music – from classical, Afrikaans and pop to hard core music, you get exposed to a great deal of it. School was a great place to learn about music. I continued my studies in classical music at school, although I did not learn about the music most people listen to today [while I was there]. This was the first time that I can remember thinking about studying music.

The other music genre that plays a big role in my life is gospel music. This is one of the genres that underwent a huge change [over] the past few years. For a long time, the only type of gospel you [heard] (which was called gospel), was African-American gospel. The name tells you everything about it. It is gospel music that African-Americans sing. In the last few years, gospel has grown along with technology. World-famous groups and solo singers such as Hillsong and Michael W Smith have made CDs. Both of these groups use technology to enhance the quality of their music. To be able to sing in front of bigger crowds, they used the best equipment, as well. They had to grow along with technology in order to keep their fans coming back to their concerts. Nobody is able to make a living if they are not able to adapt to the circumstances of the world they are living in. Technology is an integral part of the lives of people living

in today's society. I listen to this music all the time and I would like to produce this type of music one day.

A number of things influenced ... my decision to study music at the University of Pretoria. My parents were a big influence. From the moment I started to play the piano, my mother believed I was going to study music. Well, look where I am today: studying music. My parents never wanted me to listen to rock or pop music, but some things are inevitable. You are plunged into it, whether you want it or not.

I never knew what the actual studying of music entailed. I always thought you could only teach. When I did a bit of research, I realised that there is a lot more to BMus than I first thought. The course has expanded, adding to it music technology. My big interest in this world is technology. I love technology, every bit of it. It makes the lives of people better and faster. The music that is digitally created changes the face of the known world. If I can help change the world for the better, why not? The internet is making an enormous impact on everyone, the movie industry is booming. Everywhere everything to do with entertainment is growing very fast. The world needs more music in everything [that is done] and I want to provide it. Finally, after searching for so long for the right course, I found it. Studying engineering or architecture now seems so trivial. I can't imagine myself in any other place than the place I am in now.

The day I walked into the university changed my life enormously. I never liked listening to opera and now I [have] to listen to it. Listening to music you did not like [before helps you to] become accustomed to it and you will start liking it more.

Everybody in this world would like to [bring] positive change in the world. All will get the chance to do this in the career they choose. Some choose performance, whether their instrument be a guitar or a piano. Others choose to teach children. Others may [become chartered accountants] or engineers. I would love to make a change through music technology. It is a relevant career, something that everybody needs and cannot live without.

The music department has a lot of positive energy. The lecturers care about the students. The department is beginning to grow with the times and is not standing still any more. The introduction of the new modules, technology and ethnomusicology, really brought about change in the department. The people who lived in the time bubble of classical music [have to] realise that there is more to music than just classical music. The

introduction of the new modules broke that bubble and people [have to] move with the times.

There is a great deal of 'politics' among students of the music department. The students cannot live together in peace and there is always some sort of rivalry amongst them, especially the piano students, [among whom] I also [find myself]. If everybody can learn to live together in peace, all will be better. The pianos could be looked after better. If everybody did their part to make the music department a better place, all will be well.

I would like to see [the students] more involved in the happenings in and around the department. They will then learn about the other things that are happening and be able to participate in something [else, as well,] rather than just those things that have to do with music.

The Musaion could be modernised. More computers in the laboratory are a necessity, so that more people will be able to use it. The better the equipment, the better I will be prepared when I step into the working environment.

More rooms could be built to [provide] more recording rooms, studios and other rooms associated with technology. There is more to technology than just the creation of music. I want to learn how to insert music into movies, how movie production works and further options related to music other than [just] the creation of it.

More lecturers could be appointed to teach music technology. The department must realise that this is the future of music and that [this could either be embraced or the department could be closed]. The more lecturers appointed, the more students will be able to take the subject and learn [about] something other than the history, writing and dying of classical music.

There is a lot that interests me in the field of music technology. I won't live long enough to discover all of the wonderful things it entails, but I will try my absolute best to find out and learn as much about it as possible. This is my future and I embrace it fully.

3.8 Paula Fourie (2005)

I am a second-year music student majoring in voice. This was a major decision and will most probably influence the rest of my life. What made me decide to study music and what do I intend to do with my degree when I have finished? These questions and other aspects of my musical training will be discussed in this essay.

I was born in Germiston in 1985. When I was two years old we moved to London, England. Two years later we moved once again, this time to New York in the USA, where we stayed for two and a half years. After that, my family came back to South Africa and I lived in Pretoria for half a year. When I was seven, we moved to Vienna, Austria, where we stayed for over two years. We moved back to Pretoria and I have lived here ever since, a period of ten years. Due to the fact that I spent a lot of my childhood travelling around, I have come into contact with a variety of styles and genres of music.

The earliest musical experience that I can recall [involved] watching my older brother playing the violin in London. He must have been about six at the time, and I used to think he was amazing. Although I cannot remember it, my parents tell me that I saw a few musicals, including *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Les Misérables*, in New York. Musical was truly something that I grew up with. Even though I have not seen more than six, we had soundtracks to *Oklahoma*, *Brigadoon*, *Chess*, *Cats*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Misérables*, *42nd Street* and many others. I often catch myself singing a tune that comes from a musical I did not even see, or I might watch a musical for the first time and realise that I know all the music intimately.

In Austria, I started taking piano lessons. I did not practise much and it was on a very basic level. I also joined the United Nations Children's Choir. This choir consisted of about 70 children from all over the world, each wearing their native dress as a uniform. We were not very good, even though my last performance with the choir was a Christmas extravaganza on Austrian TV where we sang alongside David Hasselhof and the Viennese Boy's Choir. I cannot help but laugh [about] those days when I considered it a much greater privilege to hold David Hasselhof's hand or sing into his microphone, as I did in the dress rehearsal, than to sing alongside such a

great boy's choir. We all even had a good laugh at the boys drinking tea before the performance instead of the chocolate milk, as we did.

The best thing about Vienna was that I got the chance to walk past Beethoven's old house on the way to school every day, and see the opera house where Mozart's operas were mainly performed. Unfortunately I was too young to appreciate what I was seeing. It took me a whole year, for instance, to realise that Beethoven Strasse referred to someone completely different from the Saint Bernard dog of the Disney movie.

Austria was also the place where I came into contact with the waltz. My father taught me how to waltz and I remember dancing to countless Viennese waltzes in the living room. There was also a certain park that we used to go to, where there was always a little orchestra playing Richard Strauss. We used to sit outside at the tables of the cafe and eat Sachertorte while listening to Viennese waltzes or gazing at the huge statue of the master himself. I saw five big musical productions in Vienna, namely *Die Fledermaus*, *Elizabeth*, *Die Zauberflote*, *Land des Uichelns* and *The Phantom of the Opera*, in German. The two that I remember most vividly were *Elizabeth* and *Die Zauberflote*. The former was my first encounter with depression. In this musical, Death was embodied as an actual character and there are at least two suicides. I remember crying for days; nonetheless, I still have the soundtrack and listen to it often.

Watching *The Magic Flute* was an experience that I can never forget. The opera was magical and the walk home through the snow almost as good. Everything seemed tinged with magic as my mother and I walked through the streets. Then I began to sing the aria of the 'Queen of the Night', prancing around and using my opera glasses as my 'magic flute'. I sang without a care and I remember the people walking by laughing and smiling at me. Everyone knew what I was singing: you cannot tell the Austrians a thing about Mozart. Little did I know then that it is a very difficult aria to sing, and that I would [one day] love to be able to sing it without restraint as I did then.

Back in South Africa, I continued my piano lessons at Pro Arte, where I also took music theory up to Grade 3. Eventually my mother made me stop taking lessons because I never practised. The ironic thing is that I knew that I would regret quitting piano, as I do today. I just didn't have the discipline to practise. In primary school I was part of the Orffkreis, a musical percussion ensemble, and also took guitar lessons for two years.

All that I can remember from those two years is how to play D, E and A major chords and half of a classical piece. My mother took me for auditions for the Jacaranda Children's choir, but they turned me down two years in a row. So it looked as if music wasn't for me. But then there was the North Gauteng Youth choir. Although I wasn't a member, my brother and sister were. I sat at the back during their rehearsals most weeks and went to many concerts and to their braais with my parents. The result of this was odd in the sense that I still know their repertoire for those four years and most of my friends at university today were actually part of that choir that I watched as a child.

I went to the Afrikaanse Hoër Meisieskool when I was 13. I planned to join the North Gauteng Youth Choir, but then I got into my high school choir. Since I wasn't so interested in music, I decided that one choir was enough. Our choir was good; we won the international Peter Eben Advent Choral competition in 2001 and the ATKV Applous twice while I was a member. I started out as a first alto in Grade 8, became a second soprano in Grade 11, and then sang first soprano in matric. I loved singing very much, especially choral singing, and started to take lessons with Isabella Eksteen when I was 17. It was also at high school that I got the opportunity to go to the state theatre to see *The Phantom of the Opera* again, as well as *Cats* and extracts from Puccini's music.

When I came to university, I enrolled as a BA Languages student. I had toyed with the idea of studying music, but decided against it. I soon changed my subjects to major in Geography, while still doing Languages. Then I joined the Tuks Camerata. During our practices I began to feel increasingly frustrated. I didn't just want to sing the music, I wanted to understand and be able to create it. I wanted to be able to understand each element and put them together like a jigsaw puzzle. One day while I was busy practising my choir music, I couldn't stand it any longer, and went straight to Professor Walton to ask him if I could come to study music. Although I couldn't do the admittance test for theory, I got into the course. Now I am a second-year music student but I still take German and English to enrich myself. I am doing German as a third-year subject this year and will go on to second-year English next year.

I still have doubts about whether I should have started studying music. I have a big disadvantage in that I cannot play the piano and am not very advanced in my theory. Still, I passed my first year and am enjoying myself.

There are days when I am convinced that I will never find a job or will spend my life teaching little children about music. Of course that could happen, but since I cannot imagine myself happily [engaged] in any other profession, I am content to wait. I sometimes think that I should have studied Animal Science or continued with Geography. Then I would have had the likelihood of a steady salary and the opportunity to be in nature a lot. Yet I stick to my decision.

Influences in my musical development include musicals, operas and choral works. I am very interested in choirs and especially the works of American composer Eric Whitacre. Choral music is, after all, the reason why I am studying music. Musicals will always interest me and I still love listening to them. At university I have been introduced to many different types of music, including African music, which I have grown to appreciate. Some of my favourite composers are Eric Whitacre, Puccini, Claude-Michel Schoenberg, Dvorak, Joshua Shank and Faure.

I am not as familiar with instrumental music as I should be. There are individual pieces that I am very fond of, but in general I prefer programme music with voices. The reason for this is that I am emotionally much more sensitive to singers, probably because I am a singer myself. I find solo piano music especially tedious as works are long and often only aimed at being technically demanding. I do not like classical music, as I find it too precise and distant. Romantic and twenty-first century music appeals to me much more, because of the highly expressive emotional content. As far as popular music is concerned, I like alternative music because it is often different and musically more complicated than mainstream music. The lyrics also make more sense. I do not like rave music as I find the constant beat repetitive. Favourite popular music groups of mine include Radiohead, Tori Amos and Blk Sonshine.

Today I am active in the choral world, singing in the university choir and acting as a voice trainer and junior assistant conductor for the Waterkloof High School Choir and the Pro Arte Alphen Park Choir. I take choral conducting as a second 'instrument' with Professor Johann van der Sandt and the voice training at Waterkloof is part of my practical classes. My work at Pro Arte is paid. I also take part in the university's annual opera, although only as a chorus member. I also pay attention to opera, oratorio and lieder, as I come into contact with them in my solo singing.

I intend to specialise in my first instrument (voice), choral conducting

and aural training. These three subjects are very important, should I want to become a choral conductor. I am interested in composing and might specialise in that as well. As it is also important for any musician to be able to play the piano, I need to work on that as well. I believe that musicians today need to be equipped with knowledge of music technology. I want to keep my options open in this technological age and therefore also take music technology. African music is also very important because it is something unique that we Africans have and [it] can also help to broaden our horizons.

I think that the Department of Music should hire a full-time singing instructor and focus more on singers. We could have seminars about body-voice integration and acting skills for those of us who are considering a career in performance. Other than that, I am satisfied [as far as] the rest of my education is concerned. I have a good choral conducting lecturer and enough opportunity to gain practical knowledge.

One day I hope to be a choral conductor or performer. I would even be interested in being a musicologist. One of the main reasons that I have dedicated my life to music is the fact that it is something mysterious. Music is an art that has lasting value far beyond the life of a mortal man. It is a medium understood by all cultures and races. It has the potential to lift the human spirit higher than imaginable. That, to me, is more than enough reason to commit my life to this higher cause.

CHAPTER 4

Visionary factors influencing choice of specialisation

Certain students expressed a logical thought process leading to music as a field of specialisation. These writers examined their musical studies as a means to an end. The essays in this chapter offer a well-considered goal that can be achieved in part by using the BMus course to serve as a specific platform from which to launch their future careers in the field of music. It is important to acknowledge the views of future music revolutionists, as these authors seem to be passionate about making a change – whether through music education, music therapy or through multiple musical professions.

In Essay 4.1, the writer expresses realistic views of the future. She goes on to acknowledge the boundaries she will need to break in order to achieve her goals. She believes her dreams will motivate her to create a future for herself that will, in turn, help create opportunities for those less fortunate than she.

The author of Essay 4.2 draws motivation from helping those who do not understand concepts, and are younger than she. She, in addition, wishes to extend her activities to helping special needs children. This thought process is what drives her in her ambition to become a music therapist. She wishes to better the lives of those who either suffer from birth defects or who have experienced traumatic events. This writer envisages a future of selfless helping of others.

In having multiple ideas of probable future career choices, the writer of Essay 4.3 is likely to create realistic opportunities for herself. She lends her

talents to various fields of music practice. She sees her future as a fulfilled and dynamic excursion filled with many gratifying opportunities.

The writer of Essay 4.4 has a notion that music education should be examined with specific reference to the current times and milieu of society. She argues that effective music education has not yet been formalised. She wishes to conduct studies in the popular music field so as to establish a means of teaching concepts of music through a medium to which children of today can relate.

4.1 NS (2006)

It is always important to know why one does what one does. Sometimes we know why, but we, because of circumstances, get caught up in the execution of our plans and forget these reasons. An essay entitled 'My Personal Ambition for Studying Music' could lead to a variety of different outcomes. Firstly, I could be encouraged by the reminder of why I do what I do. Secondly, I could realise that I have missed the mark and need to return to my original plan. Or perhaps I could realise that things are not what I thought they were and see the need to adapt and follow a different path. This is not only applicable to me, but to all who ask such a question in their [particular] fields of study and/or vocation.

I have always enjoyed music. I remember sitting next to the piano at my home, listening to my father and other visitors who frequented our home, and being utterly fascinated by the sound of the instrument. After they had all left and I thought I was alone, I would sit in front of the piano, close my eyes, and begin to play the piano the way children do, plonking, caressing and teasing the piano according to my mood. Although my mother was never very musical, she fostered in me a love for classical music. We would often listen to music together and [create] silly little dances depicting what we thought the music was saying.

I only began playing an instrument at the age of 12. From the beginning, I loved it, and spent every spare moment practising, counting the 'sleeps'

until my next lesson. Two years later, at age 14, I began learning my second instrument.

I soon became involved in my church's music group, initially helping out here and there when they needed someone extra, but later becoming very involved. To this day, I enjoy making music with other musicians, giving musical input and contributing to making the best possible sound that the group is capable of. It was in my years of involvement in this area that I learnt about the deep spirituality of music, that it is a language where we communicate with God, and He with us. I learnt that music has the ability to touch people, beyond the realms of logic and intelligence.

At the age of 15, I attended my first orchestra rehearsal. The feeling of being such a small part of something that can express any emotion, [whether] named or not, thrilled me in ways that I will never forget. I still love [to think] that, in this context, I am so necessary and yet so unnecessary all at once, and that I am part of something by which I am enriched and I enrich others.

Although I received great pleasure from music making, for most of my early high school years, I never considered studying music. It was only later, although I cannot remember exactly when, that I knew that this was what I needed to do. Music produced in me such pleasure, such fulfilment, that to think of [a] life [in which] I could not devote myself to it, if not entirely, then at least in part, was simply not within my grasp.

This idea of studying music is, if nothing else, a romantic one. Perhaps this initial birth of desire was based on a far-off notion of something that does not truly exist. But I believe that in life, if one does not expect beauty, even if it is naive to do so, then one will never find it. Sometimes, if we will just take one small step towards that beauty, the whole universe seems to stand behind us, which enables us to fight the obstacles that inevitably come our way.

I soon began to play with the idea of some day giving back, [by giving] to other people ... many of the gifts and privileges that I have been given. The idea of owning and managing my own conservatoire grew out of this desire. [With the passing of years] my ideas have grown, and this is now my dream: I dream of a place where musicians, both young and old, amateur and professional, can continually grow in both their love for what they do, and their ability to do it. So this would not just be a venue, but a garden where musicians can inspire one another to blossom. I want facilities for

teaching music genres and instruments of many different kinds. I envision a concert hall that would be a facility for orchestras, dance companies, drama producers and the like. Catering services would provide for events, both large and small scale. State-of-the-art recording facilities would provide a platform for upcoming South African artists, and there would be music therapy facilities.

Although this 'dream' would function as a business venture/opportunity, a large part of the dream is to give back to the community. I plan to start upliftment opportunities in surrounding underprivileged communities, where those who are involved at the conservatoire make regular trips to those less fortunate and teach the art of playing their instruments to others. The possibilities for this are endless, with orchestras, jazz bands, solo musicians, rock groups and other ensembles being formed, and later giving performances at the conservatoire.

For a long time this dream has thrilled me, yet I have always doubted the [possibility] of it coming to pass. Fear is a giant we all have to fight. I never used to think of all this as possible, as it would no doubt require vast amounts of capital, and the taking of many risks. Yet, I am becoming convinced that we are given dreams for a reason and, in reality, the only ones that can stop us from fulfilling these dreams are ourselves. Apart from my pure love for music, this would be my second motivation for studying music.

I now find myself a student at the Department of Music, University of Pretoria, taking one small step at a time towards my dream. I believe that one's end goal is purely the culmination of small goals accomplished one at a time. I ... love what I am doing right at this moment in my life. I see and recognise that, although there are challenges and battles I need to overcome, they are merely stepping stones to greater things that await me.

With respect to my envisioned career, what do I find positive and negative about music education at my current institution? It is a sentimental, idealistic notion to say that I do not believe that there are negatives. However, I will begin by stating what I believe to be the positives of our institution. I think that our tutoring and lectures are at an exceptionally high level, especially on the theoretical side of things. We have a number of world-class practical students too, and this would not be possible if it were not for outstanding practical lecturers. There are also plenty of opportunities for practical performance.

In terms of the negatives, there are those which go beyond our abilities

to repair, such as the [shortage] of practice rooms and the state of the pianos in them. Addressing this problem would require a lot more finance than we have available, so I think it is for the students to make the most of the opportunities they are given, and realise that it could be much worse (there are institutions where a single violin is shared by more than five students, and they are still turning out fantastic musicians). In terms of issues that could be addressed, there, unfortunately, still are instances of partiality shown towards students and groups of students. This kind of discrimination should have been done away with a long time ago. I also dream of a department where back-biting and gossip is done away with. Although many would say that this is a highly idealistic idea, I do not think it is impossible. If both students and lecturers could realise what a gift we as musicians have been given, and seek more to see the good in others than their shortcomings, I believe that our department would see a drastic improvement with regard to the 'vibe' we are often said to have. We as people should not be so selfish as to only be happy for those whose situations do not seem to threaten us in any way, but even if someone else has things which we do not, I believe that the noble thing is to be happy for them anyway, and realise that all of us are unique, and do not gain our identity from what we do, but from who we are.

By the same token, if I were ever in the situation where I could no longer study music or make a career of it, it would be in my best interest to realise that, before anything else, I am Nicole. My performance is not who I am, but what I do. Therefore, if ever I had to stop doing music, I believe that I could use my life experiences up to this point, and do something else. I love the idea of giving to others what they cannot get themselves. I would therefore most likely go into some sort of field where I could do this and generate a sustaining income for myself at the same time.

To answer the questions I asked at the beginning of my essay, what is my response? Perhaps it is a combination of all three [possibilities]. Firstly, I am encouraged by reminding myself of the reasons why I find myself at this institution, studying this course. Secondly, it is true that I have missed the mark more than a few times with respect to where I have been focusing my attention and need to realise what my priorities are. The third question is difficult to answer in all honesty. I don't believe I have missed the mark with regard to my choice of study, but I will not deny that it is perhaps different to what I thought it would be. I don't intend changing what I study by any

means, but I cannot help smiling at the thought that we are given dreams and desires, and when we begin to move towards them, even if we don't know exactly what they are and what they look like, someone else does, and we find ourselves fitting into a chess game that we do not control.

4.2 Anina de Villiers (2007)

I have been surrounded by music from a young age; my grandmother was a music teacher for forty years and my mother is also a music lover. I have had a variety of interesting and inspiring music teachers, and each one has had a unique and different approach to music. With this background, I have been exposed to diverse fields of music. I also did ballet and with the kind of music you are exposed to with ballet, as well as the type of piano pieces I began to play, one could say I was mostly exposed to classical and light contemporary music. My family and I have never particularly enjoyed the strange sounds produced by Schoenberg or the incomprehensible clamour of rock music and so my favourite music up to now has been on the classical and light contemporary side. The reason for the type of music I prefer or do not prefer is that, when I play a particular piece or listen to music on the radio, it has to tell me a story or paint a picture in my mind. If I cannot see a picture or 'read' a story in the music, it does not make sense or appeal to me and I cannot appreciate it, because I do not understand it.

I have also been exposed to folk music of different kinds. When I was younger, we used to attend annual festivals where we would look back in time to the history of our ancestors. Not only in the sense of where we came from, but also the type of music these people played and enjoyed. The instruments [that were] used for this type of folk music – particularly for Afrikaans folk songs (I am a descendant of this group) such as the banjo – played a huge role in my interest. This traditional kind of music has had a huge influence on my appreciation for music, because of how people, in spite of travelling literally through hostile and dangerous Africa, would write songs and compose accompanying music, [often] inspired by an incident or

beautiful scenery, on the spur of the moment, for example, *Aanstap Rooies* and *Al lê die berge nog so blou*. I truly enjoy songs and music that reflect my heritage.

On one occasion during a visit to the Victoria Falls, I was fortunate to experience the African rhythms and hollow, soulful sound of marimbas. The melodies and conversations I heard in those instruments had me transfixed and this, next to the sound of a hippopotamus, is my favourite sound. I liked the way the instruments ‘talked’ to one another and how the music just continued on and on, just like the flowing of the Zambezi River.

Music is a part of everyday life and we as humans cannot function without it. However, what I describe as music, the next person may not see as such. For one person music is the sound of the *Pastoral Symphony* growing in his head; for another it is the steady rhythms of an African drum around the campfire at night; and for yet another it may very well be the sound of the *chaila* time traffic, signalling the end of the day.

I started playing music, piano music specifically, at the tender age of nine, my other instrument being the recorder. Like most children, I suppose, my background is firmly cemented in classical music and, later, in art music, for that is the basis on which our tutorage was founded. I continued music as an extra curricular subject throughout my primary school years and naturally took it as one of my subjects in high school. Therefore it has been a part of me since I can remember.

What I enjoy most about music is that it is something you can share with the people around you, whether knowingly – by giving concerts – or unknowingly by just playing your instrument for your own enjoyment but someone in the vicinity hearing and enjoying your music too. My siblings and I played a piano trio when we were in Grades 7 to 9, all three on one piano, squashed in next to each other like sardines. I particularly enjoyed that trio for the chance it gave me to share my instrument with my brother and sister. I consider it a great blessing if siblings are able to enjoy their art forms together like that, and people also found it different and intriguing to listen to, because it was a trio and not just a solo piece. But, of course, for systems to work together, differences need to be ironed out. And this playing and sharing presented us with an opportunity to grow, not only in our knowledge of music but also in our understanding of each other. Therefore, music helps us to grow as individuals in a micro- and in a macrosystem.

[I see] a good music teacher [as] someone who can inspire you to practise

harder and longer than you ever thought you would be able to, while you, at the same time, are growing more in your knowledge and love for your instrument and enjoying it. My teachers did that for me and it is what I would like to teach other children. I study music because it is my field of interest and it is more than just a hobby, it is a way of living.

Naturally, the kind of music that I prefer and that interests me is a reflection of what I was exposed to and learnt to appreciate as a child. Music must speak to me and make sense to me for me to be able to understand it. Music which speaks to me makes me feel calm, or encourages me, and the kind of music I like to play creates pictures in my mind, it might bring fresh memories of an event from my past to mind or I would try and conjure up an image of what the composer might have had in mind when he composed the piece.

What I would like to achieve with my studies is to become a music therapist. This is a relatively new field of study and one that has potential for growth. It has captured my interest because of its many possibilities for helping people. For instance, mentally challenged children are known to have responded to music in a much more positive way than to other activities. With so many people being affected by traumatic incidents, for example, child abuse, that occur throughout the wide spectrum of our rainbow nation, it is interesting to realise that music is one of the means used to treat and help the traumatised to overcome the obstacles [caused by] these events.

I like to help people, especially children, whether by explaining difficult concepts or entertaining them. There is nothing more satisfying than to see how some old lady appreciates your music, or to see the light in a child's eyes after explaining something difficult to them which they now understand.

If, however, I am not able to achieve this with my music studies, I would consider teaching different subjects: piano (would definitely be one), mathematics (because, as I said earlier, I like to explain things to people until they understand) and whatever other subjects might need a teacher. But I would focus my attention on special needs children; I think there are enough teachers for the average child out there. The university gives us as students a good background so that we know what to expect of our future careers. The wide array of subjects that we have lays a good foundation in covering some of the many areas of study that are available to us. However, at times I think our courses are more theory-oriented and we would be much better equipped for our future careers if we gained more practical

experience. Therefore, with performance classes preparing performers in some way for their careers one day, or students with technology as a subject [becoming] better equipped for their field through practical work, those of us who want to become teachers or something in that line should be presented with a wider range of opportunities to better equip us for our prospective careers.

In short, music ‘speaks’ to me in different ways and different kinds of music have different effects on me. But what I would like to achieve with my music is to touch people’s hearts and to help them through difficult circumstances. I also think the world is in need of people who want to help and who do not just care for themselves. A sense of community and connectedness is what is missing in the world; it has been replaced by tall palisade fencing and alarm systems in our houses that shut us off from friends and neighbours and lock us up in ourselves.

I suppose I, like many, would just like to make a difference in the world by using, in my situation, music. Music is the universal language of mankind, and as such is capable of many great things.

4.3 Kate Moore (2005)

Music, I believe, is one of the greatest forms of self-expression known to the human race. There are countless emotions that cannot be expressed by language, and it is an insult to those feelings to try trapping them in the strange symbols that we write down on paper, which restricts them to a [particular] word that [may have] many interpretations. Music, in contrast to language, has no set meaning or emotion. It is up to the artist to interpret the music in the way that he or she sees fit, and to allow other people to experience the music in the same way.

My family has had no or very little musical education. My father studied cello and piano for three months and six months respectively, and my mother taught herself to play a few chords on the guitar while she was at university. Other than that, my parents knew nothing about music. They

had their favourite bands, and would go to Sun City when Bryan Adams toured South Africa. My two sisters have had some musical training, but neither of them [continued it] for more than a year.

My introduction to music was the nursery songs that my mother would play on the cassette player in the car while we travelled to and from school. When I was in the car with my father, I remember him playing his Phil Collins and Enya cassettes, and I still enjoy that style of music. I am quite grateful that my family is not musical, as it gives me a place to escape to where there is no pressure, and where people enjoy music for social and relaxing purposes [without having to worry] about concerts and competitions, and whether the person in the practice room next to you is going to be competing with you. I think it is important to have a place to escape to, especially when one is surrounded by people who are studying music, trying to be better than you are all the time every day. And I am grateful that my place of retreat is at my home, with my family.

The first instrument I was taught was the recorder, in group music class in Grade 1. I remember enjoying those classes greatly, and always wanting to learn more about the pipe-shaped thing that, with a certain combination of fingers, would produce different sounds. It was in these classes that I was also introduced to theory of music, which, in turn, introduced me to an entirely new language.

I realised that the day would come when group recorder classes would stop, and I would be left with nothing to play. So, after speaking to my parents, I applied to study the cello at my primary school, when I was in Grade 3. There was no cello teacher at the time, so I was offered violin lessons instead. It was an instant love affair, and I started taking an interest in classical music. I started attending symphony concerts and listening to classical music. My friends at school thought I was weird, never going out to movies over the weekend and listening to classical music, so I learnt to deal with them in my own way.

My first orchestral experience was with the National School of the Arts orchestra, which I joined when I was in Grade 5. Even though I was sitting at the back of the third violins, I still loved making music with different instruments, and loved playing with other people who had the same interests. When I was in Grade 9, I joined the Johannesburg Youth Orchestra, which was an experience in itself. A little later that year the conductor of the orchestra mentioned that there was a shortage of violists

and double bassists in the orchestra, and anyone who was interested in learning those instruments would be given free tuition. I saw this as an opportunity to learn something new, so I started playing the viola.

I like listening to a wide range of music. I will listen to 5 FM or Tuks FM when I am in my room, or, if I need a change, classical music. The styles of music I listen to include classical, rock, dance, trance, pop and metal, depending on what mood I am in and for what I am preparing myself. There are very few types of music that I will refuse to listen to, but, saying this, I must mention that hip-hop and R&B are not my favourite styles. With regard to classical music, I will listen to most instrumental music, orchestral music and concertos, while trying to stay away from opera and lieder.

My eventual aim in studying music is to become a performer, not purely as a soloist, but a chamber musician as well. I currently do not want to go into teaching, but ... I realise that I will more than likely go into this field some time ... whether because it is the only means of making a living, or I [develop] the ambition to teach others what I enjoy so much.

I currently play in the University of Pretoria Symphony Orchestra, which is a great experience, and I have been [following] the National Youth Orchestra Course for the past five years. Over the past two years I have also played with the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of South Africa, the Johannesburg Music Initiative orchestra, and the Pro Musica orchestra. I have made backing recordings for South African bands, and have had different experiences playing with bands, which in itself is a completely new musical experience.

While I do have ... plans for my future, I know that many things [might] change. Three years ago I was not even [planning] to study music, and considered going into a BCom field. All I can do is go with what I want to do at the moment, and learn as much as I can while I am still a student. If music takes me overseas, it would be great. But I live in a really nice country with lots of different cultural backgrounds, which can only make my music more individualistic.

This department, like most other departments, has its faults and problems. But I am currently happy with the environment in which I am studying. It might be more centred on certain other instruments, and currently there is no strings department, but the way I am studying is working for me; my playing is not getting any worse, and there are many opportunities to learn new things. After all, that is what life is about: learning.

4.4 Suzanne van Rooyen (2006)

Music has always been of the utmost importance to me. It became a part of my life before I was conscious. I have loved music since day one. As I grew up, this recreational adoration developed into a passion that has overwhelmed me and is consuming my being. I am first and foremost a musician, then I am everything else ...

Perhaps my profound love of music began in my foetal subconscious. As a yet unmade human being, the strains of Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin and Strauss were already reaching my tiny auditory organs. I not only grew up in a classically rich environment, I grew in a womb wrapped in layers of sonorous orchestration by the greatest Baroque, Classical and Romantic composers. I owe infinite gratitude to my mom and grandfather for imparting their love of this music to my infant self. However, it was not the grand classics only to which I was exposed as a young child. My father's 60s pop rock, concentrating on Elvis, also infiltrated my infant realm. My brother and sister, respectively thirteen and ten years my seniors, exposed me to various bands and singers in the late 80s pop rock genre. Thus I stepped into early childhood and entered nursery school singing Elvis and Roxette, and humming the theme from the *Trout Quintet*.

At nursery school I was introduced to the plethora of childhood tunes, nursery rhymes and Christmas carols. It was in the nativity play of my fourth year that I made my performance debut as one of the shepherds at the manger. I loved [the stage from] the first time I stepped onto it and I love it still.

The genres in my repertoire were expanding at home, as well. The sublime and sonorous world of Andrew Lloyd Webber had flooded my childhood dreams. Roger and Hammerstein and Gilbert and Sullivan musical numbers also became an intimate part of my musical upbringing. By the time I reached Grade 1, I had already been exposed to an eclectic mix of musical styles and genres. My love for music had become an overwhelming passion. At six I began taking piano lessons and landed the role of Tinkerbell in the senior primary production of *Peter Pan*. I loved the stage, the dressing up and being in the limelight. I then enrolled at a performance academy called Stage Arts. This academy offered dancing, singing, jazz performance

and theatrical training. I did it all and spent several years prancing on stage and in front of television cameras for the children's series *Kideo*. Music, in various forms, was my life. It governed my being; it was the defining concept of my existence.

As the demands on time increased at school, so my involvement with Stage Arts diminished, but my passion for music never wavered. At 11 I started cello lessons but soon relinquished strings for wind and pursued the flute instead. Flute instantaneously became my primary passion and has been my main musical focus since the moment I touched the ethereal silver instrument.

In high school, music soon overshadowed my interest in the sciences. Music dominated and dictated my life. I chose to study music as a matric subject purely because I loved it. Not once did I think that I would make a career out of music. Music was therapeutic; it was a release, a catharsis. School was a traumatic endurance test for me as I was always the outside child. I was 'weird' because I didn't dress or act in the same way as the others. This 'uniqueness' isolated me and caused me to suffer from depression. In music I found solace. I medicated myself with the mystical melodies of Celtic and Native American Indian music. Music was the medium in which I could be free, I could be truly myself. Music enabled me to establish an identity and thus gave me the self-confidence to function in the reality that spurned me.

The last three years of high school were a watershed. Music became my primary focus to the detriment of other subjects, but I redefined myself as a secure member of the alternative genre through music. With the depression easing, I gravitated more and more towards the rock, alternative genre of music. Dark, haunting and emotionally driven, that was the music of my choice. I ensconced myself in the Gothic subculture. Socially I interacted with other introspective, melancholic, Goth-like individuals and gradually found my way into the heavier genres such as doom and black metal. The frustration I failed to express was given voice by the screaming, leather-clad, long-haired characters in bands such as Dimmu Borgir and Cradle of Filth. My taste in classical music also took a darker turn into the romantic compositions of Weber, Wagner, Liszt and late Chopin. As I listened to these vastly different styles of music, I began to hear similarities in the harmony, rhythm and melody lines. Rock music began to interest me on an academic level as well as an expressive one. My interest in music was piqued

and the possibility of pursuing a career became an ever-increasing reality, which gratefully I chose to explore and act upon.

Today's human environment is saturated with sounds, some merely noise, others music. Almost any style and genre of music is available to me, either on radio, television, the internet or in CD stores. The types of music I pay attention to range from black metal to contemporary classics. It is easier for me to pinpoint the styles I do not like: jazz, hip-hop, R&B, rap, commercial pop and gospel. I'm not a Christian, so gospel music is irrelevant in my life. Most pop music I find superficial and churned out by record companies simply to make money, not to explore any musical or artistic aspirations. Rap contains no sung melody and thus, to me, doesn't even qualify as music, although I do recognise it as a form of poetic expression. R&B and hip-hop are too repetitive, not lyrically introspective enough and too focused on the black American way of life for me to find something to which I might relate. I am a pattern person. My life is based on numerical codes and orders as is the harmony of classical music. Jazz deliberately seeks to undermine these patterns and thus jazz disturbs my psychological equilibrium with its inconsistent rhythm and metre. The styles I do love encompass metal, hard rock, indie rock, gothic rock, new age and instrumental music, particularly from movie scores. Of course I love classical music, particularly nineteenth century compositions. I love the passionate intensity that characterises black and gothic metal. This type of music is physically and intellectually demanding on the performer and emotionally demanding on the listener. Hard rock allows me to express myself in a lighter, brighter medium while still maintaining a profound emotional connection between music and listener. New Age music soothes my sometimes turbulent soul and allows for meditation, whilst movie scores provide the soundtracks to the constant images in my head conjured by an over-active imagination.

Regarding my current participation in music, I am a member of PUCE, the university's wind ensemble, in which I play the piccolo. This ensemble plays a wide range of music, including traditional African songs, such as *Mama Themba's Wedding*, big band themes from Glenn Miller and movie themes from the likes of John Williams. This ensemble is far more enjoyable than the main orchestra. I used to play percussion for UPSO but that highly strung and over-sensitive environment was just not for me. I am also an avid groupie for my best friend's rock band. I am at every gig they play and try to support other amateur South African bands by going to live gigs and battle-

of-the-bands competitions when [these are] held in my area. In this way I keep abreast of the developments in my immediate musical environment.

I know I will always perform either in a professional orchestra or ensemble or as soloist performing at functions. My main interest lies in education and the music business world. My dream is to help the teenage generation become more aware and appreciative of classical music. To this end I want to do extensive research into various popular genres, particularly rock, and write a thesis on the classical principles which form the basis of any musical composition. I would then like to develop this into a school textbook or curriculum. In this way I believe that high school [learners] will be able to relate to classical music, thus opening another generation to the fantastic realm of this style. I would like to achieve this either as an individual or be actively involved in the development and creation of the national curriculum for high school education.

I can also see myself as an impresario arranging music festivities across all genres. South Africa is sorely lacking in the number and quality of musical events. I would like to revolutionise this, creating a more musically aware society by hosting more music festivals such as the Coca-Cola Colab Massive Mix concert and the Divas concert recently held in Centurion. I would endeavour to create in South Africa festivals such as the Reading Festival held annually in England and the great many others held in Europe throughout the summer. I see no reason why South Africa could not host a music festival of this size when the country is perfectly capable of hosting World Cup sporting events.

Regardless of what becomes of me and my grandiose dreams of musical revolution, I know that I will always work within the music world and, as long as I am ensconced in music, I will be happy.

The standard of music tuition at Tuks is extremely high and the range of subjects allows for the attainment of a broader, more holistic degree in music. The most positive aspect is the Music Education subject. This subject is all-inclusive, spanning topics concerning how to teach music to various age groups of any and all abilities.

The international exchange programme with Finland is a marvellous innovation giving students the opportunity to experience another culture and system of education in a developed European country. I am lucky enough to be going on exchange to Finland in August this year and I plan to make the most of this unique opportunity.

I do not think there is another university in South Africa that can compete with the standard of practical classical education at Tuks. However, I do feel that Tuks needs to modernise and include a music business module in the course. This module should deal with music law, marketing, record label dealing and issues concerning surviving the commercial music industry as music careers are tending more and more towards a corporate business industry. I think more instruments, such as electric guitar, bass and drums, should be offered, even if only as second instrument options. I firmly believe that jazz piano and singing should be made a first instrument option and that other instruments should be allowed to be studied as jazz instruments as well.

I also think that there should be greater emphasis ... on African and Indian music as these two styles are intrinsic to South African culture and yet are subjugated by dead European white men at every turn. A balance needs to be created between traditional styles and classical styles, as each is just as important as the other.

Sadly, students can perform in only three choirs, if selected, in one orchestra, if selection and space allows, and in a wind ensemble, if they play a wind instrument and if there is space in the band. This does not give many a chance to perform in different types of ensembles. I think the Tuks music department should have one or numerous rock bands, jazz bands, brass bands, marimba bands and any other type of music group for which students show performance interest. This would give more people more opportunities to expand their playing ability and their knowledge of different styles and repertoire.

Music is what I am. Music defines my personality and soul. Through music I relate to my environment. I could not imagine a world without music and I could not imagine my life without music. Irrespective of where my life takes me, no matter what direction I choose, I know that music will always play an integral part in my existence.

CHAPTER 5

Introspective views of musical study

For some students, the reflection upon the choice to study music given in the essays is introspective and thoughtful. These students were philosophical and contemplative in examining their paths through childhood and into their tertiary studies. The following authors offer a deep evaluation of the different influences involved in their musical and psychological upbringings, thus shedding light on the emotional and intellectual factors that prevail when choosing a specialist field of study. The students whose essays are included in the following chapter acknowledge the hopes and dreams they hold, while still extending a realistic view on the role that music studies should play in their future careers.

The writer of Essay 5.1 expresses the belief that society and its people are dependent on music. The notion is expressed that music has reached a point of 'stativity in the past three hundred years' and it is the writer's great concern with such concepts that inspires the need for in-depth musical study. The writer offers further insight into her liberated views concerning musical sound and a 'sterilised understanding' of music and the study thereof.

In Essay 5.2, the writer explores the passion he feels for music, and reflects upon the enriching quality music has on one's personal being. The writer explains how, after entering into a career outside the musical spectrum, he found himself 'drowned in a melancholic state of mind', and it was this lack of passion that drove him in the musical direction.

Essay 5.3 demonstrates a perceptive view of the decision to study music,

while also expressing the desire of the writer to allow for her full potential in her musical abilities to be reached as a result of studying music.

In Essay 5.4, the writer acknowledges the importance of acquiring background knowledge of music before being able to obtain a complete understanding of the practical side of music.

The writer of Essay 5.5 offers a view into the minds of musicians who have chosen the field of musical study as a result of the impulsive tendencies of the heart. This student acknowledges the challenges faced with regard to the consistent practising required for gaining the necessary skill that is essential to one's understanding of the instrument. The writer examines the ability of music to allow him to 'become human again'.

It is evident through Essay 5.6 that another reason for studying music is to obtain spiritual satisfaction. By converting a hobby that the writer is passionate about into a way of life offers a means of obtaining contentment. The writer chose to embark on musical studies in South Africa (being originally from Germany) in order to combine her 'two big loves' – music and Africa. The writer acknowledges her uncertainty when considering a particular future career in music, though this concern is overcome by the fulfilment of doing what satisfies her.

The writer of Essay 5.7 offers an insightful view, based on extensive experience in the international classical music scene, into the field of musical study. The essay covers the writer's desire to become a vocal accompanist and chamber musician, while delivering an introspective view into the ideologies behind musical study. He offers insight into the wisdom that study and the practice of music have brought to his outlook on life.

In Essay 5.8, the writer describes music as her 'purpose'. By exploring her wide musical background, she justifies the need to contribute to the ever-growing field of music. Drawing on personal experience, she offers an intuitive view into the challenges faced in the musical field, and acknowledges the importance of adapting to the modern context in which music plays a pivotal role.

5.1 Louise Saunders (2007)

Have you ever stood in the centre of a crowded corridor, closed your eyes and just listened, listened to the sound that a mass of people produces? The sounds, like mechanical warfare, as people's movements, talking and screeching fill the void? The sounds clashing, causing a warlike explosion, making you stop, think, imagine? Now open your eyes, and look at the social clones. What hypocrisy it is! They have become machines. They believe what they are told, resisting questioning.

You are probably wondering where music comes into all of this. I have a passion for music – music for the people, by the people and with the people.

My question is: If everyone is a social clone and has no desire to be unique, how can music still be music? Music cannot be dynamic or incomparable if the beings that create it are governed by rules that dictate who and what they are. How can there be music if spirituality is dead and all people are machines? If we have no spirit, then how, as a society, do we keep the pulse? What are we to do when the music that used to lift us high now makes us fall? Has society allowed for evolution in music or has it forced ... the degeneration of human sound? Does it make sense in its nonsensical nonsense?

Ducks quack, cows moo ... but what sound does a Louise make? Think about that one.

My name is Louise and I'm a conforming nonconformist. The questions I have posed above are the questions that drive my ambition in music and my music studies. But how do we save society when even Apollo isn't interested anymore? The consequences of music in today's society ... are disparaging and catastrophic. Music no longer brings communities together, it separates. We can only define ourselves as noble savages. Music is the art of the gods, but it cannot be seen as that when it causes animosity. It separates and causes xenophobia rather than uniting a society. So I pose the question to myself: Where is music going?

Everywhere we go we are exposed to sound, to music. It is a fact of life, a part of life. In studying music we are studying that which drives us to live. Music motivates, expresses and aids our conscious and subconscious

selves. People and society are dependent on music. Music is the light of our existence and without light there is no life. Music is a force, it is magic. It is a creation or power that manipulates our emotions and sense of self.

My desired career after completing my music studies would be world domination, but as that [may] be somewhat out of my reach, I will [stand aside]. Unfortunately, I will admit, I do not have a career goal. That may seem like a lack of ambition, but I disagree. My passion for many areas of music makes a career in only one area seem like seclusion, segregation and most undesirable. I have no desire to perform. I find that in a Western music setting music is pretentious and isolated. Music should be a coming together of people where it is not about inferiority or superiority, but equality. Therefore Western art music repels me [most] of the time.

I want to see music develop and to become an engineer in the process of viewing where the aesthetics of music are heading. I feel my calling to music was in light of two issues that caused grave concern in my everyday life. These issues [concern] how music segregates people rather than unites them, and my major concern is with how contented society is with the static state of music in the past three hundred years. Where can music develop to from here? I believe that music can become a much more powerful force than we perceive it to be today. Music as it exists in nature, and the frequencies in nature are far too complex for us ... to comprehend. But the naivety of mankind [revealed in not having a] desire to explore these forces shows contentment. I wish to make an investigation of the potential ... in undiscovered music.

To suggest a theory, I will use the unoriginal example of dolphins, in whose case large masses of information can be passed on in a single utterance through rapid or high frequencies. Maybe human beings are primitive communicators and there are, in fact, more advanced methods of communication in nature.

In returning to the topic, I will for a moment leave my discussion of these profound, problematic and unrealistic views. When I was growing up, my taste in music was never concrete. I was hardly exposed to Western classical music. The music I was exposed to was film music from the films I was watching at the time, and whatever music my older siblings would bring home. I am not entirely sure if that was a good influence, as most of the music came with a parental advisory logo. The other exposure I had to music was through the radio and I was thus exposed largely to popular

music. Somehow, though, even at a young age, it never took hold of me and I never quite appreciated it. This could have been because I did not understand why it was appropriate to mock a stereotype of a person with an alternative way of life. I was frightened to listen to specific [types of] music, as I believed that [doing so] would [prevent me from being] my own person. The implications of listening to music made me anxious.

Up until matric, I had never envisioned myself in music. I was always a drama kid, fixated with theatre and fine arts. Music served the sole purpose of being a means to enhance the expression of art and theatre. As I became more involved and somewhat obsessed with movement theatre, music became more conspicuous and as attractive and powerful as theatre. The more I grew fond of music, the more profound and prevailing the other arts became. I began to realise that they are all reliant on each other, and, together, form an exceedingly powerful force. This encounter helped me to realise the purpose of music. It was never designed to be a fashion. That is what society manipulated it to be. Music is an Art.

I thank the education system for Grade 2 recorder lessons. I fortunately learnt how to read music when I was very young, although that is where music ended for me for quite some time. At least I had some grounding to pursue music when I realised it was my calling. I caught up all the theory in about a month and managed to pick up music as a subject, which allowed me more exposure to this newfound profligacy in my life. This, in fact, led to a bigger complication. My parents' envisioned career for me, of becoming an engineer, had to be put on hold for a while. Music it was to be.

Having not always been exposed to music, I feel that I have an alternative and sterilised understanding of it. I have been allowed to decide for myself, which, in many ways, is liberating, but in the hierarchy of musical institutions, I am left in the dust. Thankfully, however, I come from an 'unmusical' background, so I experience music with no preconceptions and in a raw state, unprocessed and untainted.

When opinions and 'politics' are engaged in the Department of Music, I try to steer clear of them. I believe improvements can be made, but given the resources and availability of many things, I think people in charge do their best and sacrifice a large amount for us. So I think we should step back, observe and appreciate instead of complain. Those who [are consumed by] the intricacies and inner workings of the Department of Music must find little time for other things. We are students; we are here to learn and study,

not to get involved in things we barely understand. The only request I would have for the department is that we need more focus on world music. This surely would make us more efficient musicians. As for my envisioned career, I could not expect the Department of Music to be equipped for my bizarre theories.

I am a person of many tastes. I am dynamic in my taste in music and that has led me to be described by many musicians as tasteless. Segregation, segregation, segregation.

The biggest discriminators of all are those ‘wicked free thinkers’ in society. I do not like to view myself as having a taste, a preference or desired music. That can only create mental barriers for me. I would rather allow myself to indulge in and enjoy a variety of music – this is my personal honesty. Every day I experience and embrace new things, which will alter my perception in one way or another on a subconscious level. Therefore my taste in music, something that is so personal, can be affected by this. I see it as self-awareness not to disown unfamiliar or ‘deplorable’ music. Due to this, my musical milieu and social surroundings are dynamic and varied. This definitely helps to avoid dull moments. I have to admit, though, that, while animosity exists between different groups with different tastes, music is losing its identity. As everything has been done before, what [can still be] original? Does such a thing exist?

I conclude this essay by stating that my mission is to see music serve music’s purpose. I would like to see it include all members of the community and not abandon the so-called substandard. I anticipate discovering a way to help music progress, and become something more than it is now. Definitely, then, I will feel that music has to regain purpose. Although ... this may seem somewhat abstract, it is my personal ambition in studying music.

5.2 Brand van Dyk (2007)

My career in music hasn’t been one with a coherent history. Any subject of studying requires a purposeful decision to pursue it for the rest of your life.

One needs to assess future possibilities within that field of study. But the chosen field of study can also present us with a broad and rich education that doesn't fit into any particular plan for career-building opportunities. The experience counts more. Music to me has both these qualities: one with career prospects and the other to enrich myself as a human being.

I showed talent in music at an early age. My kindergarten teachers used to put me in front for musical activities. I loved to play the drums and hold the rhythm. I loved to sing as well. I also went to extra music classes outside of my kindergarten school. I remember learning music on the tiny electrical pianos made for children.

My family has a strong background in music. Both my mother and grandmother received Grade 8 Unisa diplomas in piano. I have a cousin who has ... completed a Master's degree in Music, as well as an aunt with a music degree. I enrolled for piano lessons as soon as I went to primary school. Since my grandma and mother were very interested in my progress as a piano student, they were always close by to check up on my practising methods. Due to my individualistic nature, I disliked their participation in forcing me to practise, as well as keeping rhythm while I was playing. I quit the piano after only receiving my Grade 1 Unisa Diploma. This proved to be a very [serious] mistake. Even today my musical experience is hampered because of my limitations on the piano.

Because of my father's great love for classical music, especially choir music and the Bach Cantatas, I remember waking up many a morning to these beautiful harmonies created by a multitude of voices. And I could sing. [For just] about the whole of my school career, I sang in the school choir, [which] included many top awards in eisteddfods, and a highlight in performing *Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*. I was vice-head of the high school choir committee and very proud of being a part of it. I never sang a solo, however – [something that would] change in my later musical studies.

In all areas of human interest, there is a spark that initiates the drive to pursue that interest. That spark touches ... the soul, [sparking] a very unique [response in] every individual. My yearning to study classical guitar came from such a spark. I did, however, take up the guitar as instrument earlier than that. At the age of 16, like many other boys of my age, I wished to be a rock star. I listened to the popular rock music of the time. I borrowed a nylon-stringed guitar from my uncle and took up lessons with Gertjie

Viljoen in Bloemfontein. My parents understandably didn't want to buy me an electric guitar, due to the potential levels of noise pollution in a small domestic setting.

Gertjie Viljoen was a quiet man. He lived alone. My good friend Clarke Marée also had lessons with Gertjie. What I can remember about my experience is that he taught us how to play like Kurt Cobain. Gertjie didn't have a set syllabus. I had to buy the sheet music to Nirvana's *Unplugged in New York* album. The album came out about two years before that, and anyone who could play some of the songs was immediately popular – not only with his friends, but with the girls as well. The year was 1997. In a very short time I could entertain people with any song on the album. I felt like Kurt Cobain. But something was missing.

Gertjie taught me how to play Metallica. *Nothing Else Matters* had the guitar solo introduction that every player dreamed of playing. The simple E minor arpeggio opening could easily be recognised by anyone, and faked by many a want-to-be guitarist. But if played with a melancholic undertone, any audience around your fireplace would be mesmerised. But after successfully accomplishing the technicalities of this tune, it still wasn't the spark that drove me into my current direction.

On a sunny, clear, Sunday afternoon in Bloemfontein, I attended an open-air concert in the botanical gardens. There were many performers of different genres. I remember a male classical singer hitting a high note, his voice immediately rejecting the necessary demands and breaking into an unimpressive, harsh grumble. I laughed. On came a guitarist, a Bulgarian named Stefan Velkov and the current teacher at the Musicon School. The particular repertoire I can't remember. It was a mix of popular classical numbers, transcriptions and East European folk dances. His right hand fingers were fast, yet precise with clear tones. His left hand flowed back and forth across the fingerboard with immaculate ease. I wanted to play like him.

Early the following day I walked into his studio at the Musicon. 'I want to take lessons with you,' I said. I had to take an audition, and to my good luck the auditions were two days away. Nirvana and Metallica were enough to prove to him that I had an interest in the instrument and an already developed technique. One year later, I could play a few classical pieces and throw in some flamenco beats to it. But I was 18 years old and had to decide what to do with my life.

For a couple of years before, I had been preparing to go to medical school. My grades were perfect. I started at the University of the Free State, but circumstances and opportunity made me move to the United States where I studied at the University of Virginia, changed degrees and received a degree in Economics. I still studied the guitar under Mike Rosensky. I moved to London and worked in a recruitment firm hiring chartered accountants and building new business opportunities with clients. [In between] I continued to practise the guitar and took a few lessons with random people, travelling long distances between work, home and guitar lessons. I worked at Hudson-Shribman Financial Recruitment for almost a year, and then quit. I was becoming successful in my job, and my employers wanted to organise a permanent visa for me. Then I broke the news to them: I didn't like my job.

I returned to South Africa. I was drowning in melancholy ... my idealism giving way to a pessimistic outlook on life. Should I follow what I was really passionate about? After a long and hard discussion with my mother and cousin (the one with the Master's degree in Music), they persuaded me to enrol at the University of Pretoria to study BMus. At the age of 25, this was a risky decision. I had already had success in another field with a bright future when I changed for a career with very few set opportunities. I was a bright high school student, top academic performer, top sportsman, and at 25 I had nothing to show for any of it. My situation was in stark contrast to that of some of my friends who had already tasted success in business.

I am currently halfway through my second year of BMus, and I love it. Apart from [upholding] my good academic record, I have pursued extra opportunities and areas of interest in the field. Since September last year I have acted as an Assistant to the Manager of the University of Pretoria Symphony Orchestra. This was new to me as I hadn't played an orchestral instrument before. I barely knew what timpani were. I was introduced to the scene behind the whole act, as well as to more orchestral repertoire than I had ever known. The structure and functioning of such a large and complicated entity fascinates me. Unfortunately I had to quit the job due to the demands of my studies.

I also teach guitar at the Afrikaans Boys' High School, where I have 16 students. It has put a heavy demand on my thinking from a teacher's perspective. Factors such as motivation play a huge role in the lives of young adolescents. They have an option to take music as a subject at school, but

very few of them have heard the classical repertoire. It is my job to introduce them to it and create the same zest to pursue it.

I have had problems with students not showing up for lessons from the start. Rugby and other sport have taken priority over the guitar. But a light came on when some of the boys started to cancel their rugby practice to attend guitar lessons. That is when I knew I had made a difference.

The world might not revolve around a small wooden case with nylon strings intended to be plucked to make sound. But it can add to a person's individuality and self-expression. I find myself when I play the guitar. The guitar is part of music as a whole, and I intend to study further to deepen my knowledge, not only of the classical repertoire but of other cultures as well. Hopefully this knowledge will extend into composition as well.

5.3 Welmien Coetzee (2006)

When I was a little girl, both my parents used to listen to various genres of music, from opera arias and Mozart sonatas to *But you love me, Daddy* by Jim Reeves, as well as jazz classics. There was an old piano in our house and I used to sit in front of it and make a big noise. This 'noise' was my attempt at composition. I was about three and my feet were not even touching the floor when I sat on the piano chair. I grew up on a farm and our housekeeper, Lydia, used to teach me Xhosa songs. I did not always understand their meaning, but I enjoyed them very much. By learning these songs, I came to understand more about her and her culture. There also were the other workers with whom I pressed sheep wool with my feet. They used to tell me all kinds of stories about their ancestors and their children. Lydia and the other workers might have been very important stepping-stones to an open mind. Then there was my grandfather. He made up his own little songs and I used to sing along while sitting on his lap with coffee and biscuits. My father also used to 'compose' his own tunes with weird little rhymes. We made quite a few trips to Namibia. On our way there we used to sing every possible thing my father and I could

think of and when we had gone through [all the songs] we knew, he had to compose new ones.

When I was about five I used to parade through the house in my mother's high heels and sang, pretending that I was a famous opera singer. One day my mother showed me the violin she had inherited from my late grandfather; I was about six at time. I fell in love with it and often asked her to show it to me. It was one of the most beautiful things that my young eyes had ever seen.

In early life, I listened to opera and classical music with my parents, but at that stage ... I found it terribly boring. Only when I started playing and singing it myself, was my heart captured by its beauty. I was also exposed to a lot of ballet music because I did ballet from a very young age. This genre intrigued me a lot. To be quite honest, I think my interest in classical music really developed in the ballet class. There was an elderly lady who played the piano for us in our ballet examinations. I had just started formal piano lessons when I did my second ballet examination and I remember that I wished I could play like she did. I had, and still have, a very fertile imagination. I used to listen to cabaret songs and then pretend that I was on stage singing them. I used to have all kinds of weird and wonderful little concerts for my mother, grandmother or anybody else who was willing to listen. And if could not persuade anyone to listen to me, I used my dolls and teddy bears as an audience.

I started taking piano lessons at the age of five and violin lessons at the age of eight. I was dedicated from the beginning. I sometimes even missed school to practise. At times when I felt I wasn't enjoying it anymore, I reminded myself of my love for music and that I was not to make a burden out of music. My early training involved competitions and concerts. When I look back now, I am not really sure that competing with others was necessary. In the end the only one you are competing with is yourself, and that one can do without involving others. Formal competitions sometimes felt like an enchanting poison. The more I won, the more I wanted to win. Then one day when I was about 15, I realised that I was running but not really getting anywhere. I stopped competing [at that] high level and only then really learnt how to pour my whole being into my music. I developed a theory, as I said, that the only one you really can compete against is yourself.

Richter Grimbeeck, my piano teacher before I came to the university, probably had the biggest influence on my decision to study music. Before

I started taking piano lessons with him, I never really intended to study music. ... I wanted to study dancing at the African Ballet Theatre, but the harder I worked, the more I wanted to study music.

I still listen to various genres of music. I listen to a lot of Eastern music in particular. I also like listening to lieder by Schubert, Schumann and Brahms. I am not one to listen only to classical music. ... To be honest, I was really intrigued by the drums we played in last year's class. Since then I have been listening to all kinds of drumming quite often and I really learn a lot from this. I believe it is important to have an open mind about life, and then, more specifically, about music.

In the century we live in, any type of music is available. We are surrounded by diversity, especially in the music industry. I participate in classical music, as well as rock music where classical music is incorporated. Of all the music that is available, I probably dislike heavy metal the most. The reason for this is that it has a very depressing effect on me and, in my opinion, on most people. The lyrics are mostly negative and/or aggressive and apart from that, one can barely hear a word. Music that I like listening to other than classical music, as I mentioned before, is Eastern music. It intrigues me a lot because it is so different ... from everything else we hear from day to day.

My aim in studying music is to let it reach its full potential in my being and through that let me reach my full potential in music. My goal is to start a production school/company that sets the stage for dancers and musicians to participate in theatre productions. I would like to incorporate as many people with the same dream as possible: art teachers, drama teachers, sound engineers, etc. The development of young people holds a special place in my heart, and I wish to create an opportunity for every young person with a dream – no matter how big or small it might be.

Being a part of the Department of Music is mostly a positive experience for me. It all depends on the way that one perceives things. I choose to look beyond the 'politics' of my environment and to focus on that which I love – the music itself. I would be selfish if I would want to change the Department of Music, because the very thing that bothers me might be the thing that is an absolute necessity for others. Once again, it all depends on one's perception. I do sometimes feel that the 'politics' in the Department of Music gets too much, but then there are people who need those 'politics' to drive them from achievement to achievement. This is not only a problem in our department, but in music circles worldwide. This, to me, is very

unfortunate, because it takes the essence out of music [to practise it like] a type of sport instead of an art reaching right down to the very soul ... However, to me, music extends a whole lot further. I have experienced music in different forms and different ways throughout my ... life, especially because I am a dancer too. Therefore I believe that one should look further than one's own desire to obtain fame, power and even status. Much more will be achieved if people get rid of their egotistic power struggles and work together.

I think it is really important [to] incorporate your music in the different aspects of your life. I am convinced that there are some who are far too narrow-minded in the classical music sector. They [suppose] that the whole world revolves around classical music and anything else is utter nonsense. I strongly disagree with this. My life is built out of many bricks of which music might be the cornerstone, but definitely not the whole house. Our lives dance to our own rhythms, not the rhythm of Mozart, Bach or Beethoven. Their music is [undeniably] beautiful, but it is not the alpha and omega of life. There is an essence – a rhythm pulsing through all of us – that is definitely not bound to classical music alone. It is a universal rhythm, a rhythm that even the best of academics dance to.

5.4 Marina Solomon (2003)

I was influenced by music from an early age. My musical career began with my mother teaching me simple songs, at the age of three. She played the piano and the violin, thus it was not surprising that I started playing the violin at the age of four and the piano at the age of seven. I played the violin for a few months. My favourite piece, [as I remember it], was 'Pitter Patter Rain Drops'. After violin, I began to play the piano. I played in various eisteddfods, concerts and in the annual Royal Schools' examinations. From early on I was also attracted to performing. I always chose pieces that were exciting and interesting – pieces that contained rich harmonies and expressive melodies. At the age of nine, I started taking an interest in

the harp (as I'm sure most girls do at that age). [Quite] coincidentally ... a small Celtic harp was available for purchase and there was a teacher, the Philharmonic Orchestra's harpist Shelly Frost, who could be my teacher. From then on I took piano as my first instrument and harp as my second. [When I was] in Grade 6 my piano teacher moved to Cape Town, thus bringing an end to my piano studies, as there were no other piano teachers that influenced me as much as she did. I [came to prefer] the harp and dislike the piano. Consequently I stopped piano [lessons] and concentrated on the harp. In primary school I played the harp in ensembles and musical productions. I loved playing in these musical productions because they were so full of colour and spontaneity. They influenced and inspired my interest in performing.

I have loved musicals [since my primary school days], in particular the Gene Kelly films, *Singing in the Rain* and *Summer Stock*, and the *Sound of Music*. To me musicals represented a freedom that is not found in [the everyday] world – the freedom to burst into song whenever one is happy or sad. I also listened to a lot to Christian music, mainly songs of praise and worship. This was because my mother played music in the church. I enjoyed listening to this music because it was fulfilling and serene.

Towards the end of my primary school education, I began playing in the KwaZulu-Natal Youth Orchestra. This was a great influence as it taught me how to play in an orchestra, to identify the different types of instruments, to know where the players sat, and about the orchestral repertoire. I enjoyed this experience greatly, and continued [participating] right into high school. In Grade 10 I was invited to join the Bloemfontein Youth Symphony Orchestra when they went on tour in KwaZulu-Natal, and again in Bloemfontein. This enhanced my orchestral education and influenced me greatly because it taught me about freelance work and interacting with people that I had never met before. My favourites [among the] orchestral pieces that I played were the *Carmen Suite No.1* by Bizet, and *Romeo and Juliet* by Tchaikovsky. Both contain beautiful harp solos.

For the greater part of my school education I took music outside of school. This mostly [involved] playing in the orchestra. Music became a school subject in Grade 10. In taking music as a subject, I was required to play an instrument (harp), play in the school's wind ensemble (glockenspiel), and learn harmony and history of music.

When I realised that I wanted to be a concert harpist, I decided to study [for a degree in] music. I came to this realisation towards the end of high school. I feel that it is very important to learn [about] the background of different periods and composers as this gives insight into the pieces one studies for performing, and thus one is able to interpret the pieces better. My favourite era is the Romantic period, because the pieces contain so much emotion and can be interpreted in diverse ways. The harp truly developed in this genre and important harp composers wrote amazing pieces of music at the time. Some of these composers were Tournier, Sphor, Thomas and Hasselmans, who were all masters of harp composition.

My current music milieu includes involvement in Western art music, mostly because I study music. I am confronted with this type of music on a daily basis. It is the music that I am most accustomed to because it has been such a part of my life. As a performer I pay close attention to Western art music because it is the field in which I want to work some day. The Romantic and the Modern periods are my favourite periods. I find the Modern period fascinating and interesting [because it has introduced] so many new ideas, new harmonies, dissonances and sounds. I also enjoy the Classical and Baroque periods as I find them intellectually stimulating. The music is ingenious, with composers such as JC Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. I love Christian music because it is so gratifying – in particular praise and worship songs and the ‘hip’ songs performed by the younger generation. I enjoy the occasional ‘chart topper’ because of its beat and groove. I don’t like heavy metal music, as it is loud and not at all intellectually inspired.

The area of my music studies that interests me the most is the practical side. I want to be a concert harpist performing mainly Western art music. I want to travel the world winning competitions, giving recitals, giving master classes and making recordings. It is something I have always dreamed about and I believe if one really sets one’s heart on something, it can be achieved. This is why I prefer to concentrate on the practical but at the same time learn the theoretical so as to gain understanding.

One cannot say that this university focuses too much on the theoretical side, because when one looks at what the university offers on the practical side, it is evident that the practical and theoretical even each other out. There are frequent evening and lunch-hour concerts, performance classes and orchestral performances. I also think that it is a good idea to learn

about other cultures because this gives one a better understanding of the world around us and of the various people and their musical practices. The one thing I would add is a few lectures on pop music and song writing, as this is a very big part of today's world – especially amongst the younger generation. To study music is to study everything that is regarded as music, including the music of other cultures and modern 'pop' music. There are so many different styles that could be studied, for example the music of the 50s and 60s, such as that of Elvis. A few lectures in each of these subjects would be profitable.

It is interesting to note how one's ambitions change as one gets older and more experienced. When we first received this assignment (at the beginning of the year) I wrote the first draft. Now, after rereading the first draft five months later, I realise how much I have changed and how my personal ambitions have changed to some extent. This assignment [focuses on] my current ambitions, which I am sure, will change as I grow older and learn more about the world.

5.5 Gerhard Geyser (2007)

The first experience with music that I can remember [occurred when I] was a child of six ... My sisters and I sang to Laura Branigan, using hair brushes as microphones. We liked singing folk songs with my sister accompanying us with the guitar. My parents also played music in the car while we were driving the long road to whichever location we decided to go to on holiday.

My first formal music lesson was on the piano, when I was nine years old. I never practised, except perhaps during my lessons! It was not that I did not enjoy the music; it was just that the music never challenged or intrigued me enough [for me to want to] practise it. I was actually more of a sportsman than a musician at that stage of my life, and swam competitively. Swimming training is a very lonely activity.

There are other people in the swimming pool, of course, but there is very

little interaction between athletes, as you are doing laps with your head in the water most of the time. While doing laps, I would be singing ... in my mind or playing rhythms with my teeth. To a certain extent, swimming taught me self-discipline, which is a good thing, of course, but it also had a negative effect on me. Swimming up and down for hours on end taught me how to shut down. A good description of the situation is the idea of a computer going onto screensaver. You might wonder what this has to do with my musical career, but the effect it had on me ... was that I would just go on 'screensaver' in situations where I had to work – whether practising my instrument or studying for a test. I was turned into a robot, to a certain extent. This I only realised recently and music has taught me to become human again. When you are really playing music you have to be involved and very much awake.

Swimming played a very large part in my life and the consequence of the screensaver way of living that I adopted from swimming was that I was stripped of many experiences. I played the piano until Grade 11, [but was] just so uninspired by it that I stopped [doing it]. I started playing the saxophone when I was in Grade 10, however, and decided to take it as first instrument in my studies at the Afrikaanse Hoër Seunskool (AHS). The music department at AHS was almost non-existent. I was one of three boys who took music as a subject out of the 220 boys in my year! I played in the wind band of the school, which was not of a very high standard but I really enjoyed making music with other people. We played classics such as *Heal the World* (Michael Jackson) and *Mambo No. 5* (Lou Bega).

The experience I had while playing the saxophone in the context of a band was so liberating to me that I decided I had to make a career out of it. Looking back, my reasons for studying music might have been a bit impulsive. Fortunately I also really enjoy music now, and at this stage of my life I cannot see myself doing anything else.

Another important realisation, which I have come to this year, is the importance of balance. I read the play *Arms and the Man* by George Bernard-Shaw. One of the main themes of the play is romanticism versus realism. Bernard-Shaw said: 'Romanticism is the cause of modern pessimism.' What this means to me, is that polarised thought (romantic thought) creates unbalance. Life is not always either stupendously amazing or heart-wrenchingly sad. A space in between does exist. Unrealistic expectations usually bring disappointment. This, of course, is not to say that one should

not have big dreams. I firmly believe in having dreams – as long as one realises that there is hard work involved in reaching great heights.

This brings me to another point: the balance between technique and interpretation. My outlook on music has been very unbalanced up until a few weeks ago. As illogical as it seems to me now and as it must sound, I thought of music as something that just happens magically. I thought that I would just wake up one day and be able to play the most difficult pieces that exist, as long as I am inspired. Of course, this is not complete nonsense. Music should be inspiring, but it is a skill like anything else and it is something one should work at every day. I have had teachers who told me that the music I play should be heavenly, and the rest would come by itself. I have now realised that this is not true. In order to be a great performer, one should get to know one's instrument very well and practise for many hours. This can be compared to a doctor who studies medicine and practises operations on a cadaver before performing open-heart surgery.

At [present] I would like to be a composer, a historian, a teacher, a performer and a playwright. I have started working hard in all the mentioned fields and I am equally interested in all of them. I am only 20 years old, so I think I still have time to pursue a lot of things. Perhaps I will get more focus next year or towards my fourth year when I have to do my thesis, but for the moment my interests are spread over a wide spectrum. If my musical career objectives do not work out, I would perhaps study literature and become a writer or perhaps get involved in the family business.

My current musical influences are extensive. I enjoy listening to Björk. What touches me about her music is its honesty and the interesting ideas she uses to make music. Her latest album, *Medulla*, for instance, consists of human voices only. All the sounds on the album are human voices – from the percussion to the bass, to the melody. Ella Fitzgerald is another of my all-time favourite artists. I especially enjoy her album covering the Cole Porter songbook. I, [naturally], also listen to Mozart. My favourite works by him are his clarinet concerto and the clarinet quintet K.581. I like the effortlessness in his music – the way that it just flows. Of course I also study his music for academic purposes, as his work is almost flawless from a formal point of view.

I have started playing in a duet with Odyke Nzewi, a Master's degree student at the department. I play the saxophone and he plays the *djembe*. The combination is new to me, but very exciting. From a technical point of view,

I am definitely improving my sense of rhythm, but I am also intrigued by the African philosophy of music-making. According to African philosophy, a composition is never really completed. The performer plays an integral part. It is expected of the performer to add his personality to the music. This is quite an abstract idea to [grasp mentally]. It does make a lot of sense for the performer to give the piece his own flavour; otherwise a robot could probably produce the same effect as someone who just plays what is written. This idea is difficult when you have been trained to not interpret beyond the boundaries of what is given. It is interesting to note that classical Western music did not always operate so conservatively. In the early 1800s, musicians were still expected to improvise at concerts and play their own compositions. It was only when women were allowed into the concert halls as performers that the standard repertoire of Beethoven, Mozart, etc. became common practice. This was because women were not considered as worthy or able to create their own music. Female concert pianists of the time were Clara Schumann and Fanny Mendelssohn.

In my opinion, the Department of Music at the University of Pretoria provides a very balanced course. The only thing that I would like to see happen, is that more people should get together and perform and experiment with different combinations of instruments to just generally interact more on a musical level. This, of course, is up to the students. I will definitely look into starting a club and furthering these ideas.

5.6 Stefanie Denz (2006)

My whole life has been filled with music. At the beginning, music, naturally, was placed around me by my family, and later on I ensured that there was music around me, on my own accord. During childhood and adolescence, [listening to music] was the main way of spending my free time, and after neglecting music for two years after school, I have now found my way back to it to make it more than just a hobby.

In the following [paragraphs] I will [relate] my life with music in the past,

the present, and the future, and critically discuss my personal experiences, hopes and plans in connection with music.

I grew up in a very musical family. My mother played the guitar, my father the cello and my grandparents always sang to us. At the age of four I started taking recorder lessons and at the age of six years I had my first piano class. Soon I was joined at the piano by my younger sister, who made not only the lessons, but also the practising, more enjoyable. Fortunately, there was never any force [behind learning] music, even though I was never much of a hard-working pianist and would go for weeks without practising. However, there were other weeks of spending lots of time at the piano, as well. My parents left my hobby up to me, though, even at a very young age, which is probably the main reason why I am where I am now.

Making music on my own was never much fun for me. I started singing in choirs from the age of six and have not stopped. At school I learnt [to play] the oboe and the saxophone so as to join the big band and the orchestra, and at home my sister and I enjoyed piano duets.

During my childhood I was exposed to a variety of music: German folk music, mainly through my parents and grandparents, classical music through my instruments and my parents' CD collection, jazz through the big band, pop music through radio and peers, and religious music through church. My interest in other countries made me buy folk music from abroad, too, which I enjoyed [greatly]. I never really had a preference and my only dislike was techno music – a dislike which I have retained. Generally, I try to give all kinds of music a chance and, even if I do not like it at first, I listen to it again and give it time to sink in.

Even though I do not have a particular preference, I have a great liking for folk music which, being from Germany, often overlaps with classical music by German composers. I feel that it is very important to know where each one of us comes from and it is only natural to have a special connection with the music of one's own country and at the same time be open to music from other countries and cultures.

Up until my graduation from high school I had spent all my life in Germany. That was also where I went to study medicine for one year after finishing the German equivalent to the South African matriculation examination. After realising that medicine would not make me happy, I went to live in Scotland for one year, from where I applied to study music at the University of Pretoria. While I was in Scotland, I realised that, in order to be happy, I

had to do what I loved. It had to be thought through carefully, though. So I collected as much information as possible and decided to combine my two big loves: Africa and music. My dreams worked out and I am in my second year of studying for a BMus degree in South Africa.

I must admit that I had been a little scared of studying music, especially with piano as my first instrument, and moving ten plane hours away from home into a foreign country. I can only explain this unusual decision as an urge and a longing which I had felt and which I followed, trusting my inner voice. And now I can say that it was the best thing I could have done.

I try to keep my current music milieu as broad as possible. To me it would be a nightmare to spend all day with my piano and classical music and not realise the full potential of all the styles and genres that surround me. So, even though I dearly love piano music as well as the classical music that I am exposed to in the Department of Music, I tend to listen to other types of music outside the department.

At home I try to keep myself up to date with pop music through MTV, and my sister and friends provide me with recordings of current German chart music throughout the year. Whenever I have time, I go to alternative concerts and often ask friends to update me on South African music such as Mandoza. I think it is my duty as a music student to know all kinds of music and be [familiar] with current music.

In spite of liking [almost] all kinds of music, there are styles and genres that make listening a little more difficult for me. One of them is jazz, the other one techno. In the case of techno, I have stopped trying. It is another world to me. Considering jazz, I am still trying to develop a liking for it. I believe that I do not understand it well enough to like it yet. To my ears, the music seems to start at a random point ... and then carry on and on, going nowhere until it finally [comes to an end]. I am fully aware that my perception is false and that there are certain patterns, but up to now they have been impossible for me to follow.

My love for choir singing allows me to sing in two choirs, a chamber choir and the Tuks Camerata choir. Besides my own performing, I enjoy going to choir concerts and am specifically interested in black choirs as the sound and the atmosphere differs so much from any choir I had listened to before I came to South Africa.

Since I started studying music, I have had a special interest in music therapy. I find it a wonderful opportunity of combining medicine, which I gave up,

and music. As it is a new field, there is still so much to be discovered, which is extremely fascinating to me. [It also happens to be] a growing field in Germany and Europe in general, with a growing number of jobs.

At the same time I can see myself teaching. I am studying French, as well, and I would certainly enjoy teaching at schools or in private for a while. At this moment, however, I do not think that teaching will give me the fulfilment I wish to get from a job in the long run.

I am always on the lookout for and am interested in any kind of job around music. The only future I would definitely not consider for myself is being a pianist. This is simply because I would never be able to practise enough to make a living out of it.

What is a given, is the fact that music will always be an important part of my life. If I should not be able to make a living out of music right after graduation, I will certainly not have a problem accepting a job that is not related to music. But I would still make music and keep on learning about music, to eventually make music my profession.

Being an international student, I find it very hard to criticise an institution that I am so grateful to be part of. Putting moral issues aside, however, I must say that the music education at the University of Pretoria is on par with European standards. On the one hand, this is very good as it helps students to compete on a worldwide level. On the other hand it is a pity. As much as I enjoy my subjects, I would very much like to see a greater emphasis on African music, as this is what makes us different to European universities. A broader look at music would also be nice, to make pop, jazz, folk and religious music part of the curriculum besides Western classical music, but without compensating for this with time spent on classical music. Music students could spend two hours per week longer on campus in order to get to know and understand other kinds of music, and most of us would not mind doing so.

But apart from this I feel very well accommodated in the Department of Music. There seems to be much 'politics', but I try to stay out of it as it also seems to be too personal for it to be objective.

Music is one of the most important things in my life and I am blessed to be able to study it and hopefully make it my profession later on. It is important for me not to take it for granted to study what I love and that is why I want to get the best and the most out of it that I possibly can.

5.7 Ammiel Issaschar Bushakovitz (2006)

I was born into a family of greatly diverse cultural and religious backgrounds and music and the arts formed an integral part of my childhood. My paternal grandfather was a Lithuanian Jew who was an amateur playwright and poet, writing mostly in Yiddish, his native tongue. His son, my father, who was born and raised in New York, was an avid and competent ballroom dancer whose youthful dream was to become a professional cantor in a synagogue. My grandmother on the maternal side studied singing and piano in Berlin before World War II. She also was a writer, and published an account of her remarkable experiences during World War II. My mother, born shortly after the war in what was then East Germany, also sings and plays the piano, her vocal accompanist during her high-school years being none less than Heinrich van der Mescht.

I was born in Jerusalem in 1986. My father was 69 and my mother 38. My family moved to South Africa when I was about four years old. It was in George that my musical training began. I started receiving piano lessons from my mother when I was around the age of five. My first musical memories, unfortunately, are rather unromantic. I remember sitting at the piano, my frustrated mother next to me brandishing a wooden spoon, and trying desperately to get through an unassuming piece in John Thompson's *Easiest Piano Course*. What makes the memory regrettable is that I remember experiencing distinctly unpleasant physical contact with that pitiable wooden spoon. I regard this incident as my first musical memory.

When I entered the Outeniqua Preparatory School at the age of six, I began taking piano lessons with the school's music teacher, a well-meaning but rather unenlightened lady of around sixty years old. Although I was above average, my piano career plodded on rather lugubriously. I started guitar lessons when I was seven years old. This I enjoyed immensely, far more so than the piano lessons. One of the reasons for this is possibly because the guitar lessons were given in groups – I did not receive individual coaching. This was my first experience of making music together with others and I think that it greatly contributed to the aesthetic appeal of the guitar for me. The group lessons showed me the paradigm that music is often more

rewarding spiritually when it is shared with others, since music is after all a social and cultural phenomenon.

Both my brother and my sister also played musical instruments. My sister played the violin, guitar and piano, while my brother played the trumpet, guitar and piano. Thus there was ample musical stimulation in the house. In fact, there was so much noise from the variety of incongruent sounds coming from all corners of the abode that my mother decided to build a music room a distance away from the house. This music room gave me hours of musical pleasure and many peaceful times of silent meditation. For me, silence is a wonderful thing.

I was exposed to many types of music as a child. My Israeli heritage caused me to grow up with much traditional Jewish and ethnic Israeli music. My mother's Germanic background exposed me to beautiful German folk songs, while my own interest lay in the minimalist movement exemplified by Steve Reich, Terry Riley and Kevin Volans. I was also interested in the music of eclectic composers such as Alban Berg, Olivier Messiaen and John Adams. During high school, I developed an almost fanatical fascination with the music dramas of Wagner. I would listen to *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser* and *Götterdämmerung* all day long, the sound system blaring it out at an ear-splitting level.

The popular music field was to a large extent unknown to me, since I hardly ever listened to the radio and had been doing home schooling from Grade 6. With hindsight, I feel that a genre that I greatly neglected is that of indigenous African music. It was not so much that I had a particular abhorrence for it, but more because I was just not interested. There is an adage which states that that which a person dislikes is often that which he does not understand. I believe that this applied to me with respect to the understanding of African music.

The type of music I was exposed to in my youth was more idiosyncratic than that of most children. Being isolated from peers of my age since primary school, I missed out on much musical experience I would have gained from them. However, I feel that this is not necessarily a negative thing, since I developed a personal concept of the aesthetics of music in a way that I could not have done under circumstances of 'group taste', that is, the pressure exerted by peers to listen to certain types of music and the general opinion among youth that art music is not fashionable. Music that did not have an intellectual element did not interest me, although I have

always been intrigued by folk songs. It is probably the elements of antiquity and mysterious conception that fascinate me. The harmonisation of hymns has also been interesting to me since I was a child.

Music competitions have been an evil necessity in my musical career. I have participated in competitive music for more than a decade, although I feel that competition makes music something of a sport. My first significant achievement in a music competition came when I was 11. I won first prize in the junior category of the George Young Musicians Competition. My first award in a competition at national level was in 2002, when I was placed third overall in the Bellville National Music Competition, playing the piano, guitar and trumpet on the final evening. In 2003, I received a mark of 93% for my Unisa Grade 8 guitar examination and was chosen on the grounds of this achievement to play in the Unisa South African Music Scholarship Competition in Pretoria. In the same year I was awarded the second prize in the Johan Vos Piano Competition and also came second and won the Neil Immelman prize in the senior category of the Musicon National Piano Competition held in Bloemfontein. In the following year I again competed in the above-mentioned competition and was awarded first place in the senior category, also winning prizes for the best performance of both a Classical and Romantic work. I also participated in the Absa National Youth Music Competition held in Port Elizabeth during that year and was the runner-up in the piano category, also winning the Baroque prize.

I have been broadcast on national radio and have appeared on television shows such as the SABC's *Morning Live* and KykNet's *Overture*. In July 2004, I performed as soloist with the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of the visiting American conductor Dr Leslie B Dunner in the Artscape Youth Music Festival. In October 2004, I performed as soloist with the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra in Durban, playing Tchaikovsky's 3rd Piano Concerto under the direction of Lykele Temmingh. I have also performed with the Hugo Lamprechts Symphonic Wind Orchestra.

Although I have taken part in many competitions, I do not agree with the ideology behind them. It is lamentable that music, the most deeply personal of art forms, should have become a spectacle for mass euphoria. But in Western classical music today, it is almost obligatory to build your career on concrete achievements, such as awards and laurels at important competitions. This is unfortunate, since the quality of a musician is now based on how well he fits into a certain mould. Spontaneity and individuality is stifled.

I plan to pursue a career as a vocal accompanist and chamber musician. I decided years ago already that a career as a soloist is not feasible, not only in South Africa but anywhere in the world. The risk of living life without a salary is just too great, although the idea of being a great pianist is very attractive and romantic. I enjoy playing together with other musicians. It seems to me much more natural than solo playing. So much more communication can take place musically. The art of vocal accompaniment is an age-old tradition and requires a great deal of artistic mastery. No instrument is as malleable and flexible as the human voice.

I intend to complete my BMus degree in South Africa, after which I would like to study further overseas. Many music students are of the misguided opinion that studying classical music in South Africa is futile since the standard of music in the country is much lower than overseas. I believe, however, that the standard in this country is high enough to be on par with international levels. I am of the opinion that many talented musicians leave the country unnecessarily, thinking that greener pastures exist elsewhere. This is detrimental to the country and is very unpatriotic to a young democracy like South Africa. After all, that is the ultimate aim of music – to unite dissimilar cultures, creeds and social strata.

5.8 Charlotte Botha (2007)

I study music because it is the only thing that rings true for me. During the performance of a piece, one is actually unravelling the thoughts and feelings that the composer or composers experienced at a certain ... time. When one performs the piece or is a member of the audience, influences and ideas from your own frame of reference add more meaning to the moment. I regard this as the sublime. My personal ambition in studying music has involved a long quest searching for meaning and sharing meaning through music. The journey has been influenced by many factors. These include my family life, social and musical experiences, a competitive drive within, chance encounters, and my plans for the future. This essay will elaborate as

comprehensively as my memory permits on these aspects.

My parents are both amateur singers from a very conservative Afrikaans background. They have always been extremely ambitious and have had only the highest hopes for their children. Since their traditions included family concerts and talent evenings, my brother and I were urged to perform as often as possible when we moved to the city. My main external music influence was the music in my parents' collection. They are not very picky, so I was exposed to everything from Bach through Beethoven to the Beatles and the *Jungle Book*. The single most important facet of my family is our great love for travel. This is an essential part of our lives, whether it is doing it together, or coming back to share stories of great societies with anthropological differences that astound and teach us about others and ourselves.

It has become a little tradition to collect indigenous music from wherever we go. I was therefore exposed to folk music from Ghana, Zanzibar, Egypt, India, China, Germany and many other countries as a child. This aspect of my upbringing has helped me to realise the importance of ethnomusicology. My respect for music that is not textbook-orientated Western art music has unfortunately grown rather gradually. I have reached a point, though, where I can say the more I am familiarised with the ethics and ideologies behind a specific culture, the more I am mystified at my prior ignorance.

Although we were very young (from about two years old) my brother and I loved acting, dancing, singing and drawing. We attended group classes in all of these fields from a very young age. At some stage my brother started to show a genuine interest in sport, and I remained encapsulated in the arts. I sang in choirs and played all kinds of instruments in orchestras from the age of about ten. I loved sharing musical experiences with comrades and fellow musicians, but I also had a penchant for competing individually, as playing in groups requires a certain degree of trust, which I was not very keen on until high school.

From an early age I had a liking for singing, especially in parts. This was exercised when I sang with my mother or father, or in choirs. I also developed a liking for dissonance at the age of 12, which is still with me. I explain my preference for dissonance [by the fact] that it is a medium through which one can create specific effects. These effects portray feelings that cannot be expressed through major and minor chords only. I used these intrusions to consonance in my compositions during high school, but have always believed that one needs consonance in a piece to justify the dissonance.

My formal studies in music have included tutelage in the practical, theoretical and historical aspects of my instruments since the age of six. These instruments are the piano, clarinet, cello, percussion instruments and, my great love, the voice. Throughout my musical career I have competed, sat for examinations, played in orchestras, sang in choirs and composed art songs in my mother tongue: Afrikaans.

When I was 17 years old, I decided that I was a better writer than a musician. After my final examination at school, I came to the University of Pretoria to study journalism, and did not think of music at all.

In my first year of university I met another journalism student, the kindest person that I could meet, Taryn Arnott, my best friend. She is the only person I trust with my life and whose opinion I value completely. During that year we had extensive discussions on the importance of having music in your life and she convinced me that we were betraying our purpose in history by discarding music. Then we registered for BMus.

During my first year of BMus, I discovered the endless possibilities of music technology and a renewed love for the theory of music. I sang and it was wonderful. I sang all the time, everywhere, at each opportunity that I could find. I sang so often that I developed singer's nodules, a condition where the vocal chords cannot cope with the strain they are exposed to and create new ways of functioning, which induces too much friction and makes them incompatible with the purpose of singing.

This sad coincidence has been the most devastating setback of my life, since I have not been allowed to sing at all for six months. But it has also urged me to focus on other aspects of my social and musical life. I now find solace in my *djembe* and have been taking percussion lessons again.

I try to encounter as many different types of music as possible. I enjoy attending concerts of jazz, electronic music, classical and modern art music and, most of all, choral repertoires. I am a great fan of post-modern popular culture and love eclectic performances in which there is a fusion of styles, for example traditional Indian instruments combined with the piano or cello. I like some East African groups and also the didgeridoo music of the Aboriginal tribes of Australia.

Furthermore I conduct small university serenading groups. This is a challenge, as you have to take into consideration the intellectual capacity of someone at tertiary level but combine your approach with the singers' minimal musical experience. I arrange settings of pop music for residences

on campus, which brings me to my great dislike of music produced for mass consumption.

Because of my involvement in analysing the fundamentals of modern-day pop music, I know how little art these pieces contain. They are produced through a formula of acceptance, which I do not find interesting at all. I especially dislike the new trend in Afrikaans music, where folk songs are electronically modified to produce hits for a market that, I am sometimes ashamed to say, is part of my own culture. I particularly do not approve of the supposed subliminal messages that are brought to life in these 'remixed' songs. These ideas signify an era that I am not proud of and do not wish to be a part of.

In the light of what I have said above, I regard it as highly important for me to make a contribution to Afrikaans music. I would rather produce music that is tasteful, exciting and provocative, than criticise the works of others. In terms of a prospective career, I sincerely hope that I will be able to juggle a diverse range of musical elements one day. My interest in writing has become more specialised, since I would like to write about the influence of, techniques in, and experience of music. I do wish to keep composing and have realised that my talent does not lie in composing big operas or symphonies, but in combining interesting rhythms, textures, harmonies and lyrics into small art songs.

I would like to be a choral conductor, as this would be the ultimate way for me to be close to 'singing' as a product, despite the fact that I may not sing anymore. It would also be the ideal situation for me to learn to trust others more and to learn that one sometimes has to cope with disappointment in tasks that are one's own responsibility, but can only be done by others.

Furthermore, if I had my choice, I would work in a recording studio and do editing, mixing and production. Whatever the outcome of my efforts at university, I aim to equip myself with as many options as possible so that my previous efforts will not be a burden to me one day.

I do know what it is like to be plagued by inevitable coincidences. One cannot be prepared for everything. I do still have a love for travel and if I cannot live out my dreams in the music world, I will gladly become an air hostess. I would prefer to do something completely out of the field of music for a while, though, but only for a while, because music has always had the ability to reel me back into subjection to my talents.

I must say that this department has provided the background to the happiest

days of my life. There is no doubting that the outcomes and themes are a bit archaic, though. The fact that we focus so tremendously on Western art music might be a bit of an irritation to some, but one must also remember that this study provides a good means for juxtaposing other types of music.

The great problem with any arts department is the high level of competitiveness. This is probably inevitable and I have yet to come up with a suggestion as to how to diminish the level of jealousy among artists. Maybe it would be wise to shed some more light on the ideals of performance, composition, and hierarchical aspects of African music.

I believe that my growth as a musician through many years of various types of exposure has brought me to be the person that I am and will direct me towards being the person that I am still to become. I hope that the enthusiasm that I have for music shines through in other areas of my life. Most of all I hope to share what I have learnt and made my own in being a musician with those I love, those I do not love, those I respect and those whom I must still meet.

CHAPTER 6

Fundamental observations occurring throughout the essays

Further insight into the world of competitive music, the selection of styles of music listened to by students, consideration of future careers, the social and cultural applications of music, and the relevance of music as an academic career path is given throughout the essays.

A common inclination in the essays is the tendency to form distinctions between different styles of music listened to by the students. Some detest forms of popular music, while others struggle with the tendency of classical musicians to focus only on this particular style. For example, styles such as heavy metal are regarded by some as ‘angry’, as stated in Essay 1.1, while other music students hold only praise for this style, as in Essay 4.4. Many students express their enjoyment of contemporary styles – including jazz, pop, rock, indie rock, modern folk and hip-hop – as well as classical music.

Furthermore, students express [disapproval of] the inclination of institutes of higher learning to overlook academic study in modern or popular music and the relevance of music in the contemporary sphere. Many writers express a desire to delve into studies in jazz, popular music, African music and many other styles. In Essay 5.4, for example, the writer states that the study of music should include all areas of music, including its cultural impact on and its role in the contemporary music industry. With regard to African music, some students convey the need for African music to be examined in more depth. Specific reference is made in Essay 5.8 to the neglect of studies

in African music: ‘... it would be wise to shed some more light upon the ideals of performance, composition and hierarchical aspects of African music [in the Bachelor of Music degree].’

Although there is dissatisfaction with the focus being narrowed on Western classical music, many writers, such as those of Essays 1.2 and 5.8, regard classical music as an important foundation for learning the skills required in other musical styles.

It is also important to note the view of competition that is held by many students. Whereas some regard it as a necessary means for refining skill, others offer criticism on the philosophy behind music competitions. In Essay 5.7, for example, the writer describes music competitions as an ‘evil necessity’ in his career. The writer highlights the irony of allowing ‘the most deeply of personal art forms’ to become a ‘spectacle for mass euphoria’. This pressure, according to the writer, stifles ‘spontaneity and individuality’. The writer of Essay 5.4 expresses a similar opinion of competitions, stating that ‘formal competition sometimes felt like an enchanting poison.’

There are cases where students express doubt with regard to the promise of future careers in music. In Essay 3.8, the writer says:

I still have doubts about whether I should have started studying music ...
There are days when I am convinced that I will never find a job [in music].
Of course that could happen, but since I cannot imagine myself happily
[engaged] in any other profession, I am content to wait.

In spite of such doubts, a level of ambition with regard to achievement pervades the essays.

Chapter 3 discusses the manner in which culture frequently inspires the desire to study music. The background influences revealed through the essays range from exposure to traditional southern African society and European society and culture to Westernised south African culture and traditional Afrikaans society. Throughout these essays, however, the yearning for further cultural studies in music is evident.

More than simply providing a background influence for scholars to pursue music studies, culture serves as a field of interest to which students wish to link the study of music. The belief that music has the ability to transcend social and cultural boundaries is mentioned. Its function as both a link between cultures, and, paradoxically, as a social divider, is explored

in writings throughout the publication. In Essay 5.1, the writer suggests that ‘music no longer brings communities together; it separates’. Though some writers may believe this to be the case, others view music as a means for surpassing divisions. Essay 1.3 includes the idea that the writer aims to use music as a medium ‘to comment on and suggest solutions for social problems’. The writer of Essay 3.5 offers an important argument for the role of music as a tool for progression towards social unity and the development of specific cultures:

In reviving our African culture, I strongly believe that music should take centre stage as it transcends all boundaries. Furthermore, music can be used as a vehicle for promoting the ideals of the African renaissance to narrow the gap and bring Africa’s people closer together.

Through these comments and observations in other essays, it is evident that there is great interest in the culturally specific elements of music, and thus one aspect of the pursuit of higher musical understanding includes the desire to apply this to the examination of cultural habits.

Another finding is that music students have chosen to engage in musical studies in order to reflect upon and explore the role that music plays as a universal language of expression. The writer of Essay 3.1 notes, ‘I always found music to be the best way in which I could express myself.’ In Essay 4.1, the writer comments that ‘music has the ability to touch people, beyond the realms of logic and intelligence’.

For certain students, there was no hesitation when it came to choosing a field of interest. Throughout the publication, there are essays that shed light on those students who have a natural talent in performance and musical ability. The natural progression for these students brought them to undergraduate education in music. Other students, who do not overtly indicate their already refined musical abilities, chose to pursue academic music studies in an attempt to develop their musical skills and cultivate a greater appreciation of music.

For certain writers, there is no question that music is simply the purpose that they as individuals need to fulfil. In Essay 5.8, the writer declares that, had she not embarked on a career in music, she would be ‘betraying [her] purpose in history’.

Through the varied views of different aspects of academic music study, one

common feature can be identified throughout the essays: the unwavering passion for music expressed throughout the writings by all the writers. Whether students have career ambitions for music, or study it because they could simply not envision themselves in any other field, the common appreciation of the art of music pervades. The writer of Essay 1.4 states that '[engrossing herself] in this field would ensure intellectual and, thus, spiritual contentment'.

In Essay 1.2 the writer admits that no other field of study would bring her the satisfaction that music does. The writer of Essay 4.4 clearly expresses this notion:

Music is what I am. Music defines my personality and soul. Through music I relate to my environment. I could not imagine a world without music and I could not imagine my life without music. Irrespective of where my life takes me, no matter what direction I choose, I know that music will always play an integral part in my existence.

The writer of Essay 3.8 similarly encapsulates the enchanting effect of music:

One of the main reasons that I have dedicated my life to music is the fact that it is something mysterious. Music is an art that has lasting value far beyond the life of a mortal man. It is a medium understood by all cultures and races. It has the potential to lift the human spirit higher than imaginable. That, to me, is more than enough reason to commit my life to this higher cause.

It is apparent through the study that those who pursue academic careers in music are passionate about the relevance of music in society and the aesthetic value of music, and offer insight into the spiritual aspect of music. These students are aware of the benefits and the challenges that have to be faced when choosing this field of specialisation as their academic discipline and have chosen to pursue the field with ambitions for the pursuit of a career, for intellectual understanding and for spiritual fulfilment.

CHAPTER 7

Retrospective research

In an attempt to identify the progress made by certain music students with regard to their musical studies, as well as the relevance of their studies to the ambitions for their futures, follow-up research was conducted subsequent to the writing of the narratives in the second year of musical study. Here we were able to identify whether or not the original expectations of the students were maintained after they had further experienced music in the context of university education. Further insight is offered through this research into the musical inspiration of students, the decision taken to study music and their hopes for the future with regard to their studies.

Through the follow-up research, some students affirmed that their passion for music had grown, since they had come to understand it in an analytical, historical and learned sphere. Through the understanding of performance techniques and theoretical structures of music, students feel that they have increased their appreciation of music's power of expression.

When questioned about whether or not their original intentions for studying music were maintained, most students answered positively. One student explained that the educational enrichment gained through musical studies had allowed the pursuit of his intentions to take place with a more open mind than before. Noteworthy, though, is that all students who answered 'yes' embarked on musical studies with a particular career goal in mind. The answers of those students who had a vague career goal, but a definite passion for music when choosing to study music, were similarly

vague. In these cases, students remarked that they had begun to develop a clearer vision with regard to the application of musical knowledge.

Certain students did express doubt about the possibility of pursuing the desired career in their current surroundings, and acknowledged the dependence of their ambitions for the future on the economic state of their environment. These ambitions included pursuits in music therapy, music technology, self-improvement, music journalism and music teaching, amongst others. When asked whether their music studies would prove adequate for the achievement of these ambitions, most students expressed a need for practical experience in the music industry and field alongside their university education in order to form firm foundations for the future. The students did stress the importance of the BMus degree in providing crucial knowledge of music history, theory, performance and its social and cultural context, as well as the course's development of one's creative thinking.

With regard to their perception of music, students expressed not only greater respect for other musicians and the art of music itself, but also attributed newfound open-mindedness with regard to the music of different cultures and musical spheres to their widening exposure to and understanding of the field, as a result of deeper exploration of music through their studies and interaction with fellow musicians and other music students.

Furthermore, the students were asked about their views of competition in music. As expressed in the essays, the view was maintained, by certain students, that competition imposes considerable pressure on musicians, which may be detrimental to the passion for music. It was labelled as 'destructive', and was said to stifle creativity. One student mentioned that one sometimes needs to sacrifice personal expression in an attempt to gain acceptance in the competitive sphere, thus destroying the musician's position as a true 'artist'. The response was offered that, when the focus changes from acquiring skill on and musical mastery of the instrument to attempting to outdo fellow musicians, the true essence of music – its aesthetic value – is lost.

When questioned about their interest in the music of other cultures, students offered insightful responses. With regard to the appreciation thereof, two students answered that it is necessary to understand the context from which a particular type of music associated with a specific culture comes. Others remarked that, though they do not religiously listen to the music of other cultures, they understood its importance with regard to music and social studies.

This follow-up research gave confirmation that students studying music have grown to appreciate the value of music in social and cultural contexts, as well as in their personal ambitions. After two years of studying music, the students were seen to be enlightened with regard to the relevance of the application of music in their academic careers, and were standing by their decisions to pursue such careers.

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