

**A STRANGE COUNTERPOINT: CLASSICAL MUSIC PERFORMANCE AND
IDENTITIES IN GRAHAMSTOWN, SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the perceptions of South African practitioners of Western European Art Music (WEAM), specifically as they relate to the value of WEAM in contemporary South African society. In exploring some of the connections between musical identity and national identity, it sets out to discover what value WEAM holds for a certain group of student pianists. Qualitative empirical data was collected in the form of in-depth, semi-structured interviews and questionnaire responses, and the findings point to numerous, nuanced expressions of self and varied intersections of the nation with musical identity in the life of the individual. Further, WEAM appears to represent a crucial point of identification for these individuals, in each case generating positive affirmations of the self.

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Chapter One - Introduction

The presence of western classical music in South Africa in the twenty-first century is the foundational material for this study. The colonial origins of classical music in South Africa and my personal identification with this art form and with the ideals of the “new South Africa” raise awareness in me of a certain sense of ambiguity: western classical performance traditions appear incongruent in the midst of a national drive towards Africanism and an “African Renaissance” (Mbeki 1998). As a South African who feels closely connected to this type of music (and piano music in particular), I find myself asking questions about who I am, here in this place where western classical music traditions may appear out of place.

This study seeks to discover what value the practice and performance of western art piano music holds for those South Africans who embrace it – and specifically, its student performers.

It is perhaps necessary to clarify the use of some terms, as follows:

Western European Art Music (WEAM): Conrad Cork’s “felicitous acronym” is used interchangeably with “western art music” and “classical music” to refer to the “...whole gamut of musics...defined as largely tonal, notationally based music of the common practice period, dating from the time of Bach until the end of the nineteenth century...” (Collier 1998, 11, in DUBY 2006, xii.)

Musicking: This is Christopher Small’s term (Small 1998) that is “the present participle, or gerund, of the verb *to music*” (Small 1998, 9, emphasis original), for which Small proposes this definition:

To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing. We might at times even extend its meaning to what the person is doing who takes the tickets at the door or the hefty men who shift the piano and the drums or the roadies who set up the instruments and carry out the sound checks or the cleaners who clean up after everyone else has gone. They, too, are all contributing to the nature of the event that is a musical performance. (ibid, emphasis original)

Other/Othered: By this term, I mean to refer to the sense of perceived difference between one party and another. It is my argument, at certain points, that musicians in the tradition of WEAM are marginalised in South African society; that is to say, they are “othered”, or made to be “other”, in and by that society. In this sense, WEAM represents the “little other” in relation to South African society more generally.

WEAM’s complicity must also be acknowledged in the “cultural opportunities that drove...Western hegemonic order along under grand apartheid (and before that British colonial rule)” (Lucia 2005, xxii), and as such epitomises the powerful musical “Other” in apartheid South Africa. The residue of this legacy is reflected in the curricula of many music education institutions in South Africa (Lucia, *ibid*).

Identity versus Identification: The use of the term “Identity” is here meant to refer to a general sense of being that is constituted by a number of “identifications.” For example, my identity as a South African may variously consist of my identifications with the national anthem and sporting rituals, amongst others.

Background: Musical Autonomy

Some promoters of Western European Art Music (WEAM) in South Africa have presented it as an elitist escape from the real world for those who supposedly have the knowledge and financial resources to appreciate this art form. *Classic fM* radio station’s website states that it is

...[T]he only classical music station in Africa with expert business and financial focus...It is modern, relevant, accessible and entertaining. Classic fM fits into the Joburg scene as naturally as the mine dumps, shebeens and choral festivals. Situated in the centre of up-and-coming Braamfontein, the station is surrounded by pubs, theatres and concert halls. Monthly classical concerts are held by the station and Classic fM also publicise choral, classical and even certain acoustic jazz events from across Gauteng. (Classic FM 2009)

The station appears to be targeting people in the upper income brackets and serving consumers who value the idea of a multifaceted metropolitan lifestyle. While the “mine dumps” and “Joburg”¹ refer to Johannesburg and the Gauteng Province, the intention to

¹ Johannesburg, a city founded on the wealth of natural resources, and thus mines, in its surrounds. In South Africa, Johannesburg is famous for its mine dumps (slime dams or mine waste).

ascribe to WEAM the social prestige of “theatres”, “concert halls”, “choral festivals”, the “up-and-coming” and “*even* certain acoustic jazz” (emphasis mine), is surely not localised. Moreover, the proclaimed “expert business and financial focus” is not at all intended to attract members of the working class.

Another example of the way in which WEAM has been promoted is to be found on the website of Cape Town’s radio station, Fine Music Radio² (FMR), which bears the slogan: ‘Refining the art of leisure’, among others. The slogan reflects an attitude towards life that is associated with leisure and ease, and is intended to appeal to people in the upper income brackets. The station would have us believe that by tuning our radios to their frequency, we confirm, through our choice of radio station, our refinement, sophistication, finesse and distinction (Bourdieu 1984), and assign to the concept of art the prestige of leisure, and to leisure, the prestige of the concept of art, thereby (re)defining ourselves as cultivated members of society, worthy of the *savoir vivre* we acquire through our choice of entertainment.

Third, “*Classicfeel*”, South Africa’s only classical music print magazine, advertises luxury cars (BMW, Lexus), Rolex wristwatches and other lavish items in their monthly publication. By implication the magazine targets those who can afford these items, or at least aspire to owning them and/or the prestige such ownership may yield. The impression that classical music is for the economic and social elite is thereby given and confirmed.

These are three South African examples of the way in which western classical music is associated with those who are wealthy, and for whom the music represents a refined experience in tune with their supposed life of leisure. In contrast, the “real world” is the one in which South Africa confronts problems such as widespread unemployment, dire poverty, HIV/AIDS, crime and violence. Further, many people who enjoy and support classical music in South Africa may indeed not be wealthy or live lives of leisure. As a result, there is an “aesthetic distance” between what happens in the world of WEAM in South Africa, or at least in the image of WEAM that is being created, and the lives of most South Africans who

² www.fmr.co.za, March 2009

do not identify with the art form. The idea of a WEAM concert may simply be inappropriate to the situation, if not entirely foreign.

In one sense, this is possibly rooted in the cultural segregation of South Africa's people that began during colonialism and was legislated under apartheid: the elevation of European art forms as more evolved and sophisticated meant that access to WEAM concerts was denied to black³ audiences, who were believed to be incapable of appreciating them. The marginalisation of WEAM in present-day South Africa is a part of the legacy of this denial. The problem of the "aesthetic distance" might be resolved by exploring ways in which this type of music could be beneficial to all people, and not just to proponents of WEAM, possibly with a view to informing Music and Arts curriculum policies in future.

WEAM also possesses elements that separate it from other cultural practices of European origin. In one sense, and as Pierre Bourdieu points out, it is an art form that denies society to establish itself as a means by which that society may be divided.⁴ Bourdieu's comments in this regard are particularly relevant to this study. He refers to the autonomous nature of this kind of art as the 'pure' gaze – a force in society that serves no purpose but its own:

The 'pure' gaze is a historical invention linked to the emergence of an autonomous field of artistic production, that is, a field capable of imposing its own norms on both the production and the consumption of its products. An art which...is the product of an artistic intention which asserts the primacy of the mode of representation over the object of representation demands categorically an attention to form which previous art only demanded conditionally. (Bourdieu 1984, 4)

In the context of WEAM in South Africa, the 'categorical demand' for attention to the mode of representation (the form) and the subordination of its object (the content) must significantly impact on its potential listenership. The demand for this type of listening is precisely the opposite to that made by popular musics, in which the often rigid form is secondary to the specific content details of the work in question.⁵ By requiring from the

³ This is an oversimplified example. It should suffice that during apartheid, cultural goods were distributed as unequally as public spaces.

⁴ See Bourdieu 1984.

⁵ See Adorno's 1941 essay *On Popular Music*.

outset an approach that directly contradicts the accepted norm, WEAM demands of would-be listeners that they possess a “cultural competence” or “code” in order to find meaning and interest in an artwork (Bourdieu 1984, 2). By implication this listener must have had a certain type of education in a certain type of social and economic environment:

To the socially recognized hierarchy of the arts, and within each of them, of genres, schools or periods, corresponds a social hierarchy of the consumers. This predisposes tastes to function as markers of ‘class.’ (ibid, 1)

And

Consumption is ... a stage in a process of communication, that is, an act of deciphering, decoding, which presupposes practical or explicit mastery of a cipher or code. (ibid, 2)

The uninformed listener - doubly so firstly because s/he does not have access to this code, and secondly because s/he has not been informed that this code is required in the first place – is left unable to find meaning and interest in the material at hand.⁶ The alienation of this musical material from the listener’s everyday experience serves to further separate WEAM from society.

While other music may respond to, provoke or mediate social activity, WEAM, to a certain extent, seems *only* to be concerned with its own *musical* activity and the perpetuation of the canon of great works. The music’s “Eurocentric” label is often cited as the reason for its irrelevance to the South African situation, but equally damning are the claims Bourdieu makes about the pure gaze; the “social separation” (1984, 5) that this attitude engenders could be no more poisonous than in South Africa at this time, where the legacy of Eurocentric modes of thinking and being is under critical scrutiny. To this extent, WEAM performance engages South Africa in a manner that is not immediate or even responsive, but autonomous, and the question of the reasons for its survival are asked legitimately, considering the economic implications of maintaining orchestras, for example.

⁶ “An art which ever increasingly contains reference to its own history demands to be perceived historically; it asks to be referred not to an external referent, the represented or designated ‘reality’, but to the universe of past and present works of art.” (Bourdieu 1984: 4)

This is not to say that this is the *only* way in which WEAM engages South African society. Music education development projects such as Buskaid (Soweto, Johannesburg) and the Bochabela String Orchestra (Bochabela, Bloemfontein) have taken music training to people in disadvantaged areas.⁷ The role of both these organisations is to provide music education (theory and string playing, specifically) to children who would otherwise not have access to such resources. The ostensible aim of such projects is to use music as a tool for the upliftment, through education, of some of South Africa's most deprived citizens. In this way, one might argue, WEAM is ripe for social engagement because it provides an opportunity to educate *through* the learning of music as much as *in* it.

Mostafa Rejai (2002) argues that music is never autonomous, that it is always involved in some or other political act or commentary. In the introduction to the *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* (Rejai 2002), Rejai opens with the fundamental assertion upon which the research in this particular journal issue was premised. Indeed, this assertion also informs my current research:

Much has been said and written about the autonomy and insularity of all art, including music. Bluntly put, this is an illusion. All art evolves in a societal context, consisting of tradition, culture, religion, family, politics, and the like. (Rejai 2002a, 213)

Invoking the philosophy of Plato, Rejai emphasises the “centrality of music to politics” (ibid, 213), also citing McClary (1991), Bokina (1997) and Schonberg (1997) in support of his belief in “the interrelationship of music, politics and political action” (Rejai 2002, 215). It would appear that his claims for music's social involvement are well-aligned to my project of investigating issues of identity amongst those who practice WEAM in the South African context. Moreover, insofar as individual identification is negotiated in social contexts and is therefore political (in the sense of a defining discourse of social relationships), Rejai's comments are highly relevant.

In exploring these issues, this project will consider the following questions: How do we, as South African practitioners of WEAM, negotiate our identities and situate ourselves as students, performers, teachers and audience members of this seemingly remote genre of

⁷ See www.buskaid.org.za and <http://www.jmi.net/newsletter/newsletter.php?nr=23&ID=4172&rg>

musical expression, while also engaging with the South African world that surrounds us, the world upon which we depend in almost all other spheres of life and in which WEAM, central as it is to our identities, is apparently so marginalised? How do we relate our experience of this world (South Africa) to what we do as performers of WEAM? These questions raise important issues that are central to the negotiation of our identifications: *who we are* in the place *where we are*, and *why* we do what we do.

By investigating our appreciation of WEAM and seeking out the seemingly hidden value of a music that is found far from its geographical and cultural origins, we might discover WEAM's greater benefits to our young nation, with a view to its more effective use as a tool for expression and education in South Africa.

Musical Performance, the Negotiation of Identity and Classical Music's "Legitimation Crisis"

Hargreaves, Miell and Macdonald suggest that "Individual patterns of *preference*, described in the literature as 'musical taste', can be an integral part of one's self concept" (2002, 11, emphasis mine). The various degrees of difference between individuals' 'patterns of preference' and the variety of musical genres that exist in the world mean that the resulting possibilities for the process of self-identification through 'musical taste' are many and varied. I believe it is significant that self-identification *is* seen as a process - as a dynamic, multifaceted and continuous evolution; for a rigid view of identity that speaks of one's *identity* and not *identities*, cannot adequately account for apparently contradictory elements in individuals' personalities, nor does it justly convey the range of identifications, contradictory or not, that an individual may have.

For practitioners of WEAM the question of identity lies at the core of what Julian Johnson calls classical music's current "legitimation crisis": its present state of "devaluation in our postmodern, plural, and multicultural world" (Johnson 2002, 3). Grahamstown represents a microcosm of this world – a multicultural society with marked social and cultural differences⁸ - and this diverse cultural capital profits from increased cross-cultural

⁸ High levels of inequality are to be found in Grahamstown, and the differences between rich and poor is particularly visible in this South African city because of its small size. Furthermore, the students of Rhodes

knowledge and understanding. It may be of interest and value to discover what contribution WEAM makes to the lives of its practitioners, and therefore, what contributions it may, in turn, make to this multicultural microcosm.

The research aims to determine the value of WEAM as understood by those who most enthusiastically embrace it. It will focus on piano performers (students) in the field of WEAM in Grahamstown, in the hope of discovering something about the ways in which the performance of this particular type of music shapes the identities of a certain group of South African musicians. The questions that are asked are pertinent to the work of musicians and to the understanding of the value of classical music in South African society in general, and in Grahamstown in particular: How does our work benefit us, here? What are the connections between our musical work and the place in which we live? How does our work benefit all of Grahamstown (assuming, of course, that one cultural practice could be for the benefit of all), or not? These questions are central to one's understanding of oneself as a musician, especially in the context of classical music in South Africa. Since musicians are people who may often be in a position to influence others, this study of how we negotiate our identities presents an opportunity not only to understand ourselves better, but to have a point of reference from which we may profitably engage in debate with and subsequently come to understand broader social concerns to which our music-making relates.

Personal Motivation

It is in recognition of a certain conflict, contradiction or ambiguity in my own life that I came to explore the topic at hand: the 'counterpoint' of which I speak in the title of this thesis is that formed by the various 'voices' that constitute my life's polyphony. The particular contradiction that I perceive is that created between the voice of classical music performance and study (WEAM, my dominant musical identification), and the voices of South Africanism/Africanism (national identity). It is a strange and beautiful conflict that has roots which are both internal (mental/emotional) and external (the world, popular culture, experience of life in South Africa). I am interested in how this thing that I do (performing WEAM) or try to do (have a career doing so) 'fits in' or does not 'fit in', for want of a better

University, a major contributor to Grahamstown life, come from all over South Africa, infusing the town with a wide variety of cultural influences and practices.

term, to life here, on the southern tip of the great African continent, and far away from the geographical origin of much of the music to which I dedicate my time, indeed my life. By extension, I wish to discover if and how these things relate to other musicians, other South African pianists and performers of western classical music.

Chapter Outline

The survey of scholarship (Chapter Two) that follows this introductory chapter is a brief overview relating to the connections between musical performance and identity. There does not appear to be any research available that has dealt with questions of identity specifically in relation to pianists in the tradition of WEAM. The broader scholarly conversation of “Identity”, into which the current research enters, is vast and wide-ranging in nature – the foci traverse culture, gender, religious practice and nationality, to name a few.

While Chapter Three clarifies methodological issues and establishes a framework for data collection, Chapter Four represents an analysis of the empirical data within this defined framework. Two key roles for music are identified, namely the *Role of Music in Articulating Self-Perception* and the *Role of Music in Articulating National Identity*, and these areas form the basis of an attempt at analysis of the data in light of the aim of the research, namely, to discover the ways in which a particular group of student pianists relate to issues of identity pertaining to their music making, and to their sense of nationality. In Chapter Five, the analysis is summarised and conclusions drawn in response to the research goals.

Introduction

To place the research in a scholarly context, the current chapter presents a survey of relevant available literature. Since the area of concern (western art (piano) music and (national) identity in South Africa) remains essentially unexplored, this chapter traverses related scholarly literature to describe a broader context for the research, beginning with the theoretical concepts that underlie it.

In recent scholarship on music and identity in South Africa, scholars have tended to investigate the negotiation of identity within defined racial and/or ethnic parameters, or with specific reference to gender. There is no evidence to suggest that research has been conducted on WEAM and identity in relation to performers of classical piano music in South Africa.

Despite the dearth of this particular type of research there are some excellent and highly illuminating studies that display some connection to the present concern and inform it. Tracing scholarship on identity and music (in general, and also in regard to particular styles or genres) and national identity and music in South Africa and elsewhere, this chapter situates the current research in relation to these other points of inquiry, beginning with the more general, and progressing towards the particular.

The chapter is divided into three main sections: Music, Identity and the “Other”; Music, National Identity and “Imagining”; and WEAM and South African National Identity.

In the first section, I explore some of the notions surrounding the relationship(s) between music and identity, using Social Identity Theory (SIT) as a major point of departure for the notion of the social context of individual identity formation and the significance of the “other” as a defining element of self-concept.

The second section deals with the idea of the nation as an imagined community and the importance of nationality as a means by which identities are negotiated.

In the final section, I draw upon Stephanus Muller’s seminal *Sounding Margins* (2000), plotting an environment for WEAM in South Africa, and outlining a framework for

understanding the link(s) that may exist between WEAM and South African national identity for the pianists concerned.

Music, Identity and the “Other”

Music...is sometimes seen as one of the cornerstones of identity formation, used as a site of observation by scholars in other disciplines, the “social immersion” of music being the very thing that makes it ‘obviously attractive for sociologists and, more recently, social theorists.’ (Williams 2003, 76; in Lucia 2007, iv)

Whatever relationships exist between personal identification – the dynamic matrix that may involve a myriad of (societal) identifications from sports teams and spiritual groups to schools, cultural bodies, the family and more – and music (musical choice), there can be no doubt that such connections involve deeply felt motivations that are at once highly personal and possibly universal.

Identification with or in music is at once individual and collective. Any moment of engagement with music may be interpreted in terms of its aesthetic import, but aesthetic experiences cannot be completely divorced from positions of collective identity, including those of national identity. (O’Flynn 2007, 37)

What John O’Flynn alludes to is the idea that music performance and reception rest on human connections; that is, the *feeling* of being connected (to something or someone). In the performance situation, personal dispositions, be they emotional, philosophical or otherwise, find resonance in other personal dispositions as they are communicated from, or towards, the stage. Hence the performance situation can be seen as a multiple and simultaneous *performance of identification* by those who play instruments as well as those who listen⁹.

Social Identity Theory (SIT) holds that we identify ourselves in relation to our social groups (Tarrant, North and Hargreaves 2002, 137). Thus, identification with one group necessarily rejects identification with certain others and with other individuals who are not part of the “in-group” of people, as the scholars term it, and are “categorised as members of an ‘out-group’” (ibid). Such categorisation “instigates a sense of self – a social identity – which guides behaviour” (ibid).

⁹ “Those taking part in a musical performance are in effect saying – to themselves, to one another, and to anyone else who may be watching or listening – *This is who we are.*” Small (1998, 134, emphasis original).

These authors further note that this identity as a member of the group can be contrasted with an identity “which is salient in the absence of any obvious social categorisation” (ibid). They continue by suggesting: “In such instances, [when there is no obvious social categorisation,] the self is defined in terms of personal, idiosyncratic attributes such as personality and/or physical and intellectual traits, and is referred to accordingly as personal identity.” (ibid)

Under SIT, interactions between individuals can be distinguished as being guided, predominantly, by either social identity, or personal identity (ibid). In this light, musicking presents a rather unique case: in the performance and reception of music, individuals are guided profoundly by personal choice and expression that are nonetheless made public in an arena of acceptance – that is, audiences (groups and individuals) attend musical performances to hear music that they enjoy, and musicians perform to audiences who *want* to hear their music. Given this dual function of musicking, SIT is useful to the extent that it allows us a theoretical base for the notion that expressions of identity are negotiated within, and are largely dependent upon, a social environment.

When considering the notion of self-identity as being socially grounded, formed as it is by “viewing oneself and one’s behaviour from what is imagined to be the perspective of an other, anticipating the other’s reaction” (Cohen 1994, 10), the question arises: how do one’s musical behaviours in one’s specific (geographical and imagined national) location inform the nature of the other’s reaction? Can some behaviour precipitate certain responses, and how do those responses in turn shape future behaviour? If behaviour can be seen as an indicator of identity, then we may also ask: “who is/are the other/s?” for they, too, define us. Indeed, Mead (1934), Piaget (1936) and O’Neill (2002) have all emphasised interpersonal communication as being critical for the emergence of self (O’Neill 2002, 80). Insofar as music can be seen as interpersonal communication, it too assumes a critical role in the emergence of the self.

In her contribution to *Musical Identities* (Hargreaves, Miell and MacDonald 2002), Jane Davidson investigates the solo performer’s identity, focusing on the notion of “being a performer” (Davidson 2002, 97). In considering the “personality to perform”, a key concept

for Davidson is that of the “performance mask”, as developed by Forrester (2000) (Davidson 2002, 102).

Forrester’s theory holds that external factors trigger responses and behaviours deemed circumstantially appropriate by individuals according to their internal belief systems, leading to “a major dichotomy of self-defined perspectives on personality” (ibid): “the version of the personality which is presented to the world – a self-defined ‘public’ image; and a version of the personality which tends to be of a more private nature, in which the more ‘vulnerable’ aspects of an individual such as self-doubts and extreme emotionality are revealed” (ibid). In the context of music performance, however, we are confronted by a situation in which individuals may be demonstrating, to degrees, either their more *public* version of personality or their more *private* version. The research may reveal that the stage for public music performance is *also* a place where “self-doubts and extreme emotionality are revealed.”

However, this public-private concept is still useful insofar as it suggests that we may perceive music performance as reflecting the extent to which a performer is “being him/herself”, existing and acting in ways that lie somewhere between a sense of public presence on one end and privacy on the other. Thus identification with or through music can be seen as occurring along a continuum that may be equally described as *social-personal* and *public-private*.

That the subject of identity has not been widely explored in relation to western art music practice demands attention; such a long-standing cultural tradition, ubiquitous as it has been in western(-ised) society from at least the mid-eighteenth century even to the present day, must surely be an influencing factor in cultural thought about the self and the group (be it nation, race, region or other). On the other hand, musicology’s exclusive concern with “the music itself” abstracted music from its social context so as to negate any vision of music as relating to other areas of life. Further, music can be said to lend itself to being seen

as autonomous – the concept of musical autonomy allowing us to make sense of music’s “great refusal”¹⁰: its “resistance to written and ideologized meaning” (in Muller 2000, 7).

In attempting to understand the complex relationships between performers and their various, contrasting environments, I find a useful basis for comparison in Kay Phillips’ and Mostafa Rejai’s *Political Sociology of Composing*. The scholars investigate why composers compose – “what forces or circumstances propel some people toward music” (Phillips and Rejai 2002, 218). In an examination of the “life and work of six classical composers” (Ibid, 217) aimed at revealing any patterns in their motivations to write music, the researchers found that the following five conditions were all present in each of the cases under review: familial musical beginnings, sustained mentorship, favourable circumstances, a sense of mission and an artistic ego (self-importance).

In answering their initial question, “Why do composers compose?”, and in response to the notion of autonomous composition, Phillips and Rejai suggest that

...rather than composing in the abstract, composers compose for a variety of identifiable reasons: to glorify God, to please patrons, to rebel against parental authority, to uphold tradition, to express personal anguish, to revolutionise music, to engage in occasional opportunism, and, with rare exceptions, to make a living. (Phillips and Rejai 2002, 237-8)

Phillips and Rejai, in connecting art music to lived experience, explain that “the spring boards of composing art music are to be found in the social, political, cultural, religious, familial and economic dynamics. ...rather than existing in isolation, art music is an inseparable part of the larger societal complex.” (Ibid, 238) With these thoughts in mind, I aim to discover how the practice of the performers concerned in this study is connected to their lives as South Africans.

¹⁰ As termed by Lydia Goehr (Goehr 1998, 12-13)

Music, National Identity and “Imagining”

In their introduction to *Music, National Identity and the Politics of Location*, Ian Biddle and Vanessa Knights argue for the nation as a still “crucial but ambivalent category for understanding how cultural texts and practices function in the construction of personal and collective identities” (Biddle and Knights 2007, 1). They counter the cultural imperialism thesis, as advanced by Lomax (1968), “which posits the ‘greying out’ of local styles” and thus the obliteration of cultural differences (Biddle and Knights, 7), in favour of a view of the nation state and nation-state¹¹, clearly articulated by John O’Flynn (2007), as sites of identification that mediate the forces of the local on one hand, and those of the global on the other. The central argument is that “nationality continues to have significance in both the production and the consumption of music” (O’Flynn 2007, 19). This represents a basis for the study of the pianists’ dispositions regarding issues of nationality.

Following Benedict Anderson’s description of nations as “imagined communities”, Mary Robertson (2004) argues that

...music may be considered a ‘form of imagining’, as it is capable of creating and reinforcing an awareness of shared experience of individuals geographically distant from one another. (Robertson 2004, 130)

Through listening to and performing music that is known or supposed to be performed throughout a specific geographical area, individuals see themselves as part of a broader community, many of the other stakeholders of which they have never seen nor otherwise encountered. To this extent, music can be seen as critical in allowing individuals to “imagine the community of the nation” (ibid, 128).

While acknowledging the merits of the description of nations as “imagined communities” (Anderson 1991), Anthony Arblaster warns against overemphasising “the ‘invented’ character of nationalism and the nation” and missing “the extent to which the sense of nationality and the urge to identify ourselves with our nation and its inhabitants have been internalized within the modern Western personality” (Arblaster 2002, 271).

¹¹ “‘Nation-state’ is conventionally used to describe independent states with some degree of ethnic and/or cultural homogeneity whereas ‘nation state’ suggests a more civically oriented conception of statehood.” (O’Flynn 2007, 20)

Arblaster's study of nationalism in classical music places national identification at the forefront of a number of canonical composers' influences (Arblaster 2002). He further suggests that composers' search for individuality and originality is in fact "bound up with nationality in the history of modern music" (Ibid, 259); paradoxically, the composers' discoveries of their unique musical voices were made in locations of (supposed) uniformity: nations. Thus, it is possible to distinguish between a wide variety of national styles within the field of western art music by simply identifying individual composers. Similarly, the composers may be identified because of their close association with a given national style.

Arblaster identifies four different kinds of attempts at nationalism in the history of western art music: attempts "to evoke in sound the history and landscape of the beloved country"; music written by "basically cosmopolitan composers in what they take to be a national style – such as Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies*"; "serious, concerted attempts to develop a distinctively national style of music, which usually involves the 'discovery' and study of the nation's traditional popular music – its folk-songs and dances"; and "the forthright identification of certain composers with their own nation's struggle for national or political independence or for cultural autonomy and renewal" (Ibid). These represent efforts to create music that would contain implicit – that is, musical – connections to the (imagined) nation. With these thoughts in mind, I am interested in how the pianists interviewed for this study imagine the South African nation and if and how they see musical connections to South Africa within the WEAM that they practice.

It may be said that colonialism is the foundation of the existence of WEAM in South Africa in the twenty-first century. But, we might argue, so it is also for South African Jazz, Marabi piano music, Kwaito and the various South African choral traditions, to name a few – WEAM is, in other words, not special in this regard. To consider South African culture at this point in history is to accept the fact of colonisation and everything that has followed it. The significance of *this* consideration of this particular part of South African culture, then, lies in its apparent (dis)position(s) in a country attempting to define itself – summarised in the question, "Who are we, here?" And for me, one with tenuous ties to Europe, this question is particularly poignant, because when it comes to WEAM in this country, *who-we-are* is not *who-we-were*: "we" refers to different people. That is to say, given the significant social, economic and cultural shifts that began to take place after apartheid, South African cultural

life still experiences a constant negotiation and expansion, concurrent with the development of the new democracy, that is possibly most evident in areas of activity that were previously reserved for only a certain section of the population. Thus, as younger generations begin to work as practitioners of WEAM, so the definition of “who we are” shifts. This research asks “Who are we, here, and now?”

WEAM and South African National Identity

In *Sounding Margins: Musical Representations of White South Africa*, Stephanus Muller (2000) investigates the dynamics of the existence of white South Africans post-apartheid, and the “musical fictions” that may be required to “sustain a(ny) vision of white Africans in the next hundred years” (Muller 2000, 3). Using case studies, Muller implicates “white” culture generally (painting, opera (libretto), literature, music) and (western) art music in particular in a broader South African nationalistic discourse, culminating in an analysis of the singing of the new South African national anthem at the final match of the 1995 Rugby World Cup, held in Johannesburg. Considering the game of rugby as fundamental to the establishment, maintenance and affirmation of Afrikaner national identity, and the singing of the (Afrikaner) national anthem (*Die Stem*) as an identification ritual subsumed within it, the scholar dissects the lyrical and musical¹² construction of the new South African national anthem to reveal its reflection of the delicate political situation that, in the first place, necessitated it. In light of Muller’s analysis, the anthem appears rather “messy”.

Aligned to the nation-building project of the Mandela presidency, the anthem was intended to serve as a (musical¹³) point of common ownership that would symbolise a new determination to live together: it is a literal musical and lyrical *joining* of *Die Stem* and its English-language counterpart with *Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika*, the long-time struggle song and official anthem of the African National Congress. However, Muller’s analysis reveals the stark lines along which the anthem can be seen to be a forcing-together rather than a drawing-together of the disparate musical and lyrical material that is representative, of

¹² Here, the term is used in its ‘literal’ sense; it refers to ‘purely’ musical material, separate from lyrics.

¹³ Here the word is used in its more general sense; to refer to a piece of music in its entirety, inclusive of any lyrics.

course, of South Africa's great and oversimplified demographic binary¹⁴. Indeed, there is a sense of the musics' incompatibility, and Muller reveals, if nothing else, the mythic (or problematic) character of the (rainbow¹⁵) nation. In embellishing this point, he invokes the words of Breyten Breytenbach:

South Africa is a construct: because it is the result of dreams, in equal measure to thoughts and deeds; because it is in the process of being made...; because it mostly escapes clichéd categorizations; because it is a dangerous puzzle; because it needs to be continually said so that we do not forget the taste of the words in our mouths; because it needs to keep moving as congelation can induce a fatal polarization and confrontation. In such a melting pot the will to understanding is important, but also the aspiration to building up. (Breytenbach 1999)¹⁶

The question of identity pervades *Sounding Margins*; its primary concern is the place of white South Africans (Afrikaners in particular) in South Africa in the twenty-first century – their sense of identification in a former colony, post-colonisation and post-apartheid, and how they are identified by their fellow (South) Africans¹⁷.

In a space seeking to be defined and to be identified, such as South Africa at this time, not to struggle for something is to lose it. One can lose oneself. (Muller 2000, 4)

It is in this context that I explore the words and thoughts of the pianists interviewed for this dissertation – that is to say, from a point of view that seeks to understand how their practice of WEAM represents and informs the negotiation of their identifications in a national space in which their musical activity, central as it is to their lives, can be considered as marginalised.

¹⁴ Black and white, to the exclusion of the highly diverse remainder of the South African population. Further, such distinctions highlight superficial differences that deny the human commonality shared by all people.

¹⁵ Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu coined this term for South Africa.

¹⁶ Stephanus Muller's translation of an extract of Breyten Breytenbach's "Vuur in die vingers: 'n Voorwoord" in Frederik van Zyl Slabbert's *Afrikaner Afrikaan: Anekdoties en Analise* (Cape Town: 1999), which appears in Muller's *Sounding Margins* (2000b: 19)

¹⁷ I use "Africans" to refer to both groups in the sense of Dr. Ali Mazrui's distinction between Africans "of the soil" (native to Africa, regardless of race) and "of the blood" (a member of the "black" race). See Mazrui 2003.

Research Questions

To discover the ways in which music and identity are connected in the lives of the individuals concerned, the research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is the function of WEAM in the lives of these pianists?
2. What is the role of the “other” in the practice of this art form, for these pianists?
3. How do these pianists “imagine” the South African nation?
4. How do they relate their sense of South African-ness to what they do as practitioners of WEAM?

Chapter Three – Research Methodology

The choice for empirical research in this endeavour was informed by a desire for contemporary knowledge of the relationships young South African musicians have with their nation. The resources and people in the Department of Music and Musicology also had significant influence in decisions regarding the nature of the study and that of the sample; given that I already had established relationships with some of the piano students, I was presented with a unique opportunity to access rare knowledge about how these musicians value their musical activities in the broad national context. The composition of the sample represents the people available for the study at a particular time in Grahamstown.

The scope of this research is necessarily limited: the subject of the study is experience – the personal experience of certain individuals. Through the study of the experiences, perceptions and identifications of these individuals, who readily and enthusiastically embrace WEAM – its practitioners, the performers – we may arrive at an understanding of the ways in which the practice is useful to them (as a means by which their lives are made more meaningful). The questions that informed the research follow:

- How do we as South African practitioners of WEAM negotiate our identities and situate ourselves as students, performers, teachers and audience members of this apparently problematic (see Chapter 1) genre of musical expression, while simultaneously engaging with the world that surrounds us, the world upon which we depend in almost all other spheres of life?
- How do we relate our experience of this world (South Africa) to what we do as performers of WEAM?
- How do we relate our sense of South African-ness to our work as musicians?

The qualitative interview was therefore chosen as the primary method for empirical data collection, since the answers to these types of questions might best be discovered through personal contact with the musicians concerned.

These more general questions, then, describe the national context in which WEAM in South Africa is to be found.

- What is the place of WEAM in South Africa?
- What purposes does it serve, and for whom?
- Can it be said to be benefitting South African society? If so, how? If not, why not?

Research Instruments

INTERVIEWS

The interview structure employed was that of the semi-structured, open-ended interview, as described in Seidman (1998). The musicians concerned – all of them piano students in the Department of Music and Musicology at Rhodes University in Grahamstown – were interviewed so as to explore their individual perceptions and opinions of themselves and their work in South Africa. The aim was to gain an understanding of the experience of a select group of South African performers of classical music against the background of the apparent tension between the experience of being South African and of being engaged in practicing this predominantly non-South African art form.

Irving Seidman provides a lucid explanation of the choice of the interview as a research tool:

The purpose of in-depth interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, and not to 'evaluate' as the term is normally used.... At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. (Seidman 1998, 3)

Seidman suggests as a framework for "in-depth, phenomenological interviewing" a three-interview series. The basis for this method, which involves conducting a series of three separate interviews with each interviewee, is the notion that "people's behaviour becomes meaningful and understandable when placed in the context of their lives..." (Seidman 1998, 11.)

In Seidman's outline the first interview functions to establish a context for the participant's experience by discovering as much as possible about his/her life with respect to the topic up to the time of the interview; the second interview aims to discover details about the experience in the area of study; and the third interview serves as a platform for the interviewee to reflect on the meaning of the experience detailed in the second interview.

Since the concern here is based on questions that relate to the value, to certain individuals, of an area of musical activity in a geographical location where I consider the activity to be broadly problematic (see Chapter 1), Seidman's model, adapted from Schuman 1982¹⁸ (Seidman 1998), is abbreviated to suit the needs and scope of this study. The present adaptation of this model is essentially a reduction: rather than conducting three interviews with each respondent, in view of the study's limited scope and considering that all of the interviewees were known to the researcher personally, one interview with each was deemed sufficient and the questions were designed in such a way as to include the elements of all three of the interviews described by Seidman.

Three Types of Interview Data

In *Interpreting Qualitative Data* (2001), David Silverman outlines three possible approaches to interview data collection: "Positivism", "Emotionalism" and "Constructionism." What follows is a summary of each approach and a brief discussion of my motivation in choosing an Emotionalism-based methodology for the purposes of this study.

Positivism

The positivist approach seeks to discover 'facts' about the world. These facts include biographical details as well as statements about beliefs, and are considered in a manner that accepts that their sense derives from their correspondence to some factual reality (Silverman 2001, 87). Positivism accepts as a given the existence of an objective reality, which it aims to discover and explain. Where there is an imperfect representation of this reality, remedies and checks are encouraged to achieve a fuller understanding of the field of study (Ibid).

Interviews in this context aim to generate data that hold true autonomously for both the research setting and the interviewer/researcher. A common means of achieving this is through standardised interviews. Unstructured interview techniques, from a Positivist approach, are seen as innately unreliable for research purposes because of "a lack of comparability of one interview with another" (Selltiz et al. in Silverman 2001, 89).

¹⁸ Schuman, D. (1982). *Policy analysis, education and everyday life*. Lexington, MA: Heath. In Seidman 1998.

A Positivist approach is inappropriate for the present study: the stated focus is on the experiences and thoughts of each interview subject. Since positivists' "belief in standardized forms of interviewing relies on an exclusive emphasis on the referential functions of language"¹⁹, in the context of qualitative interviewing it presupposes a certain language competence and "articulateness" on the part of the interview subject. Different informants may mean different things with words and stories, and the researcher must take this into account if the informant's views are to be represented accurately (Silverman 2001, 90).

Emotionalism

The Emotionalist concern, according to Silverman, is with "eliciting authentic accounts of subjective experience" (Ibid: 90). To this end, emotionalists attempt to "formulate questions and provide an atmosphere conducive to open and undistorted communication" (Holstein and Gubrium 1997, 116). They attempt to avoid the manipulation of respondents in order to gain as accurate an account of their experience as possible. While a positivist position would regard deviation from the set interview questions as a possible source of bias, an emotionalist position might encourage it for the sake of gleaning from the interviewee as much relevant information as possible.

This approach has as its focus the *experience* of the thinking and feeling subjects being interviewed, and emotions are considered to be central to that experience. As such, it was chosen as an appropriate approach for the current study, which seeks to explore the experiences of the pianists concerned. The emotional involvement of the interviewer is also sometimes encouraged inasmuch as it is useful to allow the respondent to relate their experience more comfortably and in as natural a manner as possible.

Emotionalists aim to access emotions by describing respondents' inner experiences, by encouraging interviewers to become emotionally involved with respondents and to convey their own feelings to both respondents and readers.... This means that emotionalists reject the positivist assumption that both interviewer and interviewee are properly treated as 'objects'. Instead, they depict both as (emotionally involved) subjects. (Silverman 2001, 91)

¹⁹ Maseide 1990: 9, in Silverman 2001, 90

Simultaneously, the interviewer must remain sufficiently distanced to guide the respondents without manipulating them. In this regard, careful use of language is called for when steering the conversation.

Constructionism

The constructionist approach, as explained by Silverman, differs only slightly from the emotionalist approach: it attempts to treat the interaction between interviewer and interviewee as a topic in its own right, rather than as a possible obstacle to an 'authentic' understanding of the experience of the respondent (Silverman 2001, 95). Constructionists treat the interview process as a separate topic for consideration – as something contributing to the meaning of the data, "and...are interested in documenting the way in which accounts 'are part of the world they describe'" (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983, 107 in Silverman 2001, 95). By contrast, emotionalist accounts reveal interviewees as "active sense-making subjects" (Silverman 2001, 95), and the data are seen as 'representations of the world' (ibid).

The constructionist approach recognises that interviewer and interviewee share the responsibility for the progress of the interview. The interaction between them is itself an object of concern and as such, methodology that advises on appropriate interview technique is to a certain extent disregarded (Silverman 2001, 95).

In the conducting and analysis of interviews, constructionists presuppose a range of 'common sense devices for making sense of the environment' which are assumed in all research-related activity: "...common relevances, stocks of knowledge, typifications, recipes, rules for managing one's presence before others..." (ibid. 96).

Despite a conscious recognition of the social construction of meaning as expounded by Silverman's explanation of constructionism, the present study will maintain focus on the concept of individual experience without consideration of the interview as a "thing in itself." This approach would sway focus from the central concern, which is to engage with the experiences, perceptions and identifications of the individuals concerned, as they understand and articulate them.

The choice of the Emotionalist approach

For the current purposes, the Emotionalist approach offers the greatest possibilities for answering the research questions. However, the limitations of emotionalism should be duly noted, and Silverman explores a number of areas of weakness.

The first has to do with the assumption that the open-ended interview “is not in itself a form of social control which shapes what people say” (Silverman 2001, 92). Where an interviewer undertakes to maintain a minimal presence, it is possible that the respondent may come across an “interpretive problem” about what is considered relevant (ibid). Further, the choice of this type of interview may be explained as an attempt to avoid bias, which attempt, Silverman says, is “entirely appropriate to a positivist approach” (ibid, 92-93).

The second limitation Silverman notes has to do with assumptions about “the immediacy and validity of accounts of human experience” (ibid, 93). The concern is that an uncritical researcher might fail to recognise the influence on him/herself of cultural norms and the predictability of particular outcomes, with the result of it being required of and applied to the interview *a priori*: the notion that possibly it is felt that people are “at their most authentic when they are...reproducing a cultural script.” (ibid)

However, despite these points of limitation, the emotionalist approach provides the greatest opportunity for acquiring knowledge about the individual’s *experience* (which is the core object of this study), and the open-ended interview provides an avenue for “an authentic gaze into the soul of another” (ibid, 94).

As Reason and Rowan state, “Humanistic approaches favour ‘depth interviews’ in which interviewee and interviewer become ‘peers’ or even ‘companions’”. (1981, 205), and in the case of the present study, the interview subjects and interviewer were already well-acquainted as fellow students in the Department of Music and Musicology at Rhodes University, which provided a foundation of trust within a relationship in which the interviewer was a senior student in the Department, the goal here being to learn about the interviewees’ experience, not to amass statistical data.

QUESTIONNAIRES

To provide for a comparison with the interview responses, a secondary data set was collected in the form of questionnaires – answered by student pianists from the Cape Town/Stellenbosch area. The questionnaire was simply a reproduction of the standard interview questions and respondents were asked to view the questions broadly and to answer in a comprehensive fashion. The goal was to gather considered answers to the open questions, which answers would provide as accurate a reflection of the respondent's experiences or feelings about the topic as possible.

There are two main contrasts with the personal interviews. The first is that respondents had time to reflect upon the questions and provide a measured written answer. Second, there was no opportunity for the researcher to guide the focus in the answering process, so the answers that were returned represent only the reflections of each respondent.

In number, the questionnaire sample is similar to the interview sample; responses were received from four pianists of similar age from the Cape Town/Stellenbosch region of South Africa (although seven pianists initially agreed to return questionnaires). The choice of the region is not significant in any sense other than that there is a higher concentration of young pianists there than in the Eastern Cape (some of whom are known to the researcher), given the existence of two well-established university music departments: the University of Cape Town's College of Music, and the Konservatorium of Music at Stellenbosch University.

The Interview and Questionnaire Samples

The samples were composed in such a way as to ensure that all of those interviewed were of similar age (within a maximum of 7 years of each other). The result was the composition of a sample that is somewhat representative of a generation of musicians, in terms of age alone. As far as "accounting for" issues of race, gender and ethnic background, the approach was to allow these topics to arise naturally in the interviews as and when they were deemed significant by each respondent.

In a South African context, such issues can almost never be ignored because, given the type of social stratification that exists in South Africa, it is likely that attention to these issues would reveal significant considerations in the search for truth. However, these broad

concerns lend themselves to being treated as categories in their own right (for example, one might study the music-making activities of South African musicians of Eastern European heritage), and since the study has a limited scope and deals with a small number of individuals, there is little to be gained from compartmentalising in this way. Any attempt to achieve some broadly applicable conclusions for one such category would be futile. Rather, the study sees the individual as an integrated person for whom a number of concerns from various areas of activity coalesce to make up the multiplicity of lived experience. How the specific activity of a particular way of making music affects or contributes to that lived experience in the stated geographical context, is where our focus lies.

Questions of origin and identity were likely to raise important other issues for each individual, and the decision not to consider these issues (including but not limited to race, gender and ethnicity) at the level of the sample selection was an attempt – admittedly positivist in nature – to avoid bias. However, let it be noted that all but one of the respondents (questionnaire and interview samples) are from so-called “white” communities.

Data Collection

The interviews started in October 2009, in the Annex of the Music Library of Rhodes University –situated in the Department of Music and Musicology. Interviews were recorded in duplicate on cassette-tape and transcribed thereafter (the complete transcriptions can be found in Appendix A). Apart from one interview, which was discontinued due to a technical problem and completed at a later date, all the scheduled interviews went according to plan. The first interview was conducted over two sessions, to account for omissions and oversights in the initial session.

Interviews were intended to last for ninety minutes. However, the actual length varied from thirty minutes to longer than the allotted time. The variance in length can be attributed to interviewees’ varying ability to express themselves, their different levels of confidence in their own knowledge and their willingness to explore issues reasonably thoroughly during the interview, not to mention my own recognition of significant statements so as to explore them in more detail.

Although the aim of transcription is to record in writing the contents of the interview, it is by nature a reductionist activity, and much is lost in the process. A conscious effort has been made through punctuation to represent the expression of each respondent fully – which representation, in truth, is not very full at all because of the impossibility of conveying in writing nuances of body language, quality of voice (tone), hesitation and so on.

Concessions – Limitations in the Data

That the interviewer remains a subjective individual, especially in the case of open-ended interviews, cannot be ignored: I am reminded of Silverman's comments (2001, 90) about the collective construction of narrative by both interviewee and interviewer in all research interviews.

It is also necessary to make explanatory commentary on the sample size. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the questions that informed the research cannot be answered within the scope of a master's degree mini-thesis, and in any case, the goal here is not to produce positivist statistics. The choice to place at the centre of the study those student pianists who happened to be studying at Rhodes University was almost obvious: the nature of the study demanded that individuals be interviewed and I had access to student pianists in the Department in which I am studying. In addition, the nature of the open-ended interview, if it is to be successful, requires that the interviewer and interviewee are acquainted at the beginning of the process (Silverman 2001), and there were five student pianists at hand with whom I was already well-acquainted. I trusted that our prior acquaintance would allow the interviewees to feel comfortable during the interview, and the results appear to support this.

Since the secondary data set consists of questionnaire responses rather than personal interviews, I tended to expect rather marked differences in the responses, since respondents to the questionnaires had more time to reflect upon the questions.

DESIGN OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Motivations and methodology

In creating the questionnaire, I drew on a number of specific resources. First among these, in line with the Emotionalist theoretical position outlined above, was a desire to ask the questions in such a way as to encourage discussion and dialogue, rather than to yield any definite answers. Naturally, however, I sought responses that were as lucid as possible, in the respondent's own language and provided of the respondent's own volition.

The goal during the interviews was always to arrive at answers that would give as much insight as possible into the nature of the respondent – that is, into his or her identifications. Thus, any indication of an opinion or fundamental belief would lead me to guide the respondent towards an explanation of those points in their responses that I felt would illuminate the questions of his or her identifications.

The standard set of questions used in the interviews and questionnaires appears here:

Questionnaire

- 1) Please provide your age and state whether you are male or female.

- 2) Please state whether or not you are studying music at an institution of higher learning (please name the institution, if yes) or are otherwise pursuing a career in music, also indicating your principal instrument.

- 3) Describe your earliest musical memory/your earliest memory of music...

- 4) a) What do you think defines you as a person? What are the various traits and characteristics that you think make you who you are?
(This question in particular is intended to be viewed as broadly as possible – please include as many points of reference as you wish. These *may* include, but are not limited to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, social groups.)

b) Does your musicianship make you feel different from the greater society? How does it impact on your interaction with others in society?

5) Why did you decide to pursue music as a career?

6) How important is it for you to be a musician? (aside from occupational/financial considerations...as if they did not exist)

- Why? What about music gives it this great import in your life?

7) How important is being a *pianist*? (as opposed to playing other instruments...)

- If it is very important, what about the piano/piano music makes it so?

- If it is not that important, why? What is more important?

8) How important is it for you to perform in public, and why?

- Why not simply learn and play music for your own pleasure?

(this question is particularly important, please answer as comprehensively as possible, elaborating every point.)

9) Tell me about the music you most enjoy performing...

- Why? What about this music/type of music draws you to it?

10) On South Africa/South African-ness/African-ness

a) Do you consider yourself to be 'South African'? What does being 'South African' mean to you? i.e. how do you define your South African-ness? (What about you makes you South African, what makes you *not* South African, if that is the case?)

b) Do you consider yourself 'African'? If so, what does being 'African' mean to you? How is it different from your sense of South African-ness, if applicable?

- c) How do you view your music performance activities (specifically the genre 'classical' music) in the context of your sense of South African/African identity? Are they integral to it? Are they autonomous from it? What is the nature of the relationship, if there is one?

(this question is particularly important)

- 11) Please list the different kinds of music (including specific performers/bands et cetera, if applicable) that you listen to. Please also describe any reasons that specific genres or performers appeal to you, citing in particular any extra-musical reasons.

This is the final version of the questionnaire that was sent to the email (questionnaire) respondents. The initial version underwent a few changes after the first interview, and student I-1 was interviewed a second time in order to make up for the missed information in the first. The manner in which the questions were allocated for analytical purposes is described in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four – Data Analysis

Framework for analysis

This Chapter presents an analysis of the interview data (Appendix A, and the questionnaire responses in Appendix B), tracing evidence in the transcripts of (a) the centrality or not of music to the negotiation of identity, and (b) the nature of the relationship between musical identity and national identity. The categories for analysis are reproduced in the table below.

Given the sheer volume of the data, only the most significant findings are presented here – that is, those that provide the best insights for possible answers to the research questions.

A. Music Articulating with Self-Perception	B. Music in Articulating with National Identity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A.1 Important Musical beginnings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A.1.1 Playing Music - A.1.2 Listening to Music - A.2. Perceived Significance of Music in Self-Identification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A.2.1 Significance of “Being a Musician” - A.2.2 The Choice to Pursue a career in Music - A.2.3 Significance of “Being a Pianist” - A.2.4 Significance of Public Performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B.1 Perceptions of National Identity and African Identity - B.2 Music (WEAM) as relating to National Identity

For reference purposes, I provide, at the beginning of each section, the corresponding questions as they were asked in the interviews and questionnaires. It should be noted, however, that answers to some questions were to be found in responses to others elsewhere in the interview/questionnaire.

A naming code has been adopted in an attempt to ensure the anonymity of all respondents. Interview candidates are referred to as I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4, and I-5 (the number order merely

represents the random order in which they were interviewed), and questionnaire candidates as Q-1, Q-2, Q-3 and Q-4 (in the order in which the responses were received).

Further, I refer to the individuals as “students”, “pianists”, “interviewees”, “interview candidates”, “respondents” and “musicians” interchangeably – representing some of the students’ various identifications and reflecting how fluid our conceptions of them should be; the “complex, non-fragmented ‘self’” of which Jayendran Pillay speaks. (Pillay 1994)

SOURCE I: INTERVIEW DATA

Part A: Role of Music in Articulating Self-Perception

A.1 Important Musical Beginnings

This is informed by the questions: What place(s) does music have in the students’ perceptions of themselves? What musical identifications appear to be present in the individual (especially from an early age), and how significant are they?

Question:

- Describe your earliest musical memory, your earliest memory of music.

A.1.1 Playing Music

All the interview participants were introduced to music and specifically piano/keyboard playing at a young age (eight years or younger) through their family in some or other way. All but one indicated that a family member played a keyboard instrument and that this was how they became interested in piano playing. Participant I-4 noted that there was a piano at the family home, although neither of his parents nor his sibling played the instrument – it seemed to have arrived there almost by chance (I-4 2009).

It is significant that in the case of participant I-2, music served as an important shared activity between himself and his mother:

...my mom was playing the organ, and I remember going to her with a piece of paper and asking her...how do you read the stuff on the page? Then she [said], ‘...each note is a note on the organ.’ So then I wrote notes out on a page, and she

played the notes, and...it just struck me.... I couldn't believe that you could write something and get a sound out of the note you wrote.... I just think it was something that I could do that my mom could play.... (I-2 2009)

In this instance, musical activity assumed a significant role in the individual's family life, and the manner in which he related the story also reflects that the memories are happy. The other participants also indicate pleasant memories of music in their early years, and it seems that this provided, at least in part, a good foundation for their continued involvement in music-making in the years to come. Further, all but one of the participants indicated that at some level, the piano's sound and/or the ability of a family member to play the piano provided a basis for their attraction to the activity. This is significant because, insofar as early (family) life plays a major role in the development of self-image in young children, it places emphasis on the social nature of musical activity and performance. In line with Susan O'Neill's arguments in her chapter, *The Self-identity of Young Musicians* (in Hargreaves et al.), the evidence here supports the idea that the origins, as it were, of music in the child are substantially social and learned, as well as being based on inherent musicality.

A.1.2 Listening to Music

Participants I-1, I-3 and I-4 recall listening to music at an early age within the context of the family. For participant I-4, this involved hearing a marimba band perform on a family trip to Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, as well as his attempts at a young age to "pick out" on the piano, by ear, the famous choral theme from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (I-4, Author's Interview Part 1 2009). For participants I-1 and I-3, however, listening to music seems to have been a family activity, and their manner of expression indicates happy memories.

In all cases, the participants reveal musical activity (either listening or playing) as contributing to early childhood happiness. As mentioned, in the case of I-2 it also assumed a role as a means by which he could better relate to his mother; their shared activity plausibly strengthening the bond between them.

In this way, music is at work in society at the micro rather than the macro level. There is a connection established between the family and music, and if anything, familial acceptance and encouragement of musical activity may consolidate the child's sense of self as multiple: it is acceptable to be a family member and a musician.

A.2 Significance of Music in Self-identification

This point of inquiry sought to discover the extent to which involvement in music-making is significant in the life of the individual – how much value they place on musical activity as a part of their lives. The responses reveal not only diverse assignments of value amongst the respondents, but also diverse and at times seemingly contradictory sentiments from individual respondents.

A.2.1 Perceived Significance/Centrality of being a Musician

Questions:

- What do you think defines you as a person? What are the various traits/characteristics that you think make you who you are?
- Does your musicianship make you feel different from the greater society? How does it impact your interaction with others in society?
- How important is it for you to be a musician? (aside from occupational/financial considerations, as if they did not exist) Why? What about music gives it this great import in your life, or not?

Participants I-1, I-2, I-3 and I-5 each indicated that their role as musicians was entirely central to their lives. Participant I-4 was of the view that although music performance was an important activity in his life, it was also simply an informed career choice that he has made, as opposed to a ‘calling’, which was intimated by students I-1, I-2 and I-3.

When asked to relate the different ways in which she ‘defined herself’, respondent I-1 mentioned the piano as a defining characteristic of who she is:

Well, I do spend most of my life in front of it, so...It’s just the one thing that absolutely consumes my time, it consumes my...thoughts, and my plans and my dreams. (I-1, Author's Interview Part 1 2009)

In addition, this particular pianist identifies very strongly with twentieth century music²⁰, and also names this style period as a “defining” characteristic of who she is. The pianist finds

²⁰ Although not stated explicitly, I presume that she refers to twentieth century western art music, and piano music in particular.

great pleasure in studying and performing musical works of the twentieth century: it is a form of art that in her opinion reflects accurately the nature of the world as a “chaotic place...[which is] not ordered” (I-1, Author's Interview Part 1 2009): “...we live in a chaotic world, and that is absolutely summarised by the music...” (ibid).

The significance of this point lies in the connection(s) between the centrality of twentieth century music to her sense of self and the fact that, as she states, she “...wouldn't have been [who she is] if [she] hadn't pursued [music] as a career” (ibid). The sentiment echoes that of Hargreaves, Miell and McDonald in *Musical Identities* when they speak of how patterns of preference ('musical taste') can form an essential part of an individual's sense of self. (Hargreaves, Miell and McDonald 2002, 11)

The centrality of musicianship as a point of identification in this student's life is beyond question. As a concern that informs choices in many, if not most, other areas of her life – as evidenced by the indication of her career plan which is to continue studying and performing music internationally (I-1, Author's Interview Part 1 2009) – studying and performing musical works in the tradition of WEAM has become an integral part of her self-image.

Being a musician also holds special significance in the life of student I-2, and his activities as a musician seem to serve as a kind of barometer for success or sense of achievement.

...I would call myself a musician – that's what my whole life is, it revolves completely around that. ...I see that as the most important thing. (I-2 2009)

This student also placed extreme significance on his chosen musical activity, and made effort to demonstrate his commitment to his goal of working as a professional musician:

I just...I can't picture myself not doing it. Regardless of the money.... I'm willing to live in a shack...like a little tin shack, with a mattress, and...[if] it even rains into the shack...I wouldn't care. (I-2 2009)

Also,

I can't visualise myself doing anything else. I can't see myself not performing. I can't actually conceptualise not being in that space... (I-2 2009)

Another important facet of this pianist's musicianship to his life in general is the effect that his success in this area of activity has on his self-confidence

...based on what I can play, and what I can't play. If I can play "Rach three"²¹, my self-esteem will shoot up regardless of anything else in my life. (ibid)

What the student alludes to here are essentially the gains in self-confidence that he believes he would achieve through the successful study and performance of (for example) Sergei Rachmaninoff's third piano concerto: an affirmation of himself as an achiever of difficult things.

Student I-3 expressed similar concerns about the importance of being a musician. For her, being a musician is

...kind of tantamount to my existence, in some ways...if you get deeply involved in...(the) musical world, it...becomes almost...it really does become a way of life...it is integral (I-3 2009)

Student I-4's responses to questions relating to the significance of music to his life tended to vary, and the sometimes contradictory commentary is summarised in the following quotation:

...at some stages I feel like I wouldn't be happy doing anything else...and at other times I think that there's a whole lot out there to...explore. ...I guess...it is...rather important, to me. I do enjoy it...and I am happy doing that. ...I think for a long time, if I stop playing or...studying music, I would feel like there's some kind of gap. (I-4, Author's Interview Part 1 2009)

Student I-5's response was somewhat more sober: "Being a musician is quite important, you know..." (I-5 2010). Echoing a sentiment expressed by student I-2, he continued:

...my identity as a musician is significant. ...[I]t's what [I] study, it's what I spend most of my time doing. ...[A] lot of the standards by which I measure myself are musical, you know? ...so [yes]...I definitely think [being a] musician is probably...quite crucial. (ibid)

Summary (A.2.1)

The interviews present a good deal of evidence to suggest that music – and by implication, the performance of music – is central to the lives of these student pianists. They invest a great deal of time and energy in their musical activities not merely because they are

²¹ Sergei Rachmaninov (1909), Concerto No. 3 in D minor for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 30

required to for their studies, but because they feel a sense of importance about what they are doing – a sense derived from within their very consciences.

A.2.2 The Choice to Pursue Music as a Career

This question grew out of a desire to know what key influences affected the students in their choice to pursue a musical career. It seems to be the general case that a career in music appeared much less as a conscious choice than as a sense of duty.

Question

- Why did you decide to pursue music as a career?

Students I-1, I-2 and I-3 all indicated that their choice was heavily based on an intuitive sense of what they wanted to do with their lives and what they should study at university in response to that. Student I-1's answer also reveals her sense of the absolute importance of music to her sense of self:

Because there are some things that you have to do, and I think...I wouldn't have been *me* if I hadn't pursued it as a career because it's absolutely part of me. (I-1, Author's Interview Part 1 2009)

Student I-2 stated that he had known from "...the time I was in Grade 9 or 10²² already" that a musical career was where his interests lay (I-2 2009). This contrasts slightly with participant I-3's response to the question, which indicated that her choice was not preconceived nor was it a determined effort to head in the direction of a musical career:

...Initially, I didn't actively decide to [pursue music as a career]...all I knew, [upon] leaving school, was that I wanted to continue playing piano. ...it's just something I've always enjoyed and...that's important to me. (I-3 2009)

Participant I-4's response again differed somewhat. To him, the choice to pursue music as a career was not a concrete decision, and nor was it something that we might term a 'calling'. For this pianist, the fact of working towards being a professional performer is only

²² In South Africa, Grade 9 refers to the second (or fourth-to-last) year of high school.

significant insofar as “...it’s a case of what I’ve chosen to do” (I-4, Author's Interview Part 1 2009).

Summary (A.2.2)

The members of the interview group place great importance on their roles as musicians. Significant involvement in music-making seems to be something with which each participant identifies on a fundamental level. Across all the interviewees, self-perceptions and self-esteem appeared to be aligned to musical ability, achievement and identity. Self-image, in this group of students, seems definitively expressed through their endeavours as performers.

A.2.3 Perceived Significance/Centrality of ‘being a pianist’

In this area of inquiry, I sought to discover to what extent each student’s identity *as a pianist* is integral to his/her self-image. This area also attracted a range of responses from the interview subjects.

Question

- How important is being a *pianist*? (as opposed to playing other instruments)
- If it is very important, what about the piano/piano music makes it so?
- If it is not that important, why is not? What is more important?

Despite stating that the piano has no special significance and is merely an instrument through which to communicate music (I-1, Author's Interview Part 2 2010), student I-1 confesses a certain attraction to the piano, based on what it has to offer the musician and how this compares with other instruments:

I love the fact that the piano has the [largest] repertoire and also the most beautiful repertoire, and I can think of quite a few instruments that I would *not* want to play... (I-1, Author's Interview Part 1 2009)

Interestingly, this student reveals a significant bias towards pianists as superior to some other musicians:

...when I think of a flautist or I think of a recorder player, I do assume that I am more talented than them... (ibid)

This sentiment stems from her view that the piano is a superior instrument, a notion based on

The fact that you can play ten notes at a time...and...the fact that you've got a pedal, and...[laughs]... Just in general, it's more complex...its sound is more...dense, than other instruments. (I-1, Author's Interview Part 2 2010)

She seems to draw confidence from the idea that the piano as an instrument has greater sonic possibilities than other instruments, and as a pianist, aligns herself with that "superiority." In this sense, the piano and "being a pianist" play important roles in this student's self-image as she identifies herself as a musician of superior quality.

Student I-2 believes that one experiences something unique in being a pianist. As a musician who has a foundational knowledge of a number of different instruments, he expresses a particular appreciation for what he sees as the benefits one has in playing the piano:

...I've played saxophone, and clarinet, flute. And I play drums, bass guitar, and guitar. I mean, I don't play them...[extremely well,] but...I have an understanding of how they work, I can, you know, throw a chord, or, I can play a beat... But...the majority of those instruments are used a lot in, you know, ensemble work...and, they can *mainly* be used in ensemble work. I'm not saying that they can't be used as solo instruments, but...as soon as you put yourself into...an environment where...you're working with other musicians, your own individual...idea of something, may not come across like you want it to, because of course you, have all these other ideas around you as well. ...I think the idea with playing the piano, is that you have, the...chance to...play solo *and* [to] do chamber music, or...you know, play within an ensemble.²³ (I-2 2009)

²³ The rest of the response: "And I just think the fact that you can play completely on its own...without any other kind of accompaniment whatsoever, and...yes you can do this with other instruments as well, but it's not the same - and this is purely my opinion - ...I just find there's something very orchestral about it...there are just so many notes put together, and you don't find that on other instruments. You have to play them with accompaniments to find...the harmonies coming together.... [S]o I guess the process of playing something on a piano can start right from the beginning whereas something like...playing a solo instrument, the full...idea as to what the music sounds like only comes when you put the solo instrument with the accompaniment, really. And you also find that...it's completely, completely your own. It...belongs to absolutely no-one else. ...[W]hen you sit down, what you play completely belongs to you. And the fact that...you don't have to sit within an ensemble and play that, or have to share that with someone else...like an accompanist...I think it's just one-up, on other instruments." (I-2 2009)

The student seems to gain a sense of freedom and ownership from the possibility of playing solo piano. In this instance, the performer not only enjoys what I would like to term “interpretational sovereignty” in performance, but he celebrates the piano as the instrument through which this sovereignty can be asserted. Given the importance he places on his role as a pianist, and the connection between this and his self-confidence as discussed above, piano-playing seems to provide him with a space in which he is *free* to ‘create’ his self-image, as it were. At the piano, he defines and redefines himself.

Similarly to sentiments expressed by student I-1, I-3 seems to place more importance on being a musician than on being a pianist. While she refers to the piano as “an incredibly versatile and...beautiful instrument” (I-3 2009), she sees it as a single element of music in a much broader sense.

This performer places significance on certain other aspects of being a pianist and musician, and counts these as equally important:

...one of the aspects is the, interaction with people who are equally as passionate about something, and...the active creation of a product that...is a work of art, at the end of the day...and the satisfaction...which that brings. It’s a sense of accomplishment that...I suppose is difficult to...attain in other areas of your life...(ibid)

The first part of this statement reveals to us the value that the social elements of a musical career have for this pianist. Although the student does not specifically mention ensemble-playing or musical collaboration, clearly she enjoys an environment in which people are pursuing similar goals.

Another significant point she mentions is the “active creation of...a work of art.” This statement may be viewed in two ways. First, as opposed to merely finding satisfaction in the finished product – the performance – the student’s comment reveals an understanding of the *process of preparing* for a performance, and, that this process is enjoyable in its own right. Second, the performance of a musical work *is itself a process* – it is temporal and organic, and its creation demands active participation over a time.²⁴

²⁴ “...as it is constructed in performance...meaning is emergent: it is not reproduced in but created through the act of performance.” Cook (2001).

That the creation of the artistic product is “active” alludes to the notion that the process of this creation is both empowered by a determination towards concrete action (work) and empowering in that it provides the creator with proof of his/her creative potential (both process and ‘product’). Therefore it is easy to understand why the “sense of accomplishment” achieved in a successful artistic endeavour is “difficult to...attain in other areas of [the student’s] life” – “active creation” is perhaps not an everyday experience.

For this student the piano provides a means by which to create works of art and simultaneously serves as a platform for achievement. Being a pianist may also come with the status of being the creator of such works as well as being an achiever of things not everyone can achieve:

...it’s equally [a] skill and a talent, and, the fact is – I suppose this is kind of...very selfish – but it’s something which not everyone can do, or can pursue, and so that makes it, quite attractive.... (I-3 2009)

Participant I-4 admits to being “drawn to the possibilities of the instrument” (I-4, Author’s Interview Part 1 2009)

I’m also drawn to certain characteristics of the instrument that can do...can fill a lot more functions that other instruments can traditionally. You know, you can play an entire symphony reduced, on the piano. But to play it on other instruments, you need a hundred people! ...I like that it has a lot of possibilities. (ibid)

Another feat that is possible on the piano is the playing of “two or three or four – five simultaneous voices in a fugue” (Ibid). The student enjoys this possibility presented by the instrument, and questions what connections exist between the level of an individual’s training and the ability to hear (well) multiple voices (simultaneously):

...to hear all those voices individually is quite a task...I don’t know if there’s a correlation between how many voices you can hear...and...how well you’re trained. (Ibid)

I am reminded of the comments made by student I-1 regarding her sense that the piano is a superior instrument, and her intimation that pianists are superior musicians. There is, of course, little to support such claims, and considering that the greatest musicians have performed on all manner of instruments, we have reason to suspect that those who make claims to superiority do so for reasons other than the complexity of the challenges

presented by the physical properties of their instrument and the possibilities or demands these properties have or make.

In any case, student I-4 indicates a similar sentiment to those of participants I-3 and I-1; being a pianist allows him to attempt to achieve things that not everybody can achieve – because of its difficulty, or otherwise – and to gain whatever sense of accomplishment such achievements may yield.

Student I-5's view is similar to those of students I-1, I-3 and I-4; for this pianist, the piano holds no special significance.

I think...the reason I study it is because I don't know another...and...because I'm probably on a higher level on this one than I could reach...logically, in another instrument. (I-5 2010)

While he considers the piano as merely the instrument upon which he is most “technically facile”, student I-5 does admit that

...as instruments go, it's probably the better choice. ...[T]here's a much larger repertoire, and also, it's more commonly studied...there're a lot more pianists...and...I'd rather do that than study...an obscure instrument. (ibid)

Again, the fact of the piano's large repertoire appears to be significant. Interestingly, this student also reveals the importance of working within a large community of like-minded people – something the piano provides (and which other, more “obscure instrument[s]” possibly do not). He enjoys the challenge that this presents: “I like the fact that lots of people do it...because you have to work that much harder...” (ibid)

The pianist also appears to value hard work as a thing in itself that is important within the context of his musical activity.

Summary (A.2.3)

Some of these musicians appreciate the piano as an instrument of beauty and one to which they are drawn particularly strongly, while for others, that they happen to play the piano at all is taken as a matter of circumstance. We might conclude, therefore, that those who have the former opinion would tend to have a more important identification with the piano –

that is to say that their own roles as pianists are more significant in the negotiation of self-image.

A.2.4 Perceived Significance of Public Performance

The goal of this line of inquiry was to discover to what extent *performing* music was considered a central activity in their lives. The students were asked about how important it is to perform in public, both in a general sense and for themselves, personally. All but one student viewed public performance as a significant activity and an important part of being musician.

Questions:

- How important is it for you to perform in public, and why?
- Why not simply learn and play music for your own pleasure?

Student I-1 enjoys performing in public for a number of reasons, including the sense of challenge it presents, the sense of enjoyment she receives from “showing off” what she can do, the sense of occasion she experiences in dressing up and “look[ing] nice” and the anticipation of the audience response. Also, she sees public performance as a useful activity for ensuring that the work is of the best possible quality: ...it's also of course a very good incentive to get things as perfect as possible.” (I-1, Author's Interview Part 1 2009)

The pianist also expressed a sentiment about the importance of public performance that was echoed in other interviews:

...For me, performing and having music listened to adds something to it. If you just play it for yourself it's absolutely a selfish act...; but there's something else...having other people listen to it adds a public dimension and adds the fact that the music isn't just for you... (I-1, Author's Interview Part 1 2009)

Here she alludes to the notion that public performance is not merely the sum of venue, practice, performer and audience. Rather, the public nature of the performance and the fact of it being *listened to* are important factors in the experience for the performer, and as a result, for the listener as well.

What is also significant for this performer is the possibility of expressing herself on stage in a way that is different from other spaces in life.

...You sit down and for a moment, you show who you are, and also...I often think ...for me – the person who walks on stage and who takes the bow afterwards and who walks off again, is not the same person who sits down and plays. (ibid)

Her comments reveal that the public performing space not only provides an outlet for *different* expressive (and identity) content, but also content that is perhaps not permissible in other areas of life.

...When I'm sitting immersed in the task I don't try to look friendly! ...maybe the person who I am when I play is also, really more serious...more violent, less shy, and less girly; and less friendly...(ibid)

Here the stage becomes a place of refuge from the 'normality' of everyday interaction and the social norms that must, ostensibly, be upheld; a platform upon which one may commit acts and convey sentiments the outwardly expression of which might in 'normal life' be considered as rude, taboo or even illegal. In the above quotation one is given the sense that in 'normal' social interaction (off stage) there is pressure to be *less violent, more shy, more girly and friendlier*.

Student I-2 was unambiguous about the importance of performing in public, and his comments reveal an acute awareness of the differences between live and recorded performances.

Yes, [performing in public is very important to me]...essentially, if we don't perform in public, the whole genre of classical music will fall flat on its face...the 'vibe' of watching someone else play something is completely different than, listening to it on a CD. ...there's no comparison whatsoever. (I-2 2009)

What stands out here is what he refers to as the "'vibe' of watching someone else play" – something he alludes to elsewhere as a "spiritual thing" which arises out of all the elements that go into the making of a performance. (ibid)

...The idea of sitting in front of an audience, and having an audience listen to it live...is completely different to them...sitting and listening to a CD. It's not the same; all you have is the music, whereas if you[re] at a performance you have everything – you have the music, you have the people, you have the surroundings, you have everything. And I think that's the important thing, because...it's a specific time and a specific place...it's a one-time thing. (ibid)

And

...you can perform for free and get people to come and listen to you, and still share something with them...(ibid)

For this pianist, the fact of a performance's transient nature, its unique and fleeting existence, gives it immeasurable value that is in no way material. Performance then has meanings which transcend the mundane considerations of time, place or ticket price – meanings which arise out of the sense of "spirituality" that is the domain of live public performance.

Furthermore, this student views performance as central to the work of musicians in the sense of a hierarchy in which all other work (such as study, analysis, research, practising) exists to *inform* performance, as opposed to merely preparing for it or even existing outside of it.

...performing to me is...probably the most important part.... I think the only study of the works is playing them... (I-2 2009)

I am reminded, again, of Nicholas Cook's contention about the meaning of a performance event: "...as it is constructed in performance...meaning is emergent: it is not reproduced in but created through the act of performance." (Cook 2001, 179)

For student I-2, creating such meaning through public performance is the central goal of his work as a pianist:

I can't see myself not performing. I can't actually conceptualise not being in that space....The whole idea of learning something from the beginning is 'what can I learn that is [going to] work out, and can *add to* a performance?' (ibid)

Student I-3 also mentions the idea of sharing the music with the audience, and makes a point of stating that this is something that is not confined by the material boundaries such as physical space and financial limitations:

...[R]egardless of [whether] you're performing for money or not, it's, it's great to share...something as beautiful as that with a whole bunch of people...it's just fantastic to share something that you're incredibly passionate about...and enjoy. (I-3 2009)

Thus, the performer is positioned as someone who shares time and knowledge, and in this way may be regarded as a servant of the listeners. The student does also confess, however,

that the act of performance is not entirely selfless, and recognition for one's work and achievement is revealed as another motivating factor: "...you...are looking for the satisfaction of...a good performance, or people's praise..." (ibid)

She echoed other views expressed by students I-1 and I-2, about how performance "adds an extra element of...pressure, to the music" (ibid). According to what student I-1 said about a performance serving as an incentive for producing the best quality of work, here student I-3 speaks of the "pressure" of public performance – something that, since she enjoys performing, is a positive rather than a negative attribute.

Student I-4 gave somewhat more insight into the *experience* of performing than did the other students. Having already indicated that he wants to pursue a performing career, I asked him what it was about performing that makes it so desirable.

...[Y]ou're in a different...level of consciousness on stage...it's kind of, adrenalin and...your sensitivities are heightened – because you've placed the importance on this event...you've thought, "this concert's important, I've [got to] do it properly", and...I think that heightened pressure, I respond well to.... (I-4, Author's Interview Part 1 2009)

For this pianist, as for students I-1, I-2 and I-3, the experience of performing on stage to an audience is entirely different from doing so alone in a practice room or elsewhere off stage. It provides a space where pianists may reveal themselves in a safe and immediate way and simultaneously put their work on display.

[On stage]...you're just, kind of more motivated to make the most out of all the things you've learnt...[and] because you're under more pressure to perform, you do it better...you know, you're...everything is more, engaging...(ibid)

The demands of the stage setting also bring about a higher quality of playing from the pianist; the "heightened sensitivities" and "pressure" help the performer to perform better than s/he normally would. In this way, performance is also important because it improves the quality of the music-making, seemingly automatically, "which is why I'll never play as well in a lesson, or...in a practice room, as I will on stage." (ibid)

Student I-5 was the only one of the group of interview candidates for whom performance is not an essential part of being a musician. For him, performing solo piano music on stage has

more often than not been a negative experience, and as a result, he feels that it “isn’t that important for me to perform in public.” (I-5 2010)

...[W]hat I found is that...I often think that, it isn’t crucial for me to perform – ...I could study music and be a musician without performing. (ibid)

While he admits appreciating what he sees as the benefits of performing [solo] in public, student I-5 laments the critical nature of many of the audiences he has thus far encountered.

...It’s something I do, and I see its benefits – not only on my playing, but on my esteem, and my growth, as a musician. ...but, there are other things that I enjoy doing. ...I enjoy accompaniment, and I enjoy chamber work, and...I could live without performing, and a lot of the time, it isn’t...especially positive, for me. ...it’s executing difficult tasks under the scrutiny of audiences who, often, are very critical and...also...judgemental. (ibid)

Another negative aspect about public performance for this pianist – also linked to the notion of critical and judgemental audiences – is the idea that “you’re only as good as your last performance.”

If you played, like, badly, people expect you to play badly the next time. Or if you play well, the same applies. And it’s sometimes difficult, or all too easy, to live up to the standards people set for you. (ibid)

While the other students find that the added “pressure” of public performance to be a positive thing, student I-5 sees it as something that often adversely affects his ability to do his best. In this light, the stage seems a daunting and even dangerous place to express oneself. This particular pianist identifies the greatest challenge of performing as the separation of the performing self from “what everyone else expects” and being able to simply perform. (Ibid)

Summary (A.2.4)

At junctures such as this, where the ability to perform in public is made difficult, we recognise the extent to which Social Identity Theory (SIT) is inapplicable to the music performance situation: the musician attempts to simultaneously bring to the fore the social and personal identities, seemingly in equal measure. The students generally have a sense

that public performance is extremely significant – even critical – in their lives as musicians. Indeed, Christopher Small argues that performance is the very essence of music: “There is no such thing as music. Music is not a thing at all but an activity, something that people do.” (Small 1998, 2)

Part B: Music Articulating with National Identity

Under this theme, I sought to discover to what extent the students felt connected with South Africa in terms of what we might call a “National Identity.” Were they highly patriotic? Would they describe themselves as South African? As African? It was important first to discover how they described their sense of national identity – what traits, characteristics or other information they used to define what it means to be ‘South African.’ From this basis, I might discover if and how music, and specifically WEAM, and their identifications as musicians within the tradition of WEAM in South Africa, engage with their sense of national identity, if at all.

B.1 Perceptions of National Identity and African Identity

In this section I asked direct questions relating to the students’ sense of national identity. Again, some interesting variations across the interview candidates appeared, although there was nothing that was extremely unusual – or that wasn’t to be expected. I began the section by asking each candidate whether he/she would describe themselves as South African and if so, what made him/her South African – what it means to be South African. I then asked the same questions relating to being African.

At this point it is perhaps necessary to point out once again that all the interview candidates are South African citizens of European descent. I made no attempt to assemble a sample that was acceptably ‘nationally representative’ as far as demographics are concerned. But also, since the study has a strict geographical focus – student pianists at Rhodes University in Grahamstown – and since there is a small number of student pianists at the university, prescribing ‘representation’ would have also involved fabrication.

Questions

- Do you consider yourself to be 'South African'? What does being 'South African' mean to you? I.e. how do you define your South African-ness? (What about you makes you South African, what makes you *not* South African, if that is the case?)
- Do you consider yourself 'African'? If so, what does being 'African' mean to you? How is it different from your sense of South African-ness, if applicable?

Student I-1's understanding of national identity is the more limited view amongst the interview candidates. Particularly regarding South Africa, which "is such a diverse country [where] there are no unifying personal traits or factors", she sees national identity as relating to the facts of one's birthplace and citizenship. (I-1, Author's Interview Part 2 2010)

However, she says, not much later:

...Geographical location is absolutely irrelevant...your upbringing, and your education, actually defines your...national identity, I think. (I-1, Author's Interview Part 2 2010)

Clearly the student also has some inclination towards the notion of social and economic factors as having influence on personal development. However, her position on the matter of national identity is apparently yet undecided. Despite this, clearly, as a musician in the tradition of WEAM, it is more central to her sense of identification that she is part of a global community of other such musicians. This identification supersedes her South African identification(s) to a certain extent and is evidenced in her comments about her 'life plan.'²⁵

Student I-2's view of "South African-ness" is significantly more nuanced than that of student I-1. While he recognises the difficulties inherent in trying to describe *what* or *how* a "South African" is, seemingly he is much more willing to engage with the issue and debate it.

...I was born here. And I've grown up in South Africa...within the cultures and traditions of South Africa. And I mean of course those – they are extremely

²⁵ She describes what I refer to as her 'life plan' in these terms: "...being a musician for me, in this kind of, day and age, would probably be going to the next school, and the next country and staying there for a number of years, playing as many competitions as possible, hoping to get invited for concerts..." (I-1, Author's Interview Part 1 2009)

varied, I can't say South Africa means it's just Xhosa or just European, or whatever it is. I think South Africa is just one broad term for a whole...variety of different cultures and ethnicities.... ...and I was...brought up [in], and am part of one of those. And if I'm part of one of those, I call myself South African. (I-2 2009)

Here 'South African nationality is a negotiated space, but one which, in this student's view, is available to all whose culture is to be found in South Africa.

When asked if he regarded himself as African, the pianist's initial response was an unambiguous 'no.' He quickly moved to discuss his response however, and revealed an understanding of the term 'African' as one that also has multiple meanings.

...Well, if I say 'African', there are quite a few different...OK, I say I'm African in the sense that I live on the continent, or I can say I'm African in that, I have a black skin. ...so, I'm African, yes, in the sense that I live on the continent, but I'm not African [in the sense] that...I have a black skin.²⁶ (ibid)

The respondent's awareness of the possibility that he is African and not-African simultaneously is interesting considering his much more 'liberal' approach to the question of South African-ness. There appears to be a significant issue regarding race and the use of the term 'African.'

In this discussion about being 'African' the pianist reveals a focus on economic development as a significant factor in his identifications with South Africa and his perception of other African countries. (ibid)

As a person of British descent who has grown up in South Africa, student I-3 feels that she is

...Kind of on the fence post with regards to cultural identity in terms of...either being South African or British, because I can't claim to be fully and completely either. (I-3 2009)

The pianist attempts to "adopt the...more positive aspects of both cultures" (I-3 2009), and names diversity, vibrancy, cultural acceptance and pride as positive attributes of South Africa that she appreciates.

...This great vibrant culture, or various cultures, that you have here – that kind of cultural acceptance. ...this country's incredibly vibrant – more so than, I'd say,

²⁶ See Mazrui 2003 – "Africans of the soil" and "Africans of the blood".

England. Just the people, they're just more colourful. ...Different backgrounds, different ways of looking at things...different ways of approaching people. ...[Different] mannerisms as well. ...there's a lot of pride, in this country I think...which is great. (ibid)

Reflecting on the "melting pot" (ibid) that she calls South African cultural diversity, while she conceded that "this country's got a long way to go in terms of discrimination" (ibid), the pianist also noted that having been born in a particular country is not necessarily significant – rather, acknowledging and accepting a variety of ways of life and of doing things is the key to South Africa's attractiveness for her. England, she says, for all the charm of its first-world material comfort, is much less diverse and can be described as "one big culture" (ibid) – as opposed to South Africa, the "big culture" of which has "various little offshoots and branches, depending on, ethnicity...cultures, language groups..." (ibid)

...Interacting with people who may not always share your...viewpoint on an issue which...maybe [people in] other cultures think [is] black-and-white...your mind is really opened up to...different ways of looking at things, and I think in that sense you become more accepting of...difference, as a whole. (ibid)

As in the case of the previous respondent, student I-3 also reveals an acute awareness of the possibility of the plurality of the term 'African.' When asked if she considered herself African, she was quick to point out that "That word's got quite a few connotations attached to it. [sigh]". (ibid) I include the "[sigh]" in the quotation because it was expressive of a burden of consideration that demonstrated to a certain extent the intellectual struggle she endures in attempting to clarify the issue – not to mention the personal struggle in identifying oneself in a contemporary African context in which one sees oneself as an African descendant of a colonising nation.

...Historically, the connotations that are attached to the word mean that you are black...; that you...do not speak English as, a mother tongue; that you belong to a third world, or developing...country, or area; ...that you may not be as technologically advanced... These days, I suppose the connotations just involve...being a person who resides, or has been born and...raised in...the continent. So in terms of the values and acceptance of...the way things are done in Africa, then yes, I would say I'm African, because I have an understanding of the issues that...face this continent. ...I don't have a...narrow...or outside perspective. (ibid)

The pianist displays great empathy for South Africa and the African continent in acknowledging the fact of her British heritage. For her, national identity is a complexity of

loyalties that gives her unique perspectives on both England and South Africa. Since she sees herself as “sitting on the fence post”, her senses of identification with either nation are both those of an insider and of an outsider. At home – in either place – she is also an “other.”

Student I-4 also refers specifically to cultural diversity as an important characteristic of South African life. The acceptance of cultural diversity is also something he sees as a South African characteristic.

...I think it's...a matter of having lived here as well...just experiencing all different aspects of the culture. ...it is a very...multicultural society, and there's [sic] influences from other countries so you have to be open to those as well...which is...a part of being South African. ...maybe...I don't feel as strong a sense of tradition and heritage as someone who's lived in...Spain, or something, where they can trace their roots quite far back...being a descendant of settlers, you know, we haven't – I haven't, and my ancestors haven't been here for that long...but, I still feel a sense of belonging to this country. (I-4, Author's Interview Part 2 2010)

And

I think the South African community is unique in how it embraces other cultures while still maintaining its own identity, which in itself is split into...several different groups... (ibid)

As in the case of student I-3, student I-4 simultaneously displays an acute awareness of his place in South African history as a “descendant of settlers” when claiming South African identity. When asked about this “sense of belonging” and what things constituted it, the pianist cited a ‘sense of comfort’ as an important factor. Also of significance in one’s sense of national identity, he implied, is the place in which one finds oneself.

...If you were to go and live somewhere else, some things about you are definitely [going to] change. But in order to...say that you're from a particular place you need to fight to keep some things the same, so that you don't completely change to how...other people, live. ...you need to decide what's important to you...and hang on to that. ...[U]ntil...I've actually lived somewhere else, it'll be quite hard for me to [know]...what defines my identity as South African. (ibid)

In a way, the pianist refers to the notion of binary opposites – opposing concepts that define themselves (and each other) by virtue of their opposition.²⁷ Here, the idea of a South African identity is posited within the context of a relationship, or relationships, to identifications that are *not* South African. This notion is congruent with SIT – the “in-group” is, at least partly, defined by its opposition or difference to some other “out-group(s)”. (Tarrant, North and Hargreaves 2002, 137)

Student I-4 considers South Africa to be a unique country, and even so within the African continent. As such, his sense of being ‘African’ is not as strong as his sense of being ‘South African’ (ibid). Again he displays a deep awareness of history and gives the sense of perhaps his own insignificance in a historical context.

...I think, for me...being African is just being...part of the continent. I mean, I’m...from here...I feel pretty firmly rooted in...Africa. My dad’s Rhodesian and my mom’s South African, and I’m not sure how long her side of the family has been here, but...I’m definitely from...Africa.” (ibid)

This statement contrasts slightly with the pianist’s earlier statement about feeling less African than South African. He seems, even within (this part of) the interview, to have negotiated his African identifications and arrived at a definitive point at which he claims Africa:

...I’ve grown up here. You know, I didn’t grow up where my family originally came from. So...most of my experiences have been, in Africa – South Africa. ...having lived here and grown up around the people here – which, I mean, is something that I think I’m proud of, that I can say that. You know...not everyone in the world can. ...I think we need to be proud of that. (ibid)

While admitting to not being “especially patriotic”, student I-5 does fully claim his South African identity. His recognition of South African-ness, however, seems to lie less in ‘characteristics’ of the place or people necessarily, but rather in

...A sense of irony about the...kind of world we live in.... I like to make fun of South Africa [because] it’s...a bit of a ridiculous place...just the levels of unequalness [sic]...and the fact [of] its...decaying infrastructure, I think is...great fodder for...poking fun. (I-5 2010)

²⁷ A musical example is the relationship between the concepts of consonance and dissonance; we can consider the dissonant only insofar as it opposes what we hear and conceive of as consonant.

When asked about whether or not he considers himself to be African, this student responded in a markedly different manner from the other interview candidates: an immediate “Yes” – without qualification.

I asked him if his sense of being South African was different from that of being African.

No! I mean, to me...well, this is a recent change of outlook – but I always thought...that identity...African [identity], isn't necessarily the domain of only black people. ...it's sort of a...a constructed identity. ...and I feel like I'm not going to...first of all, embrace this supposed guilt...for my whiteness, and then claim to not be African but European – when I've never even left South Africa – it's a bit like, illogical. ...I'm as African as everybody else who is in Africa. (ibid)

This pianist is the only one of the interview candidates to definitively claim his African identity and deny any sense of European connection or identity. Simultaneously, he rejects the notion of embracing the “supposed guilt for my whiteness”, and one immediately gets the sense of the denial of expectation – a dogged refusal to conform to what he feels is being required of him by certain social forces. He negates the possibility of claiming a European identity since his sense of identity is based on knowledge gained through lived experience rather than any imagined heritage. Although a blood line is generally considered a ‘real’ link to places of origin, for this pianist it represents a connection as imagined as any other outside the realm of his own lived experience. Further, his claim to Africa is not merely expressed through the rejection of other heritages, but through active, confident and declamatory embracement:

...I'm as African as everybody else who is in Africa. ...I'm used to...the climate of Africa, and, the people of Africa. ...it's as much my country as anybody else's, and my continent. (ibid)

Summary (B.1)

These individuals appear to identify with the nation more in terms of *ideas* about what the nation is about, than they do with the nation as a birthplace. Experience also plays an important role, and the students display a keen awareness of the specific nature of what they frame as the South African living experience: that is, the experience of living amongst multiple cultural influences in an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding.

B.2 Perceptions of Musical Activity (WEAM) in the Context of National Identity

This research is informed by my own personal sense, at least at the outset of the research, of contradiction in my identifications as a South African, fully engaged in contemporary life in South Africa, and as a musician in the tradition of WEAM, marginalised as this practice seems to be in relation to the dominant South African culture(s). I find that this is due to both internal observations and external pressures. The status quo, the media and the forces that are plugged in the media undoubtedly exert pressures that demand constant attention. However, given the seemingly autonomous nature of this type of art²⁸, it is also possible that such individuals sense no such conflict whatsoever. The report that follows reveals a range of responses that point towards an active debate rather than any sense of conclusion on the matter.

Question:

- How do you view your music performance activities (specifically the genre 'classical' music) in the context of your sense of South African/African identity? Are they integral to it? Are they autonomous from it? What is the nature of the relationship, if there is one?

Student I-1 seems to have the general sense that WEAM is out of place in South African society and her comments indicate an acceptance of a position of marginality for the practice.

...I don't think that classical music is integral to South African society, because people aren't interested – it's not going to effect any changes in...society...and...South Africa, can't be that important to a classical career, because South Africa as a country doesn't really offer, much, to a classical performer. (I-1, Author's Interview Part 2 2010)

When asked what she thought of the relationship between South Africa and classical music, the pianist had this to say:

²⁸ See Bourdieu 1984 (vs. Rejai 2002), and Pontara 2007

No relationship...I don't think South Africa is a particularly good place to try and pursue a classical performing career, and...therefore, I think that if you want that kind of career, you should move to another country. (ibid)

What one begins to notice in the student's responses is her positioning of herself as an "other" in society. This is evidenced not only in her comments about WEAM in South Africa specifically, but also in her revelations about her choices of music to perform and to listen to²⁹. Her perceptions of the state of WEAM in South Africa are expressed in such a way as to lament it, as the following quotations indicate: "Not enough money..." (ibid)

And

...here, things happen in a different way, and...what is, western...is often seen as...bad, or not bad, as...the enemy. So um...a whole public perception will have to change before we can even start thinking of [tape inaudible]...(ibid)

What appears here is a sense of resignation about the perception of the current situation, and given that she is a determined practitioner of WEAM in South Africa, her words may be seen as evidence in support of the notion of the practice as a marginalised activity.

When relating his perceptions of the relationship between his musical activities and the broader national context, student I-2 indicated that he felt a certain sense of guilt about being an African musician without a dedication to furthering "indigenous African music."

...I don't perceive a conflict; it's more of an ethical thing I think. ...I could be furthering African music. I could be taking African music to the rest of the world - instead of bringing European...western art music to Africa, and performing that....I'm not really doing anything to help African music in any way, I'm trying to promote western art music, and I think that...can be problematic... (I-2 2009)

What the pianist describes here is essentially the same sense of 'contradiction' that was described in Chapter 1; it is the 'strange counterpoint' from which this thesis draws its title. The perception or recognition of this counterpoint in the student's own life seems to emerge out of a sense of (national) duty.

...I also feel that I have this...responsibility - because I would call myself South African, or African... - that I would want to help, or not help but, further, you know, South African, traditional music, or African traditional music. (ibid)

²⁹ See the Interview Transcript in Appendix C

Whatever informs such a sense of duty to an entire country or continent must necessarily be an idea or ideology, the fundamental tenets of which resonate powerfully with the individual. One might imagine that the felt responsibility of which the student speaks is closely tied to a code of ethics, as he notes, that variously demands that his actions be based not solely on self-interest. This is a demand he makes of himself. There is a resonance in his words here with the comments he made about the responsibility of the musician to share the music with others. (ibid)

Simultaneously, however, the pianist acknowledges his right to perform “European music” in South Africa (ibid), recalling his own comments about South Africa as a place defined by many cultures. Equally there are many types of music – of which WEAM is one.

...I don't see that I'm doing anything wrong, per se, by performing it. Because...just to add, there're many people...[who]...are not specifically European...who *do* enjoy classical music. So it's not...that...classical music is only a European thing within South Africa. (ibid)

Student I-3 is of the view that there is a “small connection” (I-3 2009) between her musical activity and her sense of South African identity. Her discussion of this issue reveals the assumption of an ‘outside’ position within the framework of a global WEAM community to which she indirectly refers – that is to say, a worldview for South African WEAM practitioners that takes for granted their ‘otherness’ within this global community.

...[T]he link between South African-ness and...[WEAM] performance, is that audiences here are...more, accepting of...ingenuity, in performance. So...if you take the typical...controversial example – of Bach, how do you perform Bach? ...I know that, if you attend a concert overseas, there's definitely the sense of expectation of the performer to conform to...their ‘educated’, in inverted commas, way of...viewing Bach – in terms of ornamentation, expression, dynamics, et cetera. Whereas I feel, in this country, I wouldn't say it's due to a lack of education; it's more, a different way of looking at music in terms of, ‘if it sounds good, then great’.” (I-3 2009)

The bundling together of other international WEAM centres as “overseas” and the assertion of this particular impression of the South African WEAM audience community would suggest that this student assumes an isolated position for these audiences in relation to those “overseas.” This isolation may be firmly grounded in the physical distance that separates South Africa and Western Europe – a geographical distance that is reflected in secondary ones that are psychological, intellectual, philosophical, musical and emotional.

Furthermore, the nature of South African audiences, as described here, is set up to oppose that of audiences “overseas.” In this instance, the student identifies herself as part of a community of ‘outsiders.’

Far from perceiving this type of ‘outside’ position as a negative factor, this student enjoys the opportunities that the realm of WEAM in South Africa presents.

...I kind of enjoy the feeling that I can add something a little bit extra or maybe, personal, to the music that may not be entirely regarded as historically correct, or technically correct. ...that sense of individuality, and acceptance of that individual decision to do something, even though I may not be regarded as an expert... (ibid)

This echoes Student I-2’s comments about having the freedom in solo performance to bring forth one’s own musical ideas without the influence of others (which is the case in ensemble work): a notion I termed “interpretational sovereignty.” While student I-3 does not refer to the differences between solo performance and group performance, what she says she enjoys is essentially the same: the freedom to stamp her sense of self, her originality, on the music she performs. There is the sense that the opportunity to achieve this sovereignty is seemingly greater in South Africa than in the “overseas” regions to which she refers.

An element of the relationship between South African-ness and WEAM, as explained by student I-3, has to do with the long traditions of art music in Europe as opposed to the relatively young tradition of WEAM in South Africa. When asked if she ever has the sense of a conflict, the pianist answered thus:

Occasionally, [yes]. ...as a classical musician, ...especially...aspiring performers, you're encouraged to adopt the thought pattern ‘foreign is better’, ‘European is better’...and, because...that’s where classical music stemmed from, and there’s [sic] hundreds and hundreds of years of tradition of the practise of that music...you occasionally think ‘on a global scale, is what I'm doing acceptable?’ (ibid)

For this performer, the old European tradition and the relatively young and far-removed tradition in South Africa provide reason to question the validity of her training and work. Authenticity, it would seem, is the central concern.

The pianist refers elsewhere to “different schools of thought” dealing with “how pianists should sound or look, and what they should perform” (I-3 2009) – statements that give us a

clear sense of external pressure from certain sections of the WEAM community (national and international), and this in the context of other pressures from the South African community at large.

Student I-4 admits having a sense of irony about identifying so strongly with WEAM and growing up in a place so far removed from the origin of the music.

...[T]hat's...quite a tricky one – for someone in South Africa to have...such a strong sense of identity with...western music. But really, none of it came from this side of the world! ...but I feel that, that's part of the beauty of the society here, that people still have a strong sense and link to *that* music. (I-4, Author's Interview Part 2 2010)

This comment about a prevailing sense, in South Africa, of a connection to WEAM may also support the notion put forward above that WEAM is “othered” in South Africa. That the pianist specifically points out the wonder that “people *still* have a strong sense, and a link to *that* music”, is reason enough to suggest that the statement might equally have been made thus: ...people still have a strong sense, and a link to *that* music, despite the (South) African context in which it finds itself.”

The sense of difference in the South African WEAM situation, as discussed in the section on student I-3 above, was echoed in this particular interview as well: “...I think that...studying [WEAM] in South Africa is quite different to studying it either in Europe or America...” (ibid)

In naming this difference, the student said that the WEAM environment in South Africa, he had found, is a very competitive environment, one that focussed too much attention on competition, and not enough on learning.

When asked if he ever felt a sense of conflict about his chosen field in the context of South Africa, the pianist had this to say:

...I think you can often end up with feelings of resentment...to, where you've come from, because your choice isn't as widely supported. ...I think another part of the problem is that...a lot of the exceptionally talented pianists come from Russia, or Europe, or the (United) States, and...more recently Asia – China, Japan, Korea...South Africa is geographically very far away from those places...(ibid)

The significance of the distance between South Africa and other nations where there is a significant support for WEAM manifests itself – apart from the financial and other economic

considerations, specifically relating to travel – in the perceptions and identifications of the South African practitioners. This student in particular sees the situation in South Africa – that is, the marginality of WEAM – as an opportunity for growth and development.

Student I-5 sees his sense of (South) African-ness as entirely separate from his area of study focus.

...To me it seems as if there's...a small...margin of society in South Africa that's [sic] really...cares about western European art music. It's...a bit of an alien identity actually. The two are probably at odds with each other. (I-5 2010)

While he admits that there are classical music traditions present in South Africa, citing the strong choral music tradition as an example, he finds the presence of WEAM in South Africa

...[A] bit antithetical, because it's a very staid, western, tradition. ...it's very formal, and formalised...and...also...the interaction between audience and performer is completely antithetical to a...typically African...interaction between audience and performer...(ibid)

It would seem that “staid” (or any of its synonyms – grave, serious, sober, dull), “formal” and “formalised” are not how African music – or perhaps (South) Africa? – is to be described. Furthermore,

...It's also a bit of a dangerous...thing – being...colonial. ...it's [sic] all white European males who wrote a bunch of music, and we[re] still performing it...you know, it's a little iffy from the outside looking in. (ibid)

The student again reveals an acute awareness of his South African context and has no illusions about some of the symbols inherent in the WEAM tradition and what they are often seen to represent in a new South Africa. What he considers as “being a South African” is well outside of the domain of WEAM, or even of his own areas of activity within WEAM.

...It's a very small, select group of audience members, and...that's kind of...symbolic, of the...way it is in South Africa. ...if you just take the Guy Butler [Theatre, at the 1820 Settlers'] Monument [in Grahamstown] ... [I]t's on top of a hill, looking *down* on everybody else. And the only people who ever seem to be attending these...Music Society Concerts...are just...old, white people of middle or upper-middle class origin. So...because it's such a small, little shelled-off, ivory tower-type environment...I feel like being a South African never really comes into play. (ibid)

The student either does not associate South African-ness with “shelled-off, ivory tower-type” environments, or he feels that such environments do not accurately represent what he considers to be South African. His comment about the theatre building “looking down” on everybody else is a striking metaphor. However, it is precisely this “ivory tower-type” focus that makes the experience such a typically South African story. We know that South Africa has a tremendously high level of inequality, and we may speculate that this student aligns either himself or South African-ness more with the poor than with the elite class, or that his view of the elite is that it is, by comparison to the South African economic status quo, out of place and therefore *not* truly South African.

Summary (B.2)

All the pianists indicate an awareness of themselves and their art form as marginal, to a greater or lesser degree, within the South African cultural and social landscape. The reactions to the issue vary between negative and positive assertions as far as this state of affairs is concerned (1-3 in particular), but the general sense is that there is no meaningful connect between WEAM and what the pianists consider to be representative of South African nationality.

SOURCE II: QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

A. Music Articulating with Self-Perception	B. Music Articulating with National Identity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A.1 Important Musical beginnings - A.2. Perceived Significance of Music in Self-Identification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A.2.1 Significance of “Being a Musician” - A.2.2 The Choice to Pursue a Career in Music - A.2.3 Significance of “Being a Pianist” - A.2.4 Significance of Public Performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B.1 Perceptions of National Identity and African Identity - B.2 Music (WEAM) as relating to National Identity

Part A: Music Articulating with Self-Perception

The questionnaire data are considerably shorter than those of the interviews. Across the responses, answers vary greatly in both length and depth.

A.1 Important Musical Beginnings

Question:

- Describe your earliest musical memory, your earliest memory of music.

Three of the four respondents’ earliest musical memories involve family in some or other way. For student Q-1, music and the piano were synonymous, and at the age of three, she began to explore an interest music that involved ‘performing’ from the outset. In “happily plonking away at the keyboard” as a young child, the student was able to find a certain refuge and calm – a situation that has continued into her adulthood as a concert performer. (Q-1 2009)

I think that I can say that from then on, piano has always been my 'happy place', where I am able to forget about my worries and problems. (ibid)

Student Q-2's earliest memory of music was not of playing, but of listening. He specifically remembers the music of ABBA that was played in the [family] car when he was a small child – his father enjoyed listening to ABBA and “other music from [that] era.” (Q-2 2009)

Student Q-3's recollection of her earliest musical memory involves singing along to the soundtrack of a movie as a young child. In the traditional sense of the terms, she was simultaneously listening and performing. The student also clearly recalls how she first became interested in learning to play the piano:

...I first knew I wanted to learn piano...when I saw my sister play. I was about five. She would improvise and...pretend she was reading the music from a book (with words, like a fictional book) (**sic**). I was greatly disappointed after a few weeks of lessons to find out that I won't be learning how to convert words to music. I thought it would be like some kind of secret code that I would always have for myself. (Q-3 2009)

It might be suggested that at an early age, this student seems to have had a sense of being different from others in the (her) world. The desire to learn the “secret code” that she at first perceived music to be indicates to some extent a *desire* to (continue to) be different; a means by which she might distinguish herself from others in society.

Student Q-4 did not relate any specific musical memory that he might deem his earliest, but simply reported that for as long as he could remember, all of his dreams have been accompanied by music. Music is apparently perceived as something entirely internal – present even at birth, as it were. (Q-4 2010)

A.2 Significance of Music(-king) in Self-Identification

A.2.1 Perceived Significance/Centrality of Being a Musician

Questions:

- What do you think defines you as a person? What are the various traits/characteristics that you think make you who you are?
- Does your musicianship make you feel different from the greater society? How does it impact your interaction with others in society?

- How important is it for you to be a musician? (aside from occupational/financial considerations...as if they did not exist) Why? What about music gives it this great import in your life, or not?

Student Q-1 is extremely articulate and describes the considerable extent to which being a musician – or perhaps more accurately, her involvement in learning music – has informed (and continues to inform) her sense of self.

Having played piano seriously from an early age has forced me to learn valuable traits such as perseverance, self-discipline, dedication, focus, working towards goals, the ability to handle criticism, how to express my feelings and creativity, bouncing back after disappointments, and so many more. (Q-1 2009)

This pianist clearly recognises the broader positive effects that being a musician has had on other areas of her life. She is acutely aware of music as not merely an activity or even a career choice, but also as a way in which to see and live in the world, of “expressing myself to the world, and also of having a special place in the world.” (ibid)

[Music/being a musician] is not just something I do, it IS me. (ibid)

Student Q-2’s choice of career and dedication to his chosen art form represent for him points at which he is separated from many of his friends and family members who “couldn’t care less about the music I study (Western Art Music, Classical Music, and Serious Music, whatever you like to call it)...” (Q-2 2009)

I am seen as a music snob because I am not entertained by popular music, and I am frustrated that people close to me can have no appreciation for an art I consider devoting my life to. (ibid)

In this instance, the individual identifies with WEAM both out of choice and as a result of his sense of difference from others, and particularly those close to him. His involvement with WEAM is thus a significant factor in the negotiation of his sense of self – a distinguishing feature that is divisive but affirming.

In the case of Student Q-3, music is a central aspect of everyday life that is entirely pervasive – even at the level of arbitrary conversation – and the student admits that being a musician “definitely makes me feel different” from others in society.

We actually socialise with musical terminology (“and then she threw a cadenza and just started shouting at everyone – fortissimo! Molto dramatic” – only musicians understand), our daily lives, concerns and stresses [revolve] around

the music we play, music competitions, difficult musicians, and for someone to understand, [they] need to be in the business. I find that the longer I am a music student, the more I get bored with conversations with 'other' people. And most of the time I don't know what's going on in the rest of the world because I am in a practise room. (Q-3 2009)

"Musical terminology" provides a common language that by its very nature identifies those who use it, and by which they identify themselves. This student – along with those in her circle of friends and colleagues – draws on the musical identities of others in the negotiation of her own. She distinguishes herself as a musician as much in her difference from others who are "not musicians" as she does in her association with others who are. Here Social Identity Theory (SIT) is evidenced in the data.

Her choice of music performance as a career is grounded in the *experience* of musicking – the feeling(s) associated with it, and those associated with being without it.

Firstly...you can always achieve something new, reach a new goal even if you have been doing music for decades. Secondly, when you listen to devastatingly beautiful music, you know that you are part of the picture of that classical music. Also, the more you learn about it, the more worlds open up for your imagination - it never gets old....When I don't do music I become very depressed and...alone. I also feel like I lose control of my life. (ibid)

In general, music performance allows this individual not merely one avenue, but multiple avenues for identification: as a discoverer/explorer of uncharted (musical) territory; as a "part" of (a certain piece of) music; as a unique individual, distinct from all else; and as one who is in control of her life.

Again, student Q-4's responses to the questions under this theme are extremely brief and not exceedingly illuminating. What is significant, however, is the reiteration of the notion of life being "accompanied by music" (Q-4 2010). The brevity of this student's responses reveals a certain matter-of-fact approach to the subject that perhaps indicates that all of this – the centrality of music to his life – is taken for granted.

Summary (A.2.1)

As with the interview candidates, we see that music assumes a vital role in the lives of these musicians, and that it variously takes on uniquely significant roles for different individuals.

A.2.2 The Choice to Pursue Music as a Career

Question:

- Why did you decide to pursue music as a career?

While only one of the respondents (Q-4) stated explicitly that a career in music was “a calling” (Q-4 2010), all of them indicated to some extent or other that their pursuit of such a career was based, at least partly, on either their self-confessed inability to imagine doing anything other than music [performance], or the fear of regretting a choice *not* to pursue a musical career later in life.

Each of the pianists discusses this issue in a slightly different way – some with almost a sense of melodrama, and one in particular rather more soberly.

For student Q-1, “It is not so much that I chose music as a career; it is just that I could not imagine my life without it!” (Q-1 2009.) Apart from an admission that music “seemed like the most natural choice to make” (Ibid), and in support of her somewhat impassioned statement quoted above, the pianist explains in detail the factors that attract her to music. Principally, it is “the way it challenges me in every aspect” (ibid) that draws her to it.

...it demands a lot of one emotionally, spiritually and intellectually. Furthermore, it is always changing, posing new challenges, letting you express your own individuality and creativity, and demanding utmost dedication and focus. (ibid)

None of the things mentioned here is material, and all of them involve some fundamental, non-physical action. Paradoxically, this non-physical action *is mediated through* physical action: the use of the hands in the production of sound in what is commonly known as “playing the piano.” That this physical action is productive of both physical and non-physical results (*sound* and how it *feels* to play versus the ethereal musical structures established in the performance process) is also telling: the mental, spiritual and physical faculties are required in equal strength. This distinction between physical and non-physical may, to a certain extent, be irrelevant because all emotional, spiritual and intellectual satisfaction is experienced somatically. That is to say, no matter the source of the satisfaction, it *feels* good in a physical way.

Student Q-2's notes merely that his choice to pursue a career in music was based largely on the fact that music performance is "what I do best, and also what I enjoy the most" (Q-2 2009). While the student does not indicate any central emotional factors as essential in his decision, he does mention that a choice for "any other career" would have led to frustration and a questioning of how different things might have been, "had I pursued my passion" (ibid). This in itself indicates the great importance of music [performance] in his life – its significance in decision-making regarding career choice, even when considering the consequences of opting for a career other than music performance.

In student Q-3, we have a tremendously passionate individual who reveals a deep and sincere love, even a need, for music. While she does express a desire to have a career that "isn't behind a desk and doesn't end at five [o'clock]" (Q-3 2009), her initial response to the question shows her primary reasons as much more private and deeply passionate:

If I didn't [choose music as a career] I wouldn't have been able to attend music concerts without crying. I would have been bitter and intensely jealous of any pianist. (ibid)

Again, the significance of music [performance] in her life is implicated in the student's consideration of other career choices.

Student Q-4's brief response is unambiguous: "I don't think I decided [on music as a career]... FOR ME, MUSIC WAS/IS A CALLING" (Q-4 2010, capitals original). His seemingly negative rather than positive evidence of this is to ask

...Who the hell wants to spend hours and hours in a practice room trying to pursue or achieve perfection while knowing all too well that it is humanly not possible[?] (ibid)

In alluding to a mundane aspect of being a musician, the "hours and hours [spent] in a practice room", the student also reveals something more important. The hours spent practising are suffered willingly, and we can conclude therefore that the reward must outweigh the sacrifice.³⁰ Moreover, the striving towards "perfection", in the knowledge of the futility of such an endeavour, would seem to indicate an aspiration to something

³⁰ Assuming, of course, that he does not have some other reason for suffering this banality, such as religious/spiritual/philosophical beliefs.

perhaps better, or at least more important, than perfection: the doing, and the striving itself.

That the “hours and hours” spent in the practise room are done so in pursuit of “perfection” indicates a certain understanding of what it means to this pianist (and also more generally) *to be a pianist or musician* – pianists or musicians “spend hours and hours in a practice room trying to pursue or achieve perfection while knowing all too well that it is humanly not possible.”

Summary (A.2.2)

Student Q-1 provides yet another example of a desire to achieve the “interpretational sovereignty” about which I wrote earlier in this chapter. Music seems to provide the space to do this in a way that rewards the musician, and we see that all the pianists indicate deeply emotional connections to this activity – connections which seem to shape the very nature of their lives.

A.2.3 Perceived Significance/Centrality of “Being a Pianist”

Question:

- How important is being a *pianist*? (as opposed to playing other instruments...)
- If it is very important, what about the piano/piano music makes it so?
- If it is not that important, why? What is more important?

While acknowledging a close affinity with the piano, and a love of “its sounds, its possibilities, its touch, and even its physical attributes” (Q-1 2009), student Q-1 also indicates that she “would not say that my experience of music is directly related to being a pianist” (ibid). The student’s view is that she would have become a musician no matter what her instrument of choice might have been.

Of course the most important of all is being a musician in the best and most honest way you can, regardless of the instrument you do it on. (ibid)

Significantly, she refers to the instrument as something *upon which music is “done.”* This notion is clearly in line with a view of the instrument that sees it as just that: an apparatus or tool that, far from serving merely its own function (to be played/performed upon), is to be used for some more general and possibly more important purpose.

In contrast to pianist Q-1, Q-2 states that there is no other instrument for him. He refers to the significance of the piano in WEAM in general, saying that there is “almost no Western art [music] genre where the piano isn’t featured prominently” (Q-2 2009). Apart from this more sober analysis, he also says that “other instruments just do not excite me as much as the piano does. I have some respect for other instrumentalists, but in my (very limited and biased) experience pianists have to do all the work. And we do it well.” (ibid)

As in the case of interview candidate I-1, there is a clear indication of a kind of egotism surrounding the comparison of pianists to other instrumentalists. The attraction to the piano for student Q-3, as with students Q-1 and Q-2, is also partly based on its physical attributes – its “colouristic and sonorous possibilities” and the ability to play both harmonically and melodically (Q-3 2009).

Again the notion of pianists as being distinct from other instrumentalists appears to inform self-image to a significant extent. In this instance, it is the organ, the violin and (again) the flute that are criticised and the student clearly sees the piano as a superior instrument – and perhaps, pianists as superior musicians. While measuring up against performers of other instruments is not important as an activity in itself and while she does not directly slight such performers, the perceived distinctions between herself as a pianist and other instrumentalists do seem to provide a means by which her self-worth may be validated, confirmed or enhanced.

...[W]e don’t really participate in chamber music [in] quite the same way as a violinist (they can usually busk their way through rehearsals but we always have to learn our notes beforehand. Also, we play 20 times as many notes but get paid the same), and we can never really be part of a group like in an orchestra. Just the character of the instrument makes it inherently impossible to really blend on any sound/social level. But we are one of the few instruments that can really be solo [on stage] (...an organ [too], but seriously, look at their repertoire). Our instrument has the most colouristic and sonorous possibilities and can play harmonically as well as melodically which makes the music written for piano less [monotonous] than, say, a flute recital. (Q-3 2009)

I think that there is enough evidence that her performance work – and likely also the positive reactions she receives from audiences³¹ – is sufficient to maintain and enhance her sense of self-worth as a performer, and that the distinction with which she is endowed/endows herself through the differentiation from (certain) other musicians results more from societal forces. If we are to believe Social Identity Theory (SIT), then an individual in a group of pianists who consider themselves superior to (some) other musicians – by virtue of their instruments – may assume certain group dispositions to (be seen to) identify more closely with the group.

Student Q-4:

...I know...that the reason why God chose the piano for me is because of [its] wide range of expression...it is the [“]KING OF INSTRUMENTS[”] as Lionel Bowman once said. It’s really an extension of the soul[...]my soul. (Q-4 2010)

Clearly the piano and his ability to play the piano are integral parts of this individual’s self-image. His appreciation for the instrument, based on its “wide range of [possibility for] expression” perhaps indicates a need to express a wide range of things – emotions, opinions, tendencies, characteristics. The notion that “God chose the piano for me” displays a belief that his connection to or relationship with the piano is a matter of predestination – a “calling”, not a choice.

Summary (A.2.3)

The piano appears as a significant part of the musicianship of these pianists, with the exception of student Q-1. What is revealed here is that an instrument may hold far more value to the musicians than is obvious, and that it plays an important role in the negotiation of their identities.

³¹ I have personally witnessed this pianist performing excellently, and to rapturous applause.

A.2.4 Perceived Significance of Public Performance

Questions:

- How important is it for you to perform in public, and why?
- Why not simply learn and play music for your own pleasure?

Student Q-1 sees performing as a natural and inalienable part of being a musician. “[C]ultivating our artistic personas” (Q-1 2009) appears to be a central part of the work of (student) pianists, and she asks “What would be the point of finding our own voice if it is never heard?”, and adds that “...there is nothing better than someone saying that they had tears in their eyes while you were playing.” (ibid)

If performing equates to “expressing [one’s] individuality to the public”, then emotionally moving an audience member can be seen as evidence of the most successful performance; that an audience member (and possibly a stranger) identifies powerfully with the pianist’s expression(s) of self confirms for the performer that the intended communication occurred unhindered. Furthermore, while there can be no guarantee that the intended *content* was received/experienced, that the listener identified with the performer’s expression of identity confirms the social nature of music performance – one “finds [and expresses one’s] own voice” *so that* it might be heard.

For student Q-2, public performance is the natural extension of private work (learning, practising) – indeed, it is the *reason* for this work. He provides a useful analogy: “Why does a doctor not simply learn anatomy and never work with a patient?” (Q-2 2009)

Furthermore,

After hours, weeks, months of practicing, I want to share the music I have studied with an audience. I want them to hear how fantastic the music is, I want them to hear how I myself will play it. I want acknowledgement that what I’m doing is beautiful and successful. (ibid)

Apart from enjoying the audience’s appreciation of the performance, this pianist has a desire to display his work, express himself and receive confirmation of the validity of what he has done and thus the validity of something far more fundamental – of who he is.

Student Q-3's response(s) show congruencies with those of Student Q-2, notably in the notion that performance is the next step in a natural progression from practising, and in a stated desire to share the joy she experiences in the music with others: "All practicing [sic] for me leads to performance. I want other people to be able to get as excited about the pieces I play as I do." (Q-3 2009)

The student also echoed a sentiment expressed by some of the interview candidates – the idea that the knowledge of an upcoming performance will "make me push myself harder, to get the music to a quality that I might not have reached without some pressure" (ibid).

Despite these highly valued aspects of performance – the inherent sense of community achieved through performance and the determination towards high-quality work and excellence – possibly the most important point the student mentions is that

...[Y]ou learn the most about yourself and the music [on stage]. If you never perform a piece of music [in public], there will be great parts of it that will always be unknown to you. Only when you try to explain or show the music to other people (in other words: perform) do you really force yourself to understand the music. (ibid)

The goal of achieving a superior quality of interpretation and performance seems to serve the more general purpose of *learning*, which itself comes with an inherent sense of achievement. We might speculate whether "understand[ing] the music" is equal to *being seen to understand* the music, but in either situation it is the desire to identify oneself (that is to say, present oneself) as a valid and worthy achiever of things that are deemed important – both by the individual and by the group(s). As such, the role of music performance in the life of this individual is partly to learn and achieve in an area of activity to which she is drawn, but also partly to express who she is in a unique and powerful way.

Student Q-4:

[I]t is crucial for me to tell 'the story'[,] '[T]he story' that all human beings know[,] but none of us can put it into words...THE DIVINE STORY WHICH WE ALL POSSESS AND LIVE AND KNOW...art is the closest we can get to articulating 'the story'...and music is the highest (lack of a better [word]) of all the arts...and for me, performing in public, is just a constant reminder of 'the story'...a constant reminder of humanity...AND I GET EXTREME PLEASURE FROM IT. (Q-4 2010)

An acute awareness of himself as a part of the human race (as necessarily opposed to any subdivisions thereof) is evident in student Q-4's response. In his view, music is a divine gift that is uniquely able to allow us to tell "the story" to which he refers, and thus assumes a position as "the highest...of all the arts." As a "constant reminder of 'the story'", music performance assumes an extremely significant role in this individual's life: *an essential spiritual ritual that is affirming of his humanity* – that is, his identity as a member of the human race. Student Q-4 appears to be asserting his resistance to what Julian Johnson describes as "a reduction of what we consider to be inalienable and irreducible: the absolute value of the human spirit." (Johnson 2002, iv)

Summary (A.2.4)

Performance, then, takes on much more than the mere presentation of one's work. For these pianists, the performance act is an essential part of music making that has to do with sharing, community and an affirmation and celebration of humanity. In this sense, it operates in a manner that is opposed to the notion of the 'pure gaze', as outlined by Bourdieu (1984). Rather, WEAM performance here represents a crucial part of the life of the musician – an inescapable part that seems to be grounded in the pianists' very understanding of what it means to be a musician.

Part B: The Role of Music in Articulating National Identity

B.1 Perceptions of National Identity and African Identity

Questions:

- Do you consider yourself to be "South African"? What does being "South African" mean to you? I.e. how do you define your South African-ness? (What about you makes you South African, what about you makes you *not* South African, if that is the case?)
- Do you consider yourself "African"? If so, what does being "African" mean to you? How is it different from your sense of South African-ness, if applicable?

Student Q-1 fully claims her South African-ness, saying that apart from having been born and raised in South Africa, her “mother tongue – Afrikaans – makes me distinctly South African, as it is spoken in no other part of the world” (Q-1 2009). Being proud of the nation and its diverse population also plays a role in this sense of belonging (ibid): “South African people have certain common attributes that I would like to believe are also strongly represented in my personality. “ (ibid)

Through language, location and diverse aspects of commonality with others, the imagined nation is an important site for identification in this student’s life³². As someone who has “until now never lived in any other country” (ibid – she is currently a postgraduate student in the USA), there is a strong possibility that her sense of nationality is heightened; in a foreign country she assumes the position of an “other.”

The student also claims an African identity, “in the sense that I feel [I] belong in Africa” (ibid)

I...feel a strong sense of kinship with my fellow Africans. In my mind, I do not feel that there is any difference between my South Africanness and my Africanness. However, I can understand that some people might want to make a distinction between South African[s] with European ancestry and South Africans with African ancestry, in which case I would obviously fall into the former category. (ibid)

While acknowledging the possibility and validity of such a distinction, the pianist’s own worldview is supported by the notion that to be South African is also to be African³³.

Student Q-2’s conscious sense of South African-ness is premised almost wholly on having been born and raised in the country.

I might move to any country abroad, live there for the rest of my life, but I will always remain South African, because this is the country of my birth, the country where I was raised. (Q-2 2009)

In this view, the concept of “nation” rests on circumstance, and as such a fairly straightforward view of nationality is revealed. While being born and raised in a particular

³² See O’Flynn 2007.

³³ What we do notice is a division of South Africans into two broad categories – those with European, and those with African ancestries - that are clearly insufficient for a responsible (or even accurate) description of the situation.

place may in some senses appear insufficient to assign/warrant national identification – due, for example, to overriding identifications with ancestral nations, religious affiliations or other groups – in this case, the sense of belonging by virtue of the location of one’s birth and childhood necessarily assumes the significance of the *location of experience*. To be “raised” in a place is to be brought up *in* that place, to be a person *of* that place and thus to be evidence of the *existence* of that place. Thus, the person and the place, in one sense, are one, an inseparable whole, each explaining and articulating the other. This student’s assertion of South African identity is based on the idea that the nation is evidenced in the individual in a way that is entirely integrated, entirely natural.

Perhaps what makes me South African is the fact that I am proud of being [a] South African, I do not want to move to another country, I do not think the grass is greener on the other side, I do not complain about the problems in the country. Even though I might go abroad, my plan is always to come back to my home country and live here. (ibid)

Again, we engage with the idea that pride in South Africa is itself a characteristic of being South African, and we have here a strong statement of identity described in negative terms: “I do not...” While it is unlikely that the student posits South Africanness in these terms for all South Africans, that his appraisal of South Africa constitutes positive affirmations for the country (despite being described in negative terms) indicates identification with those aspects of South African nationality that seek to uplift rather than to criticise. Further, the sense of belonging is seemingly prioritised over what we might speculate are seen as mundane concerns of daily life: “I do not complain about the problems in the country.” Thus, *that* we are here is more important than *how* we are here. Being South African is an integral and significant part of this student’s life.

It is further revealed that an African identity is also significant: “I [was,] after all[,] born and raised in Africa” (ibid). As in the case of student Q-1 and I-1, this student places great emphasis of the place of birth as a determinant of identity.

The nonsense the Americans started by calling black people ‘African-American’ is truly irritating. If I should marry an American and become a citizen of the United States, I would be African-American, and I am not black. For many people ‘African’ is synonymous with ‘poverty’ or ‘safari.’ I do not identify with any of these stereotypes. I am African because I was born here. ...I am proud to be considered both [South African and African]. (Q-2 2009)

A number of assumptions are exposed at this particular intersection of race and national identity, and what becomes clear is that here the two cannot easily be separated. In denying the validity of the term “African-American” and essentially claiming African-ness as a birthright, the pianist reveals, first, perhaps a more limited understanding of the African-American situation³⁴; second, an assertion of national identity that consciously negates certain perceived stereotypes of the nation; and lastly, an alignment with the concepts of Africanism as described by Mazrui³⁵.

Student Q-3’s brief response to the first question (in this section) calls up the same notions of nationality: place of birth, parental nationalities, and language (Afrikaans as a South African language) (Q-3 2009). She also says that “When I go to European countries I can feel the cultural difference.” (ibid)

Thus South Africa – and South African-ness – is defined in relation to other nations and cultures. That the pianist makes specific mention of European countries, and not others, is almost to be expected: South Africa as it is (or as it has ever truly existed³⁶) is unimaginable without the significant European influence. Furthermore, we may speculate that this student’s cultural heritage (Afrikaans language and culture) inclines her to make a comparison to Europe because of her direct ancestral connections. However, there may be some, limited, scope for arguing that her mention of Europe is significant in that it reveals a societal preoccupation with the occident, as opposed, for example, to a vision of the wider world as precisely that – especially since South African cultural life has strong influences from both sides of the Middle East.

However,

I don’t know if I feel African. South Africa is in my mind quite different than the rest of Africa. I am also not very patriotic – in my mind you aren’t South African

³⁴ It does not require a great stretch of the imagination to understand the difficulty that some Americans of African descent face in assuming purely American identities. As descendants of people who were “bought, sold, stolen/arriving on a nightmare, praying for a dream” (Angelou 1993), and especially given the oppression they have continued to face in their own land, it is entirely logical that some Americans of African descent claim an African identity, othered as many have been in the country of their birth.

³⁵ Mazrui 2003

³⁶ See Lucia (2005, xxiii)

because of a certain trait or characteristic, you are South African if you grew up here. But I feel like I grew up in a more 'international' rather than traditionally African way – my lifestyle is very 'un-African.' (ibid)

Again, the notion of the *location of experience* is assigned utmost importance in national identification. Significantly, however, the student reveals her adoption of certain assumptions about what it means to be "African." We are not given any clues what these assumptions might be, but it may be significant that the student perceives so stark a (cultural) separation between South Africa and the rest of Africa.

Student Q-4 was, again, extremely brief and uncompromising in his response:

Good heavens...and we all know how 'fashionable' it is to be South African these days... CIRCUS... LOL:-D anyways, yes I am [S]outh [A]frican.. being [S]outh [A]frican just means being born at the BOTTOM OF EVERYTHING... LOL:-D really nothing more nothing less... WE ARE ALL HUMAN BEINGS... THATS IT! (Q-4 2010, capitals original)

Apart from displaying what we might call a belief in the unity of humanity or otherwise the trivial nature of national borders in relation to personal identification, this student refers to the important notion of populism: "we all know how 'fashionable' it is to be South African these days."

The national drive towards African independence and the rise of Africanist sentiment on the continent (but particularly in South Africa) since Thabo Mbeki's *I am an African* speech, delivered at the adoption of South Africa's Constitutional Bill in 1996, can be seen as a historical response to centuries of domination at the hands of foreigners, and particularly foreigners with often racist agendas, policies and practises. It complemented the national (that is, political) will to imbue the people with a new, multicultural, multiracial sense of *South Africanism*, which is what student Q-4 refers to here. What is more important, though, his observation reveals a mistrust of and even a disregard for the *fashion* of nationalism: "CIRCUS" (ibid).

Summary (B.1)

Similarly to the Interview candidates, these musicians make strong claims on South African nationality, based primarily on the idea that South Africa represents the *location of experience* for them. Language is also revealed as being significant for some in identification

with the nation. Student Q-4, however, communicates a rejection of nationalism. His words seem to emanate from a worldview that places music and humanity above nationality or race.

B.2 Music (WEAM) as Relating to National Identity

Question:

- How do you view your music performance activities (specifically the genre 'classical' music) in the context of your sense of South African/African identity? Are they integral to it? Are they autonomous from it? What is the nature of the relationship, if there is one? Do you ever have the sense of there being a conflict? Do you ever feel conflicted about what you do or where you live in relation to what you do?

Student Q-1 states very clearly that her sense of the relationship between her nationality and her musicianship is one of interdependence, and that the results of her musical work are as much an expression of this national identity as anything else.

...I believe that my musical personality is very much intertwined with my broader identity. At the same time, my South Africanness also constitutes a major part of me as a person. By implication, my music performance activities are also to a great extent an expression [,] as well as a result [,] of my identity as South African. The experiences I have absorbed in my 24 years of living in a diverse country such as South Africa could never be separated from my musicianship. (Q-1 2009)

The theme of diversity recurs, and the student indicates that this awareness of diversity, both generally and specifically regarding music, heavily informs her view of classical music. (ibid)

For this student, who currently studies in the United States, foreign perceptions of Africa and South Africa tend to cause some frustration:

There are so many silly prejudices (for example, a Russian actually asking me - "What? You play piano in Africa as well?!") which do not upset me, but just make me more determined to prove that I can be South African, as well as a good

classical musician. I think this is [a] unique challenge that we, as South African musicians, should face head-on, rather than shying away from it. (ibid)

The student is apparently assigned the position of “other”, and her reaction is evidence of SIT at work: she becomes determined to take up the challenge posed by the opinions of others and as such defines herself as one tasked with this responsibility. She represents the “out-group”, defined as it is by the “in-group.” (Tarrant, North and Hargreaves 2002, 137)

In contrast to student Q-1, student Q-2 sees his South African identity and his musicianship in the WEAM tradition as two separate expressions of his identity that are not in conflict. While he does not share a love of “local popular music...with other South Africans [who do love this music]”, the student senses the history of WEAM in South Africa as a part of South African history that is significant, “so that I can be part of a legacy that is connected with my country, as well as be part of a music community in South Africa that is unique.” (Q-2 2009)

Student Q-3 admits feeling “left out and insecure about my abilities” (Q-3 2009) due to the geographical isolation of South Africa, relative to Europe and the United States: “I always feel that they must be much better than us because they have such a rich and far-reaching background with Classical Music.” (ibid)

She then goes on to list various other issues relating to the difficulties presented by the pursuit of a career in Classical Music in South Africa. In general, the feeling is that South Africa presents more problems for those who would pursue such a career than it does opportunities.

It is therefore understandable that this pianist should have a sense of isolation with regard to the International world of Classical Music. The insecurities about her ability may be seen as points of identity negotiation: while she has a deep devotion to this type of music and feels a vital connection with this form of expression, the national environment in which she finds herself seems to present certain difficulties for WEAM, and therefore, for who she is.

For student Q-4, national distinctions appear to be entirely superfluous, and as he supports his comment that “[R]ussians can plays [G]erman music and [S]outh [A]fricans can play [A]ustrian music...etc...” (Q-4 2010), he reveals his view that common humanity transcends nationality:

WE ARE ALL HUMAN BEINGS [...] and we are dealing with the "highest of arts" which we dare not hinder...with our HUMAN LIMITATIONS: race, colour, country, continent, family status etc... (Q-4 2010, capitals original)

Summary (B.2)

In stark contrast to almost all other respondents, student Q-1's view is one in which all life experience informs her musicianship, and along with student Q-2, envisions the WEAM-South Africa relationship as one of opportunity and promise, rather than misalignment, as implied by "strange counterpoint." There is clear evidence that it is possible for some South African musicians in the tradition of WEAM to feel that their identities as South Africans and as musicians are entirely integrated.

Chapter Five: Findings and Recommendations

Introduction

A basic premise of this research was the marginality of WEAM in South Africa, and the sense of contradiction that it may inform in the South African practitioner – resulting in the ‘strange counterpoint’ found in the thesis title. Despite the lack of an active search for further evidence of this marginality, it has been revealed in the data – in the perceptions of the pianists; almost all of them expressed sentiments of being “othered” in society, to a greater or lesser extent, as musicians in the WEAM tradition within the general South African context³⁷.

The findings are presented in response to the research questions:

1. What is the function of WEAM in the lives of these pianists?

The data show that music in general and WEAM in particular form a central part of each of these individuals’ lives. Either by their own admission, or otherwise through their words, it appears that their practice of WEAM significantly affects the lives of these pianists in a most general, all-encompassing, way.

First, the drive towards musical activity appears to come from a sense of importance attached to it – an inner sense of obligation that student Q-4 named “a calling.” Almost all the students indicated that their desire to have a musical career began with an intuitive sense that that was what they should have done (I-1, I-2, I-5, Q-1, Q-2, Q-3, Q-4). Second, the pianists have variously indicated that their musical activity affects confidence and self-esteem, a sense of achievement and worth and happiness. Student Q-1 also mentioned these other benefits of having taken music lessons all her life:

Having played piano seriously from an early age has forced me to learn valuable traits such as perseverance, self-discipline, dedication, focus, working towards

³⁷ Chapter Four of this dissertation, Students I-1, I-3, I-4 and I-5 in the section on National Identity (part B.2)

goals, the ability to handle criticism, how to express my feelings and creativity, bouncing back after disappointments, and so many more. (Q-1 2009)

WEAM, then, functions in the lives of these individuals as not only an enjoyable and enriching activity, but also as a means by which confidence, self-esteem, a sense of achievement and happiness may be gained.

2. What is the role of the “other” in the practice of this art form, for these pianists?

In the interviews and questionnaire responses, the pianists revealed two concepts of the “other” that appear to be salient in the formulation of their identifications regarding WEAM practice in South Africa.

The first of these is the concept of the self as an “other.” Student Q-3, for example, notes how, after beginning piano study at an early age, she felt a compulsion towards piano playing that made her feel special in the world.

When I first knew I wanted to learn piano was when I saw my sister play, I was about five....I was greatly disappointed after a few weeks of lessons to find out that I won't be learning how to convert words to music. I thought it would be like some kind of secret code that I would always have for myself. ... I knew after my first lesson that I wanted to be a pianist. [Amongst other things], it was the ... complete embrace of my attention (and therefore a temporary shutting out of the world) that first attracted me to the piano....I only understood the beauty of the music later. At times it was lonely but it did make me feel special and unique, as though I was in possession of a treasure that most could never have. (Q-3 2009)

It would appear that the individual sets herself apart from her society by virtue of an internal sense of difference, or a desire to be different. This sentiment is variously echoed by students I-1, I-2, I-5, Q-1 and Q-4, and while there are significant gaps in the information used here (economic and social standing, for example), this may be understood as an important aspect of what it means to be a practitioner of WEAM in South Africa at this time.

The second concept of the “other”, as revealed in the data, is that of the non-musician and/or non-pianist. As is supported by Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tarrant et al.), the words of the pianists indicate that a sense of self as a WEAM practitioner in South Africa is also significantly informed by a sense of what and who the self is not. Various comments regarding such “others” as flautists, violinists and cellists, for example, set the pianists apart

within the field of WEAM. In this regard, they tend to identify with fellow pianists and with the piano itself as a unique instrument. The same kind of separation is made between those who play music, and those who do not (Q-3), or those who have 'popular' taste (I-4).

The roles of the "others" in the lives and practice of these pianists are therefore significant points at which the individuals concerned define themselves. The concept of the 'other', then, functions as a marker for self-identification as much as for identification of another.

3. How do these pianists "imagine" the South African nation?

A central theme regarding a sense of South African-ness, for these individuals, is that of diversity, and the tolerance of diversity. Ideas about the South African nation tend to revolve around concepts of reconciliation, multiculturalism and the celebration of difference. Student I-3, for example, compares the South African and British cultural landscapes, leaning favourably towards what she refers to as a South African "melting pot" (I-3 2009). Second, amongst these pianists there appears to be an acute awareness of South Africa as the result of colonial action and oppression. Concepts of Europe and "the West" were at times discussed in a somewhat negative light in favour of notions that speak of African self-determinism and freedom (I-3, I-4, I-5, Q-1, Q-2, Q-3).

What this points to is a macro version of SIT: the communal identity of nations negotiated between concepts of the home nation (the self) and concepts of foreign nations (the others). South Africa is imagined by these pianists as a place of unique diversity and acceptance that has emerged from a colonised and oppressed past.

4. How do they relate their sense of South African-ness to what they do as practitioners of WEAM?

This question yielded a range of contrasting findings amongst the data, which is perhaps a tacit acknowledgement of the currency of the issue. Each pianist revealed a unique understanding of and approach to the question that asks: where is the point at which South Africa and WEAM meet? While student Q-1, for example, maintains that the sum of her life experience is vital to her general musical sensibilities, and is therefore reflected in her performances (Q-1 2009), student I-1 has a complete sense of detachment between the concept of WEAM and that of South Africa and South African national identity (I-1, Author's

Interview Part 1 2009). Others wrestled with the ideas in an attempt to come to some sort of resolution on the matter (I-2, I-4), and others still seemed to disengage somewhat from the issue, according it no great significance (I-5, Q-2, Q-4).

It is perhaps impossible to reach a firm conclusion on this matter, given the “negotiated” character of identity. In terms of answering such broad questions as “What is the place of WEAM in South Africa?”, the only concrete response may be that WEAM does not occupy one place here, it occupies numerous places for many different people and by extension for groups, societies and cultures.

The pianists in this study, while not constituting a “representative sample” as such a sample is generally thought of, *can* be seen as representatives of WEAM in South Africa because the community of WEAM practitioners in this country is made up of individuals like them. Further, as individuals who each have connections in various social groups, we may assume that others in their groups are similar in important ways. Their activity within the field of WEAM occurs within the borders and boundaries, physical or social, of South Africa, and as such, the “meeting places”, as I termed them, between the nation and the musical practice are numerous and diverse. That is to say that people in South Africa relate to WEAM in a variety of ways: some embrace the emotive aspects of it; some see it as a completely separate field of activity that has no bearing on the nation; and still some accord it vital importance, far greater than any ‘normal’ national considerations.

Recommendations for further research

The first recommendation to be made is for further study in the area of classical music performance in South Africa in general. There is a real dearth of scholarly material that documents the lives of these types of musicians in South Africa.

Second, the sheer volume of the data collected during the study calls for further exploration. In my opinion, the interviews are a treasure, for they contain evidence of the value systems of these individuals in a specific time and place, never to be repeated and which may be analysed further for the purposes of charting a way forward in music education and training, as well as for understanding the actions and decisions of such

individuals. The opinions, perceptions and beliefs of young musicians may provide valuable insights that would be of use in educational policy improvement, at the governmental and institutional levels.

Finally, as we move further into the twenty-first century, from the turmoil of centuries past, the utilisation of scholarly knowledge about the workings of individuals within broader social groups and areas of activity becomes ever more important in maintaining the integrity of South Africa's young democracy. As Breytenbach writes, "South Africa is a construct...because it needs to keep moving as congelation can induce a fatal polarization and confrontation."³⁸ I suggest that it is possible to make this research and whatever else might come of the data more applicable to real-life situations, and especially regarding educational policy – not only in music and the arts, but more generally also³⁹. Apparently WEAM has been and continues to be an extremely positive influence in the lives of the pianists concerned – an activity that occupies a central place in the negotiation of their identities and therefore, one that provides the practitioners with increased confidence and self-worth. In the context of present day South Africa, where numerous social challenges such as violence, crime, poverty and extreme inequality hinder society's progress and threaten its survival, it is possible to understand how the promotion of activities that bring meaning to people's lives may be a step in the right direction.

³⁸ This is from Stephanus Muller's translation of an extract of Breyten Breytenbach's "Vuur in die vingers: 'n Voorwoord" in Frederik van Zyl Slabbert's *Afrikaner Afrikaan: Anekdoties en Analise* (Cape Town: 1999), which appears in Muller's *Sounding Margins* (2000b: 19)

³⁹ When speaking about creative practices and their benefits to general human development, for example.

Conclusion

I believe that this study has confirmed the value, to those who practice it, of WEAM in South Africa. This value is, however, not solely applicable to the individuals in question. Such positive attributes, I believe, should be seen as potential problem-solving tools for others, as suggested in the recommendations section above.

At the end of the dissertation, it is a happy realisation that the “counterpoint” of which I spoke in the introductory chapter no longer appears as strange. Rather, in employing an approach that sees individuals as whole and indivisible, and whose lives are informed by a multitude of contrasting elements, I am able to better understand how seemingly contrasting identifications may actually be working in harmony.

The nine interview and questionnaire respondents in this study are all extremely driven, hardworking and contributing members of the South African community of WEAM practitioners, and their testimonies as to the profoundly positive effects of WEAM in their lives serve as indicators of the value of this activity. While WEAM may not appeal to all people, involvement in the practice certainly appears to have positive effects on people’s lives, which effects bear little, if any, relation to matters of class or social standing. Through a very real sense of connection to the music they perform (and in many cases the instrument that they play) and an image of the South African nation as one of diversity and the tolerance of diversity, the multiplicity and fluidity of identity is confirmed: at the keyboard, on stage and in the practice room, these musicians and South Africans are formed and re-formed in ways that give meaning to their lives.

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Appendix A

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

Note: The interview transcription reflects the best attempt at representing the subjects' expression and manner of expression as accurately as possible. Thus, where ellipses appear in the transcriptions, they are to indicate a pause in speech and not an omission. Further, grammatically incorrect phrases and fragments have been left unedited, except where such an error may have caused ambiguity or incomprehension.

Interview Subject No. 1, Part 1

14 October 2009

10h54

Music Library Annex

Department of Music and Musicology

Rhodes University

Grahamstown

Code I-1-1

Interviewer: [Introduction]

Please tell me, what is your earliest musical memory? Or your earliest memory of music?

I-1: Um...probably, listening to my grandmother play *[she laughs as she says this]* – she was a music teacher – and also...um... *[laughs slightly]* listening to the radio on Sunday evenings *[again, laughing]* in the sitting room. There was an opera program that we always listened to. *[more excited laughter as she says this]*

Int: Let's just go back to your grandmother – did she play the piano...or...?

I-1: Yes, she was a pianist.

Int: OK, so...and do you think that was something that influenced your choice of instrument?...or not really?

I-1: Um...ya, I don't know. We all started out on piano, all...um...well, we're three children, and the three of us started with piano...I think it...well...also in a small town that was pretty much the only...instrument that you could do apart from the recorder and the guitar.

Int: Right, right. Um...you say “we all started out”, so was this a...a decision that your parents toOK – to take you all for music lessons? or...at least in your case, was it a case of you asking to be...to have music lessons?

I-1 No...um..the...the..the little music school in our town was running out of students, so the piano teacher *[laughs again]* asked my mom if I couldn’t take piano lessons, so my mom said “OK” *[so my mom said OK]*

Int: OK...so it wasn’t a case of having lot of um...choices of instrument and...

I-1: No *[laughing]*

Int: OK, um...all right...I want to talk about you now, as a person...what do you think *defines* you as a person? When you think about yourself...if you had to write a story, what would be the most defining characteristics?

I-1: Selfishness...and...um...um...literature...and...the piano.

Int: Selfishness, literature, and the piano

I-1: And twentieth-century music. *[almost declamatory]*

Int: OK.

I-1: Um...yes, and some more selfishness...

Int: *[laughs]*...can you elaborate on any of those? I mean...I’m particularly interested in the literature one...

I-1: Yes...how do you mean ‘elaborate’?

Int: If I said to you, ‘True or false: literature is something that defines you as a person – you’d say true...?’

I-1: Yes...

Int: In what way?...

I-1: Just um...

Int: and is it a specific type of literature?

I-1: Well...I just...love literature...and well, specifically poetry...and also specifically Afrikaans literature and Dutch literature [*laughs as she says this*] and French and Russian – those are my favourites...Um... But I just think that uh...that's also something that I study and that I enjoy studying. And Um...something that I see as... well almost...probably as important as music to me, and also, um...I'd love to be a writer, uh... maybe even more than to be a pianist [*laughing*]...that's...ya that...that...I think that's a dream that everyone who's read a good book has. Um...and also, like...I just like to think about myself in terms of stories...

Int: OK...[*surprised*] What type of stories do you....

I-1: Just like...no, I dunno...just, like everything...like a day – I wouldn't think about a day as just what happened in the day but rather as a narrative [*laughing self-consciously*]...like "she woke up in the morning..." and then refer to myself in the third person [*laughter*]...

Int: OK...

I-1: I dunno...that kind of...like, you know...turn everything into a story...or see yourself as a character in the story...

Int: Right. All right, that's great...

I-1: Sorry, I'm just laughing because I'm nervous...

Int: OK...

I-1: OK...

Int: The piano...let's talk about that...as a defining characteristic of who you are.

I-1: Well, I do spend most of my life in front of it, so um...you know...and, it's kind of...I can't...you know...that's kind of the only thing that I can talk about, and the only thing that you know...like...it's just the one thing that absolutely consumes my time, it consumes my um...thoughts, and my plans and my dreams. So, without it there would be...you know, there wouldn't be much left, would there?

Int: Well there'd be lots of literature...

I-1: [*laughs*] apart from the literature!

Int: OK...it consumes your thoughts, plans, your time and your dreams...the dreams part...well actually the first thing that caught me was “your time”, um...this is obviously a...I mean, OK you are studying [music], but this is a voluntary thing...

I-1: ...Yes...

Int: I mean...whether you were studying music or not, you would be...would this be the case?

I-1: Yes, it is...if I weren't studying music, I wouldn't be practicing as much, because there would be other things...um...of...greater academic importance. But that is why I'm studying music – it's because I want to dedicate my time to piano and not to other things of greater academic importance...um and studying music is absolutely a voluntary thing...um...practicing is something that I enjoy, but something that, when I don't enjoy it I have to do it anyway, you know, you can't get anywhere without it. So, um...the...the fact that I want to be something or someone or get somewhere turns practicing into something that I want to do,...I do think...

Int: OK...great...alright, and onto that last one that you mentioned, 'twentieth century music'...

I-1: ...yes...

Int: ...talk about that..as a defining characteristic of who you are...

I-1: Um...well I seem to be the only person around who likes it [*laughs generously*]...and...for some reason whenever anyone else refers to my piano playing they only refer to twentieth century, atonal music with elbows...um...but I just think it's a defining characteristic of me because it's kind of [*laughs*] chaos... [*laughs*] and...uh...it's so post-modern, and I think I'm a little bit of a post-modern person [*laughing slightly*]. And um...I just really like it, like if I could *only* play twentieth century music I would.

Int: Chaos...?

I-1: Yes, what about chaos?

Int: If the music...I don't know...I guess you're trying to say the music represents chaos, or it uh...is chaotic...how...how is that similar to you?...In what way are you chaotic?

I-1: No I don't think I am...

Int: ...Just explain that...I'm just asking you to explain the connection...

I-1: Um...the music in itself isn't chaotic, I think it just, it just um...refers to the fact...you know, chaos theory – we live in a chaotic world, and that is absolutely summarised by the music, and there's just something that I um...[inaudible]...you know, the world is not ordered, and...that it's, I dunno, a different feature of the world, you know what I mean? [laughs]

Int: Hmm...all right, great, thanks. All right, now...studying music – what...Why did you...I mean, this is probably a question that you can answer very quickly, but, I want you to try to elaborate for me, why did you decide to pursue music as a career? I mean, you could equally enjoy your performance of music or certainly playing music for your own pleasure, without having studied music, why did you decide to pursue it as a career?

I-1: Um...Because there are some things that you have to do, and I think um...I wouldn't have been *me* if I hadn't pursued it as a career because it's absolutely part of me. But also, um...I, well, I did stop, and then, like it was an inevitable return to it like, you know, it was something that just seemed to happen by itself, and if that happens, then um...it's a kind of indication, isn't it? That, that...maybe that's what you're supposed to do if you can't...[laughing]... if you can't escape it. But also just, you know...I like attention, and I like to be in control, and I like recognition, and this is something that I seem to be good at. So, you know, then it's something that you can get a lot of attention and recognition in, at least here [Rhodes? Grahamstown?]. I don't know...what happens out there in the world is still to be seen, but you know...so then it's a natural choice, you always choose what you're good at, or not always - if you are as much [of] an egomaniac as me then you choose what you're good at, and [laughs] what you can get lots of attention with.

Int: you say you "did stop" ...can you elaborate on that for me? What was that about?

I-1: Uh...[laughs]...I stopped for three years during High school, because I just didn't want to do it anymore...because um...up till then, I had had a pretty, kind of, hectic... career, um... and just didn't push lots and you know, I think it was...

Int: High school career?

I-1: No no, just like, from primary school, from starting...like just, you know...doing lots of performing, doing lots of competitions, and always having to be the best, and then

um...I reached this stage where didn't want people to...when they look at me, that the only thing that they see is music, like you know...the first thing you think of when you think about a person, that thing – I didn't want it to be music for me, because it's so, I don't know, maybe it was just burnout, I just got tired of it, so I stopped...um...and for three years I just did music for, um...as a subject, so I would kind of...pick up a few pieces like a week before the exam and just play them... but um..I didn't practice or go to lessons or anything. And then, when I came...well, a little bit before my matric final exam I had to start lessons again, otherwise I would have failed, and then the teacher told me to carry on with music when I'm *here* [Rhodes University..], and then I kind of thought "Ag, well...I might do that - just an extra subject", and then after I *did* do it as an extra subject music, you know, changed, it changed me, and it changed my degree.

Int: Hmm...and how did it change you? Because you say you didn't...you didn't want it to be something that people would "box" you for, um...is that the same now? Are you still as unhappy to be uh...put in that music 'box', or...

I-1: No! Now it's fine, I've made peace with it, um..and now I like it, you know, it's kind of just rediscovering the love..I think...

Int: Rediscovering?

I-1: the love...

Int: the love...of music?

I-1: mm...hmm [agrees]

Int: OK, great, thank you.

OK,...how much importance do you place on being a musician...I mean, when you graduate, you will also be an Afrikaans major, I understand, um....and... I'd like to know, I mean, this thing we call "being a musician" – what does that mean to you, and how important is that to you in terms \of...your life in general...

I-1: Well, 'being a musician' – that means that you try and 'get by' by doing music...and...always when I think of someone saying "that person is a..." or thinking, think of "being a musician", I think of someone saying to someone else, "That person is a musician...", and then they kind of loOK at them and they think "Oh, wow...", you know, that kind of romanticised image..but at the same time this person [the musician] is kind of walking there and loOKing absolutely poor, and...I don't know, like hungry, and just so...so sad. But ya, being a musician for me, in this kind of, day and age,

would probably be going to the next school, and the next country and staying there for a number of years, playing as many competitions as possible, hoping to get invited for concerts... and then after that, just trying very hard to get a job at a university to um...lecture somewhere...and I don't think that being a musician could, for me, go beyond that – but that's fine, that's great because it means that I engage with music for the rest of my life, which is good, you know, that's what I wanted.

Int: OK, I'm interested now that you've mentioned working at a university to lecture...is teaching something that you, um...I mean is that something that you're passionate about as well, at some level?

I-1: No, it's something that I absolutely hate.

Int: OK...

I-1: Um...that's why I said, "working at a university" - so that I don't have to have beginners [laughing]...and I don't have to have children under the age of 18 years, and um...and that I can pretty much do what I want to [laughing]...and that there's...that the teaching component...um...like [her lecturer's] job I think is very teaching orientated...um...but mostly...well, I don't know, I don't know about other Universities. At a conservatoire, obviously that's what it will be like. But I'd say, at a university maybe there'll be an academic aspect, which I wouldn't mind, I love the academic side...um, like, teaching, lecturing theory or lecturing history would also be fine for me. So, I kind of see a job at a university as something where I would lecture in music, and teach a few, *good*, students, who work, and who have some kind of musical insight on their own as well...

Int: So, so since...sorry, I'm just going back to the question about "is it something that you're passionate about"...um...lecturing – aside from teaching the piano...is *that* something you're passionate about? The...the lecturing side of things, or even piano teaching to advanced students – is that a passion of yours, or are you looKing at this as kind of...um...a contingency plan...?

I-1: Ya, I think it's more of a contingency plan...In an ideal world, I would just perform – that is what I'm the most passionate about. But I'm fine with lecturing and piano teaching.

Int: Alright...great...OK, now...how is it important to you to be a pianist? I mean, you also play other instruments...um...and obviously at this stage the piano is by far the instrument that you're most advanced on, but what does that mean to you? This thing about playing the piano, as a musician...? How does that make you feel, in

relation to other musicians that surround you, and other musicians that maybe, you don't know...in the world of music..?

I-1: The piano...means to me, that I play the piano. Most likely if I'd started earlier on another instrument I would have made that my first instrument. It doesn't have any special, um...importance. I love the fact that the piano has the most repertoire and also the most beautiful repertoire, and I can think of quite a few instruments that I would *not* want to play, you know, like, when I think of a flautist or I think of a recorder player, I do assume that I am more talented than them...but if I had started on the violin, or on the cello first, then um...then that would have been my first instrument. It's not a...I didn't start music because I heard a piano and I was absolutely transformed, I started music because I had to.

Int: OK, all right...so, so...as you said, it's not of special import...?

I-1: [agrees]

Int: All right. Performing – in your world, as a pianist and as a musician, uh...you mentioned earlier that you love attention and recognition, and such things...I take it [that] performing in public is something that's also quite important to you?

I-1: Yes, something that I enjoy.

Int: Would you like to elaborate on that? I mean, is there any...are there specific feelings that it arouses...? I don't know...you know, I mean I'm sure you know people like this as well – people who are musicians and who love music and love playing music, but are not, do not want to perform. How good they are [or not] aside, they simply don't like the stage or don't like the feeling of being the centre of attention...

I-1: Ya, um, that's not me! [laughs]...uh...I like performing because it's a challenge, and um...well, music in all senses, has always been a challenge, and that's how I want it to be. If it stops being a challenge in any way then I change that. And, um...also, I think, for me, performing and having music listened to adds something to it. If you just play it for yourself it's absolutely a selfish act, which is fine, um...I like being selfish; but there's something else like...having other people listen to it adds a public dimension and adds the fact that the music isn't just for you, to it. And apart from that, it's like showing off, you know, showing people what you can do – which is nice, you know, it's very nice to get recognition for all the work that you did [laughing]; and it's nice to have people appreciate that; and it's nice to always have this, have this um... kind of suspense – “what will they do? What will they say?” afterwards. Um...and it's also, it's nice to dress up for a concert, and it's nice to sit

down and play [laughing] and think that you loOK great, and that you're well-prepared. Um...and it's also of course a very good incentive to get things as perfect as possible.

Int: In terms of the...technical aspects of the pieces you're playing...?

I-1: Yes.

Int: OK. Do you...ever feel vulnerable on stage? I mean, emotionally? Or, if not vulnerable, I mean, at least, do you ever get the sense that you are exposing to...what often might be strangers, uh...something... personal?

I-1: Yes, um...absolutely. I think you are at your most honest when you are doing something as personal as music is. Music has to be personal, because if you want it to...at that kind of level, it has to be such a part of you, that it does become personal. But um...apart from that, I think we all wear masks, and it's very easy to put on a mask even when you're playing. And you see it in a lot of people who perform and who, who make certain, kind of, gestures and things – not because...because it's a natural movement, but because it loOKs good or because it's a nice show. Um...so, I guess it's a choice, or maybe for some people it happens naturally, that you either put on a performance mask which is honest in its own way, is honest because that's who you are when you perform; or you sit down and for a moment, you show who you are, and also, like, I often think...the person who walks on stage – for me – the person who walks on stage and who takes the bow afterwards and who walks off again, is not the same person who sits down and plays. Ya.

Int: So, so... in terms of that difference, can you reveal anything about the person you are sitting down...[inaudible]...playing music, I mean, in words? How are you different when you're sitting and immersed in...the task, from when you're standing and bowing?

I-1: Well, when I'm sitting immersed in the task I don't try to loOK friendly! [laughs]...I'm not smiling! And then it's um...it's more of a struggle, I guess. It's much easier to walk on stage than to actually play...and...the playing um...I think reflects very much of the struggle that went beforehand, and the desperation at times, to get [laughing] something down. And um..I think in that sense it's honest, and ...and that makes you vulnerable because it makes you so human – the fact that you have to struggle with something. And um..maybe the person who I am when I play is also, really more serious...um...more violent; less shy; and less girly, and less friendly [laughing a little nervously].

Int: OK...great, thank you very much. Tell me about the music you most enjoy performing....I think we covered that it's the 20th century [music].

I-1: Yes...

Int: um...all right, great thank you that's actually it.

I-1: Really?

Int: ya.

I-1: wow, OK.

Int: Thank you very much [I-1]

I-1: No, you're welcome.

Interview Subject No. 1, Part 2

4 February 2010

11h11

Music Library Annex

Department of Music and Musicology

Rhodes University

Grahamstown

Code I-1-2

Int: [Introduction]

Please tell me how old you are, if you don't mind? But it's OK if you do...

I-1: [laughs]...I'm 21.

Int: OK, thank you.[inaudible]... OK, so, just continuing where we left off from the last time...OK...talking about being, a musician, in uh...in the world, really...Does being a musician, does your musicianship make you feel different from greater society?

I-1: [immediately]... Yes, it makes me feel more intelligent.

Int: OK...can you elaborate on that?

I-1: Uh...No, that was actually a joke...um...

Int: [laughs]...well, I just wanna...in the sense of...ya, does it make you feel different, and how does this – being a musician – and also this sense of difference, if there is one, impact your interaction with other people in society?

I-1: Well, there's certainly another...dimension, because you know...think, that they don't – and it makes me feel more superior...because I know that they've got, really bad taste, and I've got good taste....[laughs]

Int: Really?

I-1: No...that I have a level of culture that they don't, just because...I know something about classical music. And then I...it makes me a snob.

Int: I'm not only speaking of um....people who aren't necessarily...uh...musicians or, you know, doing classical music...I mean...in general...

I-1: Oh, anyone, everyone...Oh. It doesn't make me feel different to other classical musicians...for obvious reasons...um...

Int: [laughs]

I-1: [laughs]...but it does make me feel different to most other people, because also, I don't think they always understand...or actually I think they understand very little of...of...the...world, of a...a classical musician, and performer.

Int: OK....How important is it for you to be a musician? – apart from um...any sort of, you know, soon-to-be occupational and financial considerations...how important...I mean, at the most fundamental level, as a human being, how...how much value do you place on being a musician? And...and, why?

I-1: Well...it is, the life that I chose for myself so, obviously...its life. It's, ya...it is, the most fundamental part of me. But...um....I guess pretty much, if I could have been successful in anything else I would....I...you know, I felt that...I would rather do that then I would've – it's not a...it's [not] an absolute necessity...for me to be a musician. What is an absolute necessity is to be successful. But I enjoy it, and I want... I want it. But it's...it's not, necessarily the only thing...that I could do with my life.

Int: And what uh...what else might you do with your life...or, sorry, might you have done?

I-1: I could have become a stripper.

Int: That's always an option.

I-1: [laughs]...no...like a... a writer, or an academic.

Int: You've mentioned that before...

I-1: Ya...

Int: All right. Do you write a lot? No?

I-1: At times...

Int: OK, within the scope now, of being a musician, um...being a pianist – I mean, we kind of covered this a little in the other question, but it wasn't from the same angle. Um...do you...is there something...special about being a pianist do you think? Or, or...do you think it's just a case of circumstance that you ended up playing the piano? Um...is...is being a pianist extremely important for you, within the scope of...of your musicianship?

I-1: I think it was a matter of circumstance – the fact that I became a pianist – because there was just no other option, apart from the guitar and the recorder. Um...but, now...after having done it for so long, I wouldn't...I wouldn't want to change now...[inaudible]...um...but definitely, it's...playing the piano was definitely not a calling, um...it just happened to be the instrument that I learnt.

Int: And um...and uh, this, now...you say you wouldn't change it now...if you...if you had to or whatever – you wouldn't wanna change it...

I-1: [agrees]

Int: Why? What about being a pianist is so great?

I-1: The fact that I can't play any other instruments as well.

Int: [laughs]...Is that seriously the only reason?

I-1: [nonchalantly] Ya. And also I think pianists are superior because they can read more notes than anyone [else]...

Int: OK....that's the only reason...?

I-1: [laughs generously] Yes, and oh...the piano repertoire is also much nicer than any other instrument. But apart from that, the piano's sound isn't that...great. The cello's sound is much better. But um... Ya..it's, it's a superior instrument, I think...

Int: Superior Instrument?

I-1: The piano...

Int: Ya...

I-1: Yes.

Int: Why? I mean, if the sound isn't that great, what makes it superior?

I-1: The fact that you can play ten notes at a time...and...the fact that you've got a pedal, and...[laughs]...Just in general, it's more complex...its sound is...it's...its sound is more...dense, than other instruments.

Int: hmmm...You could probably do with the same uh...I dunno about the density of the sound, but, the harp...also has a pedal, and has uh...lots of notes...

I-1: Ya...that's true...[resigned, in a way...but also nonchalantly, without care]...ya but the harp sounds like a...a sustaining...um, harpsichord, which is ugly.

Int: OK.

I-1: [laughs]

Int: All right, uh...performing...

I-1: Yes.

Int: ...and specifically performing in public...Um, why...perform in public? Why...not, just, enjoy the music, for yourself, and perform for yourself, or for...just for the pleasure of practicing, and performing in the sense of just playing? Why...what...is there

something specific about performing in public that draws you to it? How important is that to you?

I-1: I like the attention....

Int: [silence]...And that's it? You're full of one-liners today...

I-1: [laughs]...I really do! Um...I think...well, I guess you can say all the clichés: music is there to be enjoyed by everyone, and...[It's something that] has to be shared...but, apart from that, I...I actually don't believe in that because, then...if that's the case then you should always just learn the kind of music that everyone else wants to hear. Um, I think...music is firstly [there to] express...and there's no use just expressing if no-one can hear, no-one is listening, because then, you might just as well talk to yourself. Ya, talk to yourself in...in your mind. And um...secondly, we do like the attention. Hmmm...getting people to [like us?]...

Int: OK...OK...um...

I-1: Does it make sense?

Int: Yes, it makes sense, I'm just uh...tryna get to it...from another side...uh...

I-1: Did I not quite answer it?

Int: No, you did, I want to just flesh it out...

I-1: OK.

Int: The...the case of, of someone who performs...I mean, you said...it's there to express, and why just express for yourself.... Why not? I mean, is there some sort of benefit to the performer derived from expressing in the presence [of], or to others?

I-1: Yes, because then ...then you need to be able to articulate much better. Because you can always understand what you're saying to yourself, but other people might not – which means that things have to be clearer, and they [must be]...bigger...and more dramatic. So, it's not only getting whatever you're trying to say or feel or express across, it's also, refining your own form of expression. It's like writing a diary that no-one else is ever going to read, or writing a novel...that's...won't be published.

Int: ...[inaudible]...All right...All right, a bit of a change of ...direction. I wanna speak now about...South Africa...and on issues of South African-ness...you consider yourself South African?

I-1: Indeed, I do.

Int: OK. And what does that mean to you? I mean, what do you think...uh...defines you as such? And uh...not just you – in general, what makes one South African?

I-1: The fact that you were born here and grew up here...and that you've got citizenship.

Int: OK.

I-1: Ya, I don't think...I don't think there's anything else...that makes you especially South African...um...South Africa, especially, is such a diverse country, there are no unifying personal traits or factors, and...for me, personally, um...I don't find that South Africa, or Africa in general is such a...special place. It's just where I happen to be...

Int: OK...Alright...um...do you consider yourself African?

I-1: Yes. Because I was born here. Um...on the continent.

Int: So...it's got to do with uh...origin...

I-1: Ya...it's not about a sense of belonging, or a sense of...of sharing, it's just...[very factual??...inaudible, really]...

Int: OK. So how would you describe someone, for example, who...uh...whose parents, let's just say, live in...sorry, were from, were born in, Holland...for example...or, actually there were lots of people who were born in Holland...but, let's say, Mongolia...and um, they moved to South Africa, and their...children were born in Mongolia, but grew up in South Africa...how...

I-1: Well, they'd obviously have Mongolian citizenship, so they'd be Mongolian.

Int: But not South African?

I-1: No, if they had South African citizenship...

Int: ...then they're also South African?

I-1: ...then they're also South African. But I think...that, geographical location is absolutely irrelevant...um, in...in the...like, what kind of person you are, on a technical level, the country where...that you belong to, that's what you are. But...um, your upbringing, and your education, actually defines your...your uh...national identity, I think. So...the matter of where you are is, but a technicality.

Int: OK. All right, cool... Um...in terms of South Africa...um...

I-1: Yes...

Int: Classical music, or western art music, um...I suppose we could call it, uh...a marginalised, area of activity...

I-1: Definitely.

Int: How...how do you view your music performance activities in the context of...of South Africa? Do you perceive any sort of...conflict? Is the one integral to the other, in some way...is...I mean, what sort of relationship exists there, I mean, for you?

I-1: No relationship...um, I don't think South Africa is a particularly good place to try and pursue a classical performing career, and um...therefore, I think that if you want that kind of career, you should move, to another country. Um...I don't think that classical music is integral to South African society, because people aren't interested – it's not going to effect any changes in...society...and um...South Africa, can't be that important to a classical career, because South Africa as a country doesn't really offer, much, to a classical performer.

Int: There are three professional symphony orch...or, philharmonic orchestras in uh...South Africa. Full time, philharmonic orchestras.

I-1: Not enough money....

Int: Well, for example, the JPO's just got a huge grant uh...this year...

I-1: Yip...R24 million...

Int: 36...

I-1: 36?! Oh, for three years...R12 million a year. A million Rand per concert...

Int: Does that not uh...fly in the face of what you just, a little bit?

I-1: No.

Int: You don't think so...

I-1: No. A million Rand per concert is still not enough to pay a whole orchestra, to pay for the venue, to pay for everything. You still, you still end up with...very little money. Considering...considering the amount of work, the amount of practice, the amount of study, the amount of specialisation that goes into the career of a classical musician – compare that to an economist, or an actuarial scientist, they get paid 14 or 15 times more for something that requires less, or at most, the same amount of work. It's not fair.

Int: OK...[laughs]...

I-1: [laughs]...

Int: And, um...do you, do you see any...room for changing that? For, possibility rather...in...

I-1: A lot of...a lot of things will have to change before that can change. Um...there needs to be...value, or, ya...people need to value the...what, what classical musicians do – which means that a new appreciation for western culture has to develop. And, particularly in a country where the African Renaissance is still really big, I don't see that happening, um...here, things happen in a different way, and...what is, western...is often seen as...bad, or not bad, as...the enemy. So um...a whole public perception will have to change before we can even start thinking of [inaudible]...

Int: OK...and do you see that as something...possible?

I-1: Not particularly.

Int: All right, thanks... Last question...

I-1: Last question...

Int: Can you...just tell me about...uh, what kind of music do you listen to? All sorts of music, not just uh...in western art music...

I-1: In general?

Int: Ya...What sort of, uh...what draws you to these types of music and uh...ya, and why?

I-1: I don't listen much...at all. Because, I listen when I'm practicing. [laughs]...So, quiet is good for the rest of the time. But...I guess, I don't like 'popular' popular music, because it's so...commodified. Um...maybe, something with a little bit of World Music flavour, just because it sounds unusual. Things that sound unusual are cool. And um...I like opera...[laughs]...and, um...choral music. And I like, uh...people like, Tori Amos. I don't know whether that's...pop music...[inaudible]...not main stream pop. Um...so a little bit of everything, really.

Int: What do you...when you said "'Popular' popular music is too commodified', what do you mean by that?

I-1: Um...

Int: 'Cause one could argue that uh...classical music is commodified as well...

I-1: Ya I don't listen to the commodified classical music. Um...commodified, just in the sense that, it's exactly what people *want* to hear. It doesn't tune into um...a form of musical expression, but rather, expressing...expectations, or [is?] expectation. And, um...and global trends...So...it's...it's too predictable, and that makes it cheap. I think.

Int: OK

I-1: Ya, I think that's what I meant...

Int: Good, that's it.

I-1: Really?

Int: Thank you very much, ya.

I-1: Cool.

Interview Subject No. 2

16 October 2009

09h10

Music Library Annex

Department of Music and Musicology

Rhodes University

Grahamstown

Code I-2

Interviewer: [Introduction]

Hey [I-2], please tell me how old you are...?

I-2: I am 21 (twenty-one) years old.

Int: All right. [I-2] please describe for me your earliest musical memory...or your earliest memory of music in your life...

I-2: Playing on my organ at home...and...my mom was playing the organ, and I remember going to her with a piece of paper and asking her...uh...what was it...um...like, you know, how do you read the stuff on the page? Then she says, "No, each note is a note on the organ." So then I wrote notes out on a page, and she played the notes, and then it just struck me from there on. I couldn't believe that you could write something and get a sound out of the note you wrote.

Int: OK, and how old were you at that stage?

I-2: Four...? Five...?

Int: Wow.

I-2: I was really small, I mean, I could hardly write. I could hardly hold the pencil.

Int: And um...this fascination with...with uh...I guess it's the manifestation of something you've done, in sound. Um...I mean, can you elaborate on that – is there anything special, any particular sound that appealed to you...?

I-2: No, I just guess it was...I mean, not to sound stupid, but I just think it was something that I could do that my mom could play, and it was like, almost like a relationship thing between myself and her. I could write something and she could play it. And it

also was kind of a...a...this respect for her because I couldn't do it, and that's what made it exciting – that she could...you know, I saw her as this god because she could do this. And I think that's what made me want to do it – so then she sent me to lessons. I also just thought it's almost like you're writing in a book, and then you can read it – and this is just another way of writing, and then, the same thing, it's a way of expressing yourself. I don't think I realised that at that time, but, I think subconsciously, a click comes after a while – [that you] can actually express yourself like this.

Int: OK. And did you...you say she sent you for lessons – was that at the same time, or was it around that age?

I-2: No, it was a little bit later...

Int: How old were you when you started to have [lessons]...

I-2: I think...seven, if I'm correct...I was in Grade one. I started with this really manky⁴⁰ woman. She was like a granny. And her grandchildren ran around all the time! [laughing] We'd be playing at the piano and her grandchildren would be running past us!

Int: Um...and were these *piano* lessons that you had?

I-2: Ya.

Int: OK.

I-2: Well, piano slash theory slash whatever...

Int: Right I mean, just, as opposed to organ...

I-2: Ya. Well, I mean, the organ is what I practiced on.

Int: Right.

I-2: It was one of those really huge organs, hey! [laughing]

Int: Great, great. Um...alright, moving on a little bit. What do you think defines you...as a person? I mean, if you had to overhear someone ask someone else, "Who is [I-2]?",

⁴⁰ Slang word generally taken to mean "unhygienic", "unclean" or the like.

and they were to answer truthfully, what would they say? What are the traits, the characteristics that make you who you are?

I-2: Well, if it was someone else talking about me, then I'd say either...

Int: ...but they were being honest...as if it was from you...

I-2: Yes, exactly...

Int: ...but you were overhearing it...

I-2: Well I have different views to what other people might describe me as...

Int: OK well then...let's hear your views...

I-2: Ya and...well, someone else might des..., unfortunately...uh...I would want someone to describe as a musician...um... but I think sexuality has so much to that as well; they'd describe me as gay, so...

Int: and that's it?

I-2: Well...I have like, personality attributes which I would expect people to think of or like...

Int: OK...? Can you elaborate?

I-2: Um...well...uh...

Int: OK, well let's move away from these 'other people' now. You – tell me, who do you say you are? I mean, there's no single-line answer, so...

I-2: Well, basically I would call myself a musician – that's what my whole life is, it revolves completely around that. And then...I mean, I see that as the most important thing. But, other than that...I guess there are other...you know, like...how do I see myself? I see myself as honest, uh...hard working...or at least I try to. Goal-orientated...um...and...ya, I'm not sure...besides those...those are the most important, really.

Int: OK.

I-2: And a people's person. I enjoy people – so I think that's also important, especially in the business I'm in.

Int: Right. And, what business is that?

I-2: The music world. The music business...coz I mean, music is not a solo, solo thing, you're always involved with other people, regardless, even if you're a solo pianist. You've still got to interact with other people, whether it be in a crowd or the crowds that watch you, or people who come and listen to you, or play with you, or...conduct you, or whatever it is. You need to be able to you know...uh... [converse] with them.

Int: OK. Cool...and you're good at that?

I-2: Yes, no, very!

Int: Cool.

I-2: And I also think I'm blunt, and I like to be blunt because I want people to know where they stand, and what I think...and that's also a good uh...I think...characteristic of [for] getting what you want, and...like, achieving your goals because you need to...you can't beat around the bush...

Int: Right.

I-2: you know, you've got to get what you want...

[pause]

Int: Why did you decide to pursue music as a career? I mean, apart from the things you've already mentioned. You did say [that] your whole life revolves around this, but that's now...as you are studying music, but what precipitated your pursuit of music as a career?

I-2: Well, I think the fact that I wanted more of it. What I had at school, before, was OK, but the thing was, when you hear that there's something more to it, then not just playing a Grade 8 exam...or...there's concertos, chamber music...uh...and this idea that you can actually perform and get money for it, and perform, like, great music. So I think that was the start, I mean, obviously besides loving playing, and practicing...but I think it becomes an addiction after a while, where you actually just want more and more, and you want more of this pressure – more of the pressure, more of the work, more...whatever. Uh...you see I think it was just the whole idea of

increasing my musical knowledge, really. Because I knew, that's what I wanted to do. By the time I was in Grade 9 or Grade 10 already, I already knew I wanted to do that. So, I was like "OK cool...I'll study music...", because I knew obviously it would get harder, so....

Int: ...and, and...you mentioned very briefly there your love of it. Let's just elaborate on that. You know, different people enjoy different aspects of, of, the same thing. We might be talking about golf, and I might enjoy the walk, whereas you enjoy the challenge of hitting the ball. To me, hitting the ball might be completely superfluous. So, let's just talk about what you call the 'love of it' – let's talk about...what is it about music that you love? Does it, does it do something to you...? does it...let's just expand on that if you can...

I-2: Hmm...I think working on something extremely hard, and finally reaching a point where, even though it may not be completely finished, you still reach a...like a plateau where you finally worked your butt off on something, and you can finally perform it. And then, on top of that, the other part of the love, I think, is being able to share the music with other people. And that's what I think is important. You can play it in a practice room all your want, but it's actually sitting on the stage and playing it [that's important]. And I just think, that it's such a huge topic...or, genre within the world. There's just so much to it, and that's why I think...I just love it because there's, there's just unlimited knowledge when it comes to it, and there's something about unlimited knowledge that makes you thirsty for more. So, you just keep going, keep going, keep going. But essentially, it's the...I think it's just the playing part, I mean, that's practical part, which for me is the most important. And just that whole idea of really pushing hard, and getting something...you know, like uh...what is it, you something yourself...?

Int: reward?

I-2: Yes, reward...um, but...yes, you reward yourself, sure, but you must also challenge yourself, and that's what's nice. Uh...it also is like a good metaphor for other parts of life as well.

Int: OK...and uh...2 questions stemming from that: about the chal...well, this isn't really a question, I just want to confirm that I understand you correctly – so it's not just something that you *merely* enjoy, the way you enjoy um...taking a shower, or watching a movie...

I-2: No ways.

Int: ...there's a challenge in it, which is, which is enjoyable as well, is that correct?

I-2: Yes, very much so.

Int: OK. Um...and what's that about...is it a question about yourself? Do you...see it as a...is the challenge, "Let me see if I can do this..."? Or, "Let me do it because I know I'll enjoy it..."? I mean, the practicing part of...being a pianist and a musician...how do you feel about that – what is your relation to, specifically the practicing, the hard graft that goes into working on a piece?

I-2: Well I find it fulfilling to practice, because you know that at the end of the road there's some kind of goal that you will attain somehow, through the practicing. But, what's the first part of your question...?

Int: [It was about the challenge]

I-2: Oh yes, no, exactly...the challenge to me is almost like, the basis of how I view myself...is, completely...um...uh...placed on what I can play, and what I can't play. If I can play "Rach three", my self-esteem will shoot up regardless of anything else in my life. And obviously, the thing is, regardless if someone knows music or not, I still know what's important *in* music...and, for me that would be important. And I'm not just saying the notes now, I'm just saying, because of the...[searching for the word]...stature...the piece has...

Int: Prestige?

I-2: The prestige, yes...that the piece has. So I think...the challenge...because it's the most important thing in my life, of course it's going to make more of an impact on me if I improve, improve, improve, and do the best I can. And of course it also comes from the love of doing it, but on the other hand it's also this like, kind of competition between yourself and someone else, because at the end of the day you have to be the best you can, and if you not the best, you can't really...or, let me rephrase...you have to be the best you can, but if you don't work, you're not gonna get anywhere...

Int: OK, all right, thank you. OK, um...a lot of these questions seem to be asking the exact same thing, but I'm just coming at it from as many angles as possible, because we're trying to unpack this thing we call 'identity', which is, extremely varied and difficult to...quite impossible, really, to grasp. So...just bear with me...and give me what you can even though this question might seem to be asking the same thing...

I-2: Oh, I don't mind.

Int: How important is it for you, to be a musician? Aside from the occupational, and coming financial considerations...So, never mind that you're studying it now – as a human being, how important is it for you, to *be* a musician? As opposed to someone who merely loves music, has another job which they might enjoy or not enjoy...maybe still passionate about music, um...but not, a professional. How important is it for you to *be* a musician, in terms of your profession?

I-2: Extremely important. Like, I just...I can't picture myself not doing it. Regardless of the money, regardless of...like, I'm willing to live in a shack, um...like a little tin shack, with a mattress, and...it even rains into the shack. Like, I wouldn't care. Um...but the point is, regardless of the money, I still feel that music has another side to it that is so important for the world, because it's got...it's just such a strong medium of communication between people. And so regardless of the money – I mean money, of course, is one side – but the...um...oh my word, I forget these words super-fast hey...but the...- I'm gonna use a really bad word now – the 'job' of music, the, the...function of music, like I said...the communication of...the communication between people, and you know, not just communicating in the sense of telling something...someone...telling someone something, I mean it's just used all over the place and I just feel *that's* one of the most important things of music. I mean...unfortunately today it's becoming scientific in the sense that, it's who's the best at, at playing the notes the fastest – where, I disagree with that. Um...I just think it's about saying something with music, and uh...I mean, I just heard once that uh...during wars and things like that, they would use music and it would bring morphine rates down. And for me, I think that's more, uh...that's the most positive things about music – more than someone who can play all, however many Chopin etudes. I hope I've answered your question...

Int: OK. Um...definitely. "Saying something"...

I-2: uh-hmm. [agreeing...]

Int: Can you elaborate on that? What do *you* mean?

I-2: Ya, that is a hard thing to...to...

Int: to describe

I-2: to describe, to 'say something'...[pause – thinking]... Well, I guess sometimes it's not words, that you describe. Sometimes it can be a specific kind of emotion which you can portray through a specific piece. Um...

Int: What I mean is, aside from...let's just compare two performances...

I-2: OK.

Int: Equally accomplished technically, equally...uh, equal in everything else, you know...everything else being equal. One of them was 'saying something', one of them was, in your opinion, not. What was different? What was it about that...that one?

I-2: Well I think you'd only be able to answer that if you were actually at the...at the performance. I think it's something spiritual about the performance; I don't think it's an actual, uh...technicality of the person's playing, per se...it could just be on the one night something...there was a spark there while...while they were playing and there was just something about...and...I'm talking here in terms, mainly performance, I'm not talking about like a CD recording, 'cos there you can only, you know, hear the music, and of course that's...you can, hear it there [in live performance] but I'm just saying in terms of, like an actual performance – to watch the performer play, and hear the music that he's producing with his fingers...um...I think that's where you would get this, in inverted commas, 'saying something'. Instead of just having music for the sake of music...

Int: OK. So you don't see it as a, necessarily, specific message, rather, a general sense of... perhaps...*having*, some sort of message? Not that there necessarily is a...one that you can define in words? I mean, would that be an accurate description of what you...

I-2: I think so...I do think so.

Int: OK.

I-2: But...but, but sometimes like I said, it may not be a specific message, it may just be portraying something that you feel...or something that the music feels...or something that the music is trying to portray, because we don't specifically know what the music is trying to say.

Int: Right.

I-2: Because it's just notes...But, when I say just notes...I mean, uh...but...that's essentially what it is. But at the same time, uh...ya, it could actually just be trying to

say something of...just having the *idea* of wanting to say something. Rather than saying something...itself, really.

Int: All right...

I-2: I'm sorry if I sound like I'm getting lost – I'm not, it's just, my wording, sometimes...

Int: Not at all...it's a difficult thing to...to pin down...but that's why we're spending the time now, thrashing it out...

I-2: My brain is exploding.

Int: [laughing] Good. Next question – how important is it to you to be a pianist? You're a musician, you do play other instruments, correct?

I-2: Yes.

Int: You might have played another instrument. But, specifically [you became], a pianist. Is there something special that you feel...um... one experiences by being a pianist...*from* being a pianist?

I-2: Yes, I do. Um... [jokingly] like I don't wanna get [give] a huge list of the instruments I play... 'cos that'll take a while...but um...[laughs generously].

Int: please go through them...answer as broadly as you can.

I-2: no but like...I've played saxophone, and clarinet, flute. And I play drums, bass guitar, and guitar. I mean, I don't play them like, play them, but I mean, I have an understanding of how they work, I can, you know, throw a chord, or, I can play a beat, or whatever. But the point is, the majority of those instruments are used a lot in, you know, ensemble work, and things like that. Um...and, they can *mainly* be used in ensemble work, I'm not saying that they can't be used as solo instruments, but...I don't know...I know we've already covered this question of 'saying something', or being able to...give an individual interpretation of something...but as soon as you put yourself into uh...an environment where you...you're working with other musicians, your own individual, uh...idea of something, may not come across like you want it to, because of course you, have all these other ideas around you as well. And I mean, I don't wanna veer off the topic, but that I think is the idea with playing the piano, is that you have, the...uh...the chance to uh...to play solo *and* do chamber music, or...you know, play within an ensemble. And I just think the fact that you can play completely on its own, completely...um...without any other kind of

accompaniment whatsoever, and I mean, yes you can do this with other instruments as well, but it's not the same - and this is purely my opinion, I'm not saying this is the be-all, end-all truth - um...I just find there's something very orchestral about it, in the sense that...there are just so many notes put together, and you don't find that on other instruments. You have to play them with accompaniments to find that, to find the harmonies coming together and things like that. Uh...so I guess the process of playing something on a piano can start right from the beginning whereas something like...playing a solo instrument, the full, like, idea as to what the music sounds like only comes when you put the solo instrument with the accompaniment, really. And you also find that there's...it's completely completely your own. It...belongs to absolutely no-one else. Um...and, yes you find that on solo instruments as well, but of course I'm just biased towards the piano because I play it. But there's just this, I mean I was thinking about the other day, the fact that when you sit down, what you play completely belongs to you. And the fact that...that you don't have to sit within an ensemble and play that, or have to share that with someone else...like an accompanist almost...uh...I think, it's just one-up, on other instruments. And again, not that other instruments can't do it solo - I know Bach wrote violin stuff and, you can play guitar solo, that's fine. But I mean, I don't think they compare to a piano, I mean, none of them play like ten notes at a time. Ya, that's...if I've answered your question?

Int: Great. Yes...[long pause]. Performing. You mentioned at the very beginning about sharing music, and the love of music being...part of it being this ability to share, or this...perhaps, and I'm taking a liberty here, *responsibility* to share. Tell me about performing in public. Is it very important to you?

I-2: [answers immediately] Yes. And you obviously want me to elaborate...

Int: yes!

I-2: Well, essentially, if we don't perform in public, the whole genre of classical music will fall flat on its face. And like, I don't care what anyone says to me, it will. The idea that we've got all these CD's, you've got to pay your butt off to buy a CD...but the thing is, if you're willing to give concerts and things like that, it's a completely different...uh...the vibe of watching someone else play something is completely different than, listening to it on a CD. I mean, there's no comparison whatsoever. And I also just feel that you know, like, how is someone supposed to...uh...I mean, classical music doesn't exactly have, like, radio-play time, when I say...in the sense that, like, it has one small station somewhere, so the only way these...new works are, are played...or...debuted...or whatever you want to...use the word, is by performing, and that's why I just see...like, performing to me is like, probably the

most important part because, performing is the diff...you can perform for free and get people to come and listen to you, and still share something with them, whereas a CD you have to sell, and I mean, it costs you to make. Yes, it costs time to plan, for a performance...um...but...I think the difference between performa...the reason why performance is so important, is because I think that the idea of sitting in front of an audience, and having an audience listen to it live, right there, is completely different to them...just, someone sitting and listening to a CD. It's not the same; all you have is the music, whereas if you at a performance you have everything – you have the music, you have the people, you have the surroundings, you have everything. And I think that's the important thing, because uh...ya, it's a specific time and a specific place, especially if it's not being recorded – it's a one-time thing. It's not uh...something where, OK wow, I can listen to this over and over again, it's not...Yes, I think that's why it's important, and especially considering that no performance is the same, they're all, you know, completely different. Or, as different as what they can be.

Int: Right. OK, so, so...that was more about performance in general, and the maintenance of what you called the whole genre of classical music, or the classical music 'industry', if we can call it that as well.

I-2: [agrees]...yes...

Int: Let's talk about you. As a performer...well let's take it as a musician. There are musicians that...and I'm sure you know some, who, might be equally as talented as anyone else, who have an equal love for the music, but simply may not want to perform, you know, may do it simply for their own pleasure, in their own time, in their own house. Is it...how important is it for you, for [I-2's name], to perform in public? Outside of these considerations of, you know, the things that you've just mentioned. I mean, would you be OK if suddenly, uh...some legitimate reason came about...and...sorry, was argued, and no-one was allowed to perform in public anymore?

I-2: No, I would fall flat on my face.

Int: So it's not enough for you to perform, to learn music and to play it in your own time, for your own...

I-2: [very quickly] No. I mean, like...with all due respect to people who are willing to do that, you build ships in your spare time, and uh...hobbies are done in your spare time, not piano playing! You can play piano in your spare time if you wanna do it as a hobby, but the idea that I'm gonna learn a piece to play purely in my spare time, and

you know, play it to myself, you know...uh, great. [sarcastically]...I just...I...well, I'll put it to you straight, on a plate. Here's the deal: Um...I can't visualise myself doing anything else. I can't see myself not performing. I can't actually conceptualise not being in that space, in that...and having that kind of ideology that I'm gonna do something now, and I'll end up playing it, in front of an audience. The whole idea of learning something from the beginning is "what can I learn that is gonna work out, and can *add to* a performance?" And I'm not saying that is how it should be, I'm just saying that's how I feel at the moment. And I just, also the whole...um...[pause]...I just don't feel like I've been exposed to anything else that has made me want to do something like just...you know, rather study the works themselves, uh...and not actually play them, whatsoever. I think, the only study of the works is playing them themselves. And of course, I don't wanna veer off-topic or anything, but like...you of course can study works however, but I just feel the..that by performing them, you don't only learn them, you create this entire experience, by performing. Whereas, you know, if you're not performing, there's...or if you're doing it like in a practice room, there's that...I don't know, there's kind of that energy about performing that you don't, that people who don't perform might not understand. People will call it nervousness, and yes, at the end of the day, you do get nervous, but there's also this other energy that comes with it. Like I said earlier, it's almost a spiritual thing that comes with it, being able to walk onto that stage and have this entire audience watching you. And it's also not like uh...it's completely different to watching a band, for instance. Again, I don't wanna veer off the topic, but there's just something else about it, the idea that there's, just so much work has gone into this, this performance. And here everyone waits patiently to hear exactly what's gonna come out of the piano, and I mean, you wait as well...you know, you don't know what's gonna come out. You just, put the pedal down and go...

Int: OK. All right. Tell me about the music you most enjoy performing...or the music you enjoy performing...

I-2: You mean as in *genre*...type?

Int: Yes. Or, however you take that to mean. Genre...

I-2: Well, there're two specific types of music that I like to perform. And I would call the first 'Classical'. When I say 'classical' I mean Western Art Music...let's just get that out the way...

Int: OK...

I-2: Um...but then I also am very interested in the whole uh...I don't wanna say 'pop' industry, but the...specific genres within that...within the...uh...secular industry [in a questioning tone...searching for the right word]...

Int: Popular...ya, the popular industry.

I-2: There specific ones in there that I...specific genres within that industry that I enjoy...playing – when I get the time to, of course. But um...unfortunately I just view classical music as, as...as slightly more superior, so that's why I'm uh...trying to focus on that more. Uummmm...What else can I say about that?

Int: Well, let me just...let's just step back a sec...for a sec...'specific genres within the popular music industry, quote unquote – which genres are those?

I-2: I would say, like alternative – I would say Coldplay-sounding stuff. Uh, or...um...or...rock, not heavy metal, because I just...it gets so...[sighs]...any, any kind of music that seems to...seems to...express something, and when I say 'express something', I mean like...like, affect your emotion in some way. Um...'cos like I said earlier, you can't exactly...if someone's singing, yes there're words there, but if there're no words then your music still has to *do* something. Uh, so...any kind of music that can make someone feel something. And that's the kind of music that I would, essentially, like. And of course, not something that works on two chord progressions, but – granted if it works then it works – but there just obviously specific musics that I don't enjoy. Marilyn Manson for instance, I think is rubbish. That's just my opinion though, it's too heavy. I prefer things, things that are genuinely...put together...by people who love music...and, work has gone into it – it's not just, you know, like a quick afternoon where someone has sat down and thrown a song together, and there you go. It's more also about the idea that I can appreciate hard work, within that industry...I *want* to appreciate hard work as well, because I want to be able to see that people have...put a hell of a lot of work into something. And I think sometimes you can actually see when someone has put hard work in or if someone has not. Um...and I also have respect for the people who go against...um...the modern trend – who try and uh...uh...create new musics, almost. Um...or taking what there is and developing on that, not just people who, you know, are trying to...make music for the sake of staying alive. Even though you have to, I guess, in some sense, but I still respect the people who are willing to take a step forward and...so I like... I respect that music and therefore I'm willing to listen to it, you know, and I'm willing to support it as well.

Int: OK...

I-2: Ya...

Int: Back to Marilyn Manson – you said um...’it’s too heavy’...

I-2: Ya...

Int: Some would call Brahms’ symphonies heavy...

I-2: Well I guess there’s an understanding, really, of...of all music, and maybe I just don’t understand Marilyn Manson. Um...I understand that in...under Brahms... I know Brahms’s life, Brahms’s uh...moves, what, you know, his...the general sound of...his symphonies, and the theory behind them. So I...can appreciate them, regardless if they are heavy or not. I don’t...exactly understand Marilyn Manson, and that’s why I don’t have an appreciation for it. If I did understand it, then I would have an appreciation. But at first hearing, I don’t appreciate it, and I can understand that someone who doesn’t know Brahms, would hear a symphony and go “No, that’s too heavy”, simple as that.

Int: OK. You said, you feel...that classical music is ‘superior’.

I-2: Yes.

Int: Can you elaborate on that? How is it superior?

I-2: hmmm... I must watch what I say!

Int: Not at all, I want you to be honest!

I-2: No, I am. Maybe...uh...or not maybe, I’ll be honest. I think that reason why I think that classical music is superior is because, uh...when I say...hold on, let me just define something – are we talking about the actual performance of it, or are we talking about the actual composition of it, or are we just talking about classical music in general? As a genre...?

Int: Well...loOK, I think...in the context of the discussion we’ve just had, I think we were speaking just, of genres. I mean, I asked you to, to specify which genres within the popular music industry you...enjoy...and you spoke about any kind of music that seems to express something, that affects the emotions. And you said uh...you stated opposition to Marilyn Manson, and then...I think just before that you said, you feel classical music is superior. So, in any way that you feel it’s superior – whether from

the compositional approach, or from the performance approach, um... I just want you to elaborate on that. I mean, if it's all of those ways, or one of those ways...

I-2: Well I think it's superior firstly because I think it's the basis of all music. Um...music today would not have become how like it is, if it wasn't for the changes that occurred in classical music. And I mean, of course, you always have to look back at what did happen and...appreciate that, and...for that purpose I also just feel that, you find classical music...just had...or western art music, I don't wanna refer to a specific period...um...has this, the idea that all...I'm not saying all because many of the pieces were written, like, for the sake of making money, or...or not...but a large amount of the music was written, uh...for the sake of...just expression...or that's all...that they had...completely that they had, and it was such a huge thing at the time. It was, it was...like a form of poetry, almost. You know, it was like one of the biggest arts. And yes, you still find that today in uh...your pop culture, pop industry, I understand that but unfortunately its becoming so industrialised...with...regards to what is allowed to be...recorded...what people are paying uh...uh...to actually have certain, specific people recorded. You have to belong to a specific sound. Whereas I just feel that, classical music entails so many different composers from different countries...um...sounds, styles...it's not just one specific, you know, western...western sound. And I mean, obviously within the western sound of your pop culture you get different sounds, I understand. But the thing is it's just, I just feel classical music is so vast and so uh...so large in its uh....oh my word, my brain is burning so...so much, I'm just trying to think so hard...

Int: You feel there's more variety...?

I-2: Um...well...well, from that you have to ask the question...Variety...I don't know, I think...there's no...

Int: perhaps the wrong word...?

I-2: Well, no I don't think it's the wrong at all. I just feel that in today's music - when I say 'today's music' I mean today's like pop culture - is moving, constantly. There're constantly new things coming out all the time, so there's...you're getting this variety in a sense..of new musics that are coming out, whereas classical music has stopped, in the sense that, there's still people composing, in new styles today, but in terms of having that baroque, classical, romantic style, the pieces are there. I'm not talking about modern, because of course those are, like, listening to the Beatles, Rolling Stones et cetera et cetera, as we go on. But those are finished, those are ended, there's a limited amount of...music that's written there. And for me, that almost becomes sacred, because it's just there, it's...it...it sits. And there's this

knowledge...about all these works and pieces that you can attain through studying them. And um...I guess this all fits in to the pop culture thing as well, in a sense...but...maybe it's just because I...am studying classical music and I...have a bias towards it in the first place.

Int: All right...OK

I-2: Ya. Thank you.

Int: OK. Onto a different uh...tack now. We're almost at the end.

I-2: Oh, I don't mind.

Int: On South Africa. You're South African?

I-2: I hope, yes.

Int: You hope?

I-2: Uh, ya. Ich hope das. Sorry, I'm kidding! [laughs]

Int: What does it mean to you to be South African? I mean...how do you define your South African-ness – what makes you South African?

I-2: Well, firstly I was born here. And I've grown up in South Africa...within the cultures and traditions of South Africa. And I mean of course those – they are extremely varied, I can't say South Africa means it's just Xhosa or just European, or whatever it is. I think South Africa is just one broad term for a whole...a whole, variety of different cultures and ethnicities and things like that. Um...and I was...I feel I was brought up, and am part of one of those. And if I'm part of one of those, I call myself South African. So that's why I wouldn't...someone can be born here but like, literally, move to America, a year later...and they not...they might have been born South African but they aren't South African, because they uh...aren't really *part* of the country, per se. They've grown up with other, uh...cultures...

Int: OK...so, so it's important to you in terms of time spent and...

I-2: Well I'm not sure...I mean, you can adapt to a culture in...in a short...I don't wanna use the word culture...just, uh...lifestyle, almost, maybe I can use that word.

Int: I think culture's fine...

I-2: OK well, culture...but I mean, you can adapt into a culture within one year...or, it can take you twenty years. You know, depending on the person. But I just feel that with the...it's not unlimited...but there are so many different cultures and things like that in South Africa, that to name one of them as being South African et cetera et cetera, would be wrong...and I just think that it's not necessarily time spent – it's...it's more, how much have you adapted into the actual society, per se.

Int: OK...so much have you assumed the um...way of life of the...

I-2: Yes, like, taken the role of being South African, in inverted commas...

Int: OK. Africa, and being African. Do you consider yourself African?

I-2: No. Um...well I think there's a difference between...well, if I say 'African', there are quite a few different...OK, I say I'm African in the sense that I live on the continent, or I can say I'm African in that, I have a black skin. Um...so, I'm African, yes, in the sense that I live on the continent, but I'm not African that I live...I have a black skin. Not that I've got anything against it, I'm just saying, you know, I'm not African if I don't have a black skin, there you go.

Int: Sure...so you..you're cognisant of the different definitions that people might apply to the term.

I-2: Yes. Well, yes, definitely.

Int: Um...If I demanded a yes/no answer of you, and I said, are you African? What would you say?

I-2: No.

Int: OK, so for you – and just...tell me if this is accurate – for you, uh...the main part of being African has got o do with the black skin, race?

I-2: [heavy sigh]...[long pause]...this is hectic..

Int: Be honest, be honest. There's no wrong answer here.

I-2: Um...Well, essentially, if someone had to ask me that, I would ask them what...you know, what is African? What do you...what...describe what you mean by African.

And then from there I would answer. Because I don't...I'm trying very hard not to see race and colour, because everyone should be the same, so...um...

Int: Right. So, if we were to take race out of the equation, and colour out of the equation...what would you describe as African? What would you assign...how would you assign African-ness?

What characteristics or what...origins?...

I-2: I don't think there's just one hey... I think there's like...there's just tons here, because...um... Well firstly...well, we can say this...umm...let's think. I don't wanna say African as in African culture, or something like that. Um, I wanna talk here more in terms of, the idea that the country is developing quite a bit, right? So, you have somewhere like Egypt, for instance, and you have South Africa. So in terms of being African, and I'm being really honest, and please don't judge! But, you have Egypt which is I would say is developed in the sense that they've got, you know, big city, whatever it is, um...and then South Africa, which is also like, very developed. And yes, you've got Zim also, which is quite developed, but now the point is, uh...I think I'm going off the topic, and I'm losing exactly what you wanted. Um...Well I think I would first go and call...Gotta start from the beginning, I think, and say that, to be African has to do with the original African cultures that were...within the African continent, in the first place. Um...today, I think, you could include places like South Africa and Egypt, within that, because they've developed, in Africa. It's a hard question to try and pin down, really. But I think essentially, to be African is...without looking at uh...well if I take the word Africa, right, and I look at Africa today...I would say that to be African is to belong to any one part of Africa. And I think...that...South Africa belongs to Africa, Egypt belongs to Africa, Zim belongs to Africa, everything, everyone in Africa...belongs to Africa, I think, ya.

Int: OK. Um...I'm gonna move back to the South African-ness now, a little bit. But also, just keep in the back of your mind this question of African-ness. How do you view your music performance activities, or your music activities...specifically also with focus on classical/western art music – how do you view these activities in the context of your South African, and also in the context of your African identity? So, let's start with South African – I mean, as a South African, how do you view your music activities in that context? In the context of South Africa?

I-2: OK, but what do you mean, how do I view them?

Int: Are you...are you uh...is it quite central to you? I mean, d

---Tape ended – interview continues on a second tape---

Int: How do you view your musical activities specifically relating to the classical or western art music genre, in the context of your South African identity. How do you connect these two? Um...or is it something that doesn't occur to you..or is it entirely natural to you? What issues come up when you think of these things? Do you perceive a conflict?

I-2: No, I don't perceive a conflict; it's more of an ethical thing I think. In the sense that uh...um... I hope that's the right word... I mean...there's the possibility, really, that I could be furthering African music. I could be taking African music to the rest of the world - instead of bringing European, like, western art music to Africa, and performing that. Whereas I'm not really doing anything to help African music in any way, I'm trying to promote western art music, so for the sake of music within the African culture – Zulu, Xhosa, whatever it is – um... I'm not doing much, and I think that...that, can be problematic, in a sense, because I mean, you're essentially...[pause]...this is also a hard question... Um...uh...you know, I don't know. Well, that's I think the thing...is that, you know like, I also feel that I have this uh...this, this...responsibility - because I would call myself South African, or African, whatever - that I would want to help, or not help but, further, you know, South African, traditional music, or African traditional music. I mean, obviously I can't do...uh...help the whole continent, but I mean, I can within a specific area. And the fact that I'm promoting music that is not from the area or...in any way – I see as somewhat of a problem. But at the same time, like I said earlier when you define somewhere like South Africa, it's not *one* specific, uh...culture, or music type – there're many types of music. And I mean, I wasn't...I didn't bring, the European music to South Africa. I...so essentially, by feeling the responsibility, I also feel that I don't see that I'm doing anything wrong, per se, by performing it. Because, again, just to add, there're many people of, of...and I hate to always refer to specific...uh, Xhosa, Zulu, whatever you are – if you are not specifically European, per se, like...who *do* enjoy classical music. So it's not like, you know, that...the classical music is only a European thing within South Africa.

Int: Yes. OK, um...aside from what you called 'ethical' considerations...or...on a slightly different...tangent, how important is classical music in South Africa? Western Art music...? Do you...I mean, if South Africa suddenly...if classical music suddenly disappeared from South Africa, would things be any different, would it be less...

I-2: No, things wouldn't be different, sorry for answering so fast.

Int: That's fine...um...but not just would things be different, but...how would they be different? Would anyone miss it? Is it import...you know, how important do you think it is *to have* this thing that we do, in this country? Is it contributing to people's lives in an important way?

I-2: Yes, I think it is contributing to people's lives in an important way. Um... I'm just thinking, like, just in terms of schooling, for instance, where kids learn music at school, it's...it's a...my word, this is also hard...uh...it builds self-esteem for kids. That's one of the big factors. And again, like if we're not talking about classical music, or western art music, I mean, you can teach traditional African music at school as well...um...

Int: Let's focus on the classical for now...

I-2: But...yes, that's what I'm saying; I don't want to make as though the one is more superior than the other. I'm talking completely in this context now of...western art music...um...[long pause]...I guess there're people who...who's jobs really completely depend on it, and I think *that* would be important, essentially. Um...and if there was no classical music, what would they possibly be doing? Like, accounting or something like that? So...sjor, this is hectic...umm...well...but I think in general, if the music had to, if they had to take western art music out of south Africa, let's just say...I'm trying to think...majority of the population, obviously not all...don't listen to much classical music, so I think a minority of the population would maybe be...no, well not influenced, but uh...ya, uh...uhh... would be...

Int: influenced is...fine...

I-2: ya, OK...by the idea of having it...taken away. Um...and that's why I don't... I wouldn't see it as like...uh...like a national problem, per se. Maybe more on a personal level, um...uh...in that it's something which...it's a personal life, really. It's not necessarily like a national...uh...ya, it's not like, uh...I don't wanna compare it to anything else but I mean if you just look at rugby, I mean that's a...national thing – it's like...a majority of people watch rugby and are...patriotic about it, whereas classical music, um...I don't know, again, it needs a large...like a large amount of understanding. And I think the understanding and the work that goes into it creates the love, essentially...or, that the love was there already, I don't know...and so that's why it would be a problem on a personal level.

Int: OK. If you were tasked, if you were given the task of arguing to, let's say for example, government, *for* classical music – you had to argue for classical music, you had to explain why it's important...as humans...you had to explain this to anyone, not

necessarily the South African government, but you had to explain to someone why it's important for us to keep doing this...in South Africa – what would you say?

I-2: Oh my word.

Int: Three things. Let's just say three things...

I-2: Three things? I'm trying to think of one! [laughter]... Um...

Int: And you can include your personal...I mean, it has to include your personal feelings about I because...because it's...as you say, it's something that's affected people...personally...

I-2: OK can I say this quickly before I forget? Because it's something I like, and it's something...in this country everyone's free, and they should be able to express themselves and do what they like. That's the first thing – it's something very personal. And if I ever I had to do that, I would still argue that, why is it allowed that someone else can paint...? Um...you know, and...do art at university, or...as a profession? It's something very personal, it's a choice, and in a country like this you have freedom of choice, and that's why I would say, I would argue that there's no...viable...reason to have it taken away in the first place. That's the first thing. Now to find another one! [laughs]

Int: OK. Well, I think there's a couple of things within that, um...and that centres on freedom – freedom of choice, freedom of expression...

I-2: Ya..but I'm just thinking, there other, I mean, 'cos I keep going back to just the...uh...not the feeling, the...um.....the achievement. I mean, it really is just a platform for achievement, and especially for people who, like myself, have like, self-confidence issues. Um...uh...to achieve something within it is...you know, it can really help your self-confidence. And so that's why... I mean, instead of sitting in a room trying to get people to teach you about self-confidence, rather do something practical...and...achieve like that, through hard work. And I mean, it's a metaphor for life, there you go. And...so I just...hard work can get you what you want, and I think that's the important part, of the whole thing. I'm not saying...'cos I don't wanna talk about that specifically, 'cos there're lots of things that you can do that require hard work, and you achieve your goals like that. Um...

Int: That's great. I like...like what you said about it being metaphor for life. So life is...life is bigger than music...?

I-2: Yes, I think so. I think music is just part of...life, I mean, when I go to bed I don't... I'm not practicing! [laughs] or when I shower I'm not practicing...Um...so I guess...I guess it would be, ya.

Int: Great, thanks [I-2]. One more...It's got to do with other types of music you like. I was asking you earlier about...music you enjoy *performing*, specifically. And you said western art music, and you said specific genres within the popular industry...

I-2: Well, I was in a band, that's why...

Int: Yes, yes...so now let's talk about...music that you...listen to.

I-2: OK.

Int: and not necessarily perform...I mean, are those...pretty much in line, do you think? Or are there other types of music that you enjoy, which, you perhaps don't perhaps don't perform?

I-2: Yes. I would say so.

Int: Explain...?

I-2: Uh...well, I mean, I...or maybe it's the opposite way around for me, because I said I don't mind...yes, I'll listen to baroque music, but I'm not a fan of performing it. That's, there's that. Um..but in terms of the type of music that I listen to, let me rather just get that out the way first, because um...one thing at a time. Um...Anything that affects me emotionally, I like to listen to. Anything that...sounds as though it means something to me...and I'm not just talking about words here, I'm also talking about music...any kind of music that uh...like specific harmonies, chord progressions or something like that – something that touches me almost...uh...I like to listen to.

Int: OK, and are there specific genres outside of western art music that...seem to do this? I mean, I know you...it's difficult to generalise about a genre, because even within a genre you might find some music that you like, and some that you don't, but...are you able to do that, to basically generalise about...any specific genre and say, "Most of the time when I listen to music in this genre, it affects me in that way..."?

I-2: I feel you can generalise to an extent. I don't think you can say "OK, this complete...genre..."... I can say bands within this genre...

Int: Sure...sure, but I'm talking about you now – can you name a genre, or more than a genre...

I-2: I would say your...alternative...um...uh...not that I've always understood completely what that means, but it's just, I know that the bands that I listen to often fall into that category...

Int: Alternative rock, would you call it that?

I-2: Well, yes, alternative rock. Indie – if I can use that word. Um...and, obviously the one band that I've listened to flat-out is Coldplay. And they kind of sum up everything...

Int: OK...a British band?

I-2: Ya. Um...they sum up everything that I've really said about, you know, moving forward in music, and, creating music that uh...can, you know, turn your emotions upside down. 'Cos I mean that's kind of...it's almost got this...ballad sound to it. It's more than just...I don't know...it's music to listen to and not necessarily music to use for the sake of dancing, or um...music for the sake of music. Not music for the sake of some other, kind of, motive, really. You know, music to make money, or...music to fit in, or something like that.

Int: Right. Right...So, OK...so I'm gonna...move away from that question and just...pick up on something that you've just said – music for the sake of music. Um...do you...think it's important that music is de-contextualised? ...that it's seen...outside of the rest of the world? Outside of...traffic, AIDS, crime?

I-2: Oh no...[laughs]

Int: Libraries; nightclubs, restaurants...

I-2: No I don't think that it's...should be de-contextualised...'cos I think...

Int: There's no wrong answer...

I-2: No I understand, I'm just thinking...I mean, essentially, what is music? Is music this like...spiritual thing that just sits...and does nothing? Or is it actually a useful tool in...uh...bringing about change, if I can use it that way...? So...I wouldn't say it's a completely different...an entity all on its own...I would say it's completely part of, our lives, I mean...think about traffic – what is the one thing people do during traffic?

They sit and listen to music. Uh...when people are in a library they're sitting with their iPods in. So I think it's all...it's completely part of, um...whether people like it or not, whether you know something about it or not, it's there, it's like oxygen – you may not constantly be hearing music but...it's there. When you want it, I guess.

Int: OK...[pause]...[I-2] thank you very much.

I-2: Is it over?

Int: That's it.

Interview Subject No. 3

16 October 2009

11h05

Music Library Annex

Department of Music and Musicology

Rhodes University

Grahamstown

Code I-3

Interviewer: [Introduction]

Please tell me how old you are...

I-3: I am 19 years old.

Int: Thank you. All right, [I-3]. Just to confirm, for the record: you are pianist...?

I-3: Indeed.

Int: And you are studying...music?

I-3: Majoring in music.

Int: Majoring in music... And you...are looking at uh..performing for a career? As a career?

I-3: Yes.

Int: All right. [I-3] please describe for me your earliest musical memory, or your earliest memory of music...in your life.

I-3: Hmm...[pause]...well, uh...earliest memories really, is...sitting around, sort of, in our lounge listening to Beatles, with my dad. Aside from that, like, actual playing...memories is – my brother was given piano lessons at bout the age of six and of course, being three years younger, I was terribly jealous that I didn't get to do this as well. So uh...my parents got a keyboard just to, you know, get my brother started or whatever, and um...naturally I was allowed to touch the keyboard et cetera so, you know...desperately tried to read music, just playing notes, whatever, you know, just fooling around... I think I was about, five, at the time.

Int: All right. And what uh..how long...how much later did you actually start having lessons?

I-3: Hmm...I was about six-and-a-half, seven – so Grade 2, beginning of Grade 2.

Int: OK, OK. Six-and-a-half/Seven, OK...that's quite young... And has your relationship with music always been...uh...as serious?

I-3: No, definitely not. Um...I'd say only from about Grade 10, so age 16, really, I started really...to take, you know, serious interest in classical music, and, sort of, the performance of it and...ya...music in general; history behind it, artists et cetera. Composers...

Int: OK. So that was a...kind of a development?

I-3: [agrees]...ya

Int: All right, um...OK, moving away from music a little bit, or at least in terms of the focus of the question...I want you to try and tell me, what do you think defines you, as a person? I'm not asking for one thing...Um...as...as broad as you answer might be, what...what makes you who you are?

I-3: I'd say the people around you...

Int: I mean *you* now, hey...

I-3: Ya...No but I think um...generally, being around other people and your experiences in life, shapes you as a person, defines who you are, defines your morals..uh...maybe not to a huge extent your personality, but – that's something quite unique – but I think generally ya, your experiences in life will...shape who you are.

Int: All right...and, personally speaking now, what are...I mean, if you had to, hear...two people speaking about you, and on said to the other, "Tell me who [I-3] is. Tell me what she's like." And the other person described you, uh...and it was entirely accurate – in other words it was exactly what you might say, but without the personal, emotional involvement. What, what would they say? What characteristics, what actions, what interests?

I-3: I'd say witty, blunt, sometimes rude...uh...to the point. Loyal, dedicated...ya.

Int: OK, thanks...I didn't hear 'music' in there...

I-3: No.

- Int: Is music uh...is it not a central...aspect of your life. I mean, I'm not trying to...I don't wanna box it...I guess, what I'm trying to get at is, how important is music to you?
- I-3: No, it's very important, but it's not an integral part of someone's personality. I mean, you can say someone is musical, but you're talking about it in a context in...you know, in relation to um...other people that perform music, play music...but it's not a personality trait. If you ask who someone is, you're not gonna say...if you're talking about their personality or who they are as a person, you don't talk about them as their function, you know, as a lawyer or a musician et cetera.
- Int: Well, I was just asking broadly, I wasn't speaking specifically about personality...I mean, you might love horse-riding...you know...someone...someone else might see you in that light...you might see yourself in that light, you know – "I'm a horse-rider"...
- I-3: Ya...I suppose so. I suppose...ya, I suppose you can define yourself in that way. But then you have to specifically define what it is that characterises whatever you're defining yourself by...you see what I mean?
- Int: All right, yes...I know what you mean. Uh...but I was deliberately wanting to get a...a general...
- I-3: Oh, I see...
- Int: No, that's all right. OK cool...um, why did you decide to pursue music, as a career? Was there a specific thing?
- I-3: I didn't...I didn't actively, initially, I didn't actively decide to...all I knew, on leaving school, was that I wanted to continue playing piano. I felt that, you know, I hadn't reached a point where I could no longer progress any further in terms of technical ability or musical ability, and..it's just something I've always enjoyed and...that's important to me, I think you should as far as possible do what you enjoy, and that's what I'm doing. Hopefully it'll...it'll lead down the performance path, but ...you know...that's what I enjoy, so... I'm simply following it.
- Int: And in terms of that enjoyment, would you compare it to...OK, before I ask this question, I just want to say, I think that's quite a big decision, to say – I mean, not just about music, about anything – to say that this is something I would like to do for the rest of my life, or at least for a significant part of my life, and...so...in thinking

about, the way you enjoy it, is it comparable to the way you enjoy a movie? Is it comparable to the way you enjoy...uh...watching another performance?

I-3: No, I'd say...

Int: Can you elaborate on that enjoyment?

I-3: Ya...I'd say it's deeper-seated than that. Some people get addicted to running or...you know, some form of physical activity and...in some ways it's the same as that – you have a goal, and those goals continually change in terms of, repertoire that you're learning, or...in terms of...maybe other musicians you want to perform with, and it's...it's that kind of focussed, sort of, desire to reach the next, sort of, level in your personal...development. And I think that's...it's intrinsically tied to you as a person, um...ya...

Int: OK. OK...and this focussed desire to reach this next level, um...would you agree that it's...it's...that the challenge is something that's...attractive?

I-3: Ya. No, I'm a...quite a determined person and...so, you know, being able to play, for example, you know, a piece which is regarded as being technically difficult to master, and achieving that goal, it's incredibly satisfactory. Um...I think you find that with...with any sort of um...high-intensity career – that people create that, sort of, satisfaction. Also, on the performance front, you know...if you...if you have a good performance, it's kind of a great adrenalin rush, and that's also quite addictive. I mean, not, sort of, the...exhibitionist side of things, but um...it's very personally satisfying to...to give pleasure to other people. Also, sharing something which you, you're so passionate about, and with people who are hopefully equally passionate about, about what you're...you're doing.

Int: OK, great...So you've mentioned twice now that...it's addictive. Are you addicted?

I-3: Yes and no. I mean, I think any musician will tell you that getting addicted to practicing is...is...can be quite challenging at times...

Int: ...a challenge all on its own...

I-3: Yeah...but it's um...I think it's the...the difficulty...the whole, sort of...I guess in some ways it is a struggle to...to keep going, and keep yourself motivated. But then you know, you may stumble upon a recording of something and, you know, it'll completely inspire you to learn that particular piece or whatever, and...you know, that's addictive, that, that feeling of just utter amazement at something that

um...something that someone else has composed, and your desire to...to be able to play it, and interact with it on a...deeper level than simply listening to it.

Int: All right, all right...Just to focus on what you said about...the struggle. I mean, ya let's just talk about that for a second – the struggle of...of maintaining, I guess motivation...and of maintaining the type of practice and hours that are required to achieve the goals. Is that...I mean, I know we've said that the challenge is part of the attraction, but...OK...we'll come back to this in one of the later questions. Uh...how important is it for you to be a musician? Aside from any occupational goals that you have, aside from the...any...financial considerations, aside from everything else...if money was not an issue in the world and one could spend one's time absolutely as one wished, without concern for anything else, uh...how important is it for you to be a musician?

I-3: Um...I'd say it's kind of tantamount to my *existence*, in some ways, it's...I guess if you get deeply involved in...musical world, it...becomes almost...it really does become a way of life, um...in terms of the way you interact with other people who are equally as passionate about music as you are...it's...you continually grow as a person, I'd say...um...

Int: OK, so it's...integral?

I-3: Ya, no it is...it is integral.

Int: All right...and, within...within that, being a pianist, specifically – how important is that? As opposed to...being a performer of another instrument for example.

I-3: I think everyone has an affinity for a particular instrument, or instruments, and...the piano's just...just always been something that's...that's really struck me as an incredibly versatile and...just beautiful instrument, it's...can play multiple voices, you can...get amazing tone colour out of it, it's...it's something that you, you really kind of, have to connect with and become part of the instrument to, to get the sound out of it that you want, and...I mean, if you think about the piano as an actual object, and it's...it's kind of a strange-looking thing but it's got its own artistic qualities um...I suppose every instrument has its own different personality, and... I suppose that's another challenge of being a pianist is...as you...travel, or...perform in different places, you're obviously gonna encounter new instruments and that's, a new challenge, and...often a new joy to...to play on something different every time.

Int: Would you...consider this versatility and, and the beauty of the instrument, as you said...as contributing to...the sense of, importance, of significance, of absolute um...of music being absolutely integral to your life?

I-3: Of the piano specifically? No...not really, um...

Int: Explain?...and if not...

I-3: I think...you can't, you can't only have a love for, for piano music, for instance. Um...I mean if I couldn't play the piano, I'd find something else because, music is, sort of a...means of communication I guess, expression, that...that I... I find incredibly important and effective. And...I am attracted to the piano and its sound and...the physical demands of it as well, but...as I say, that's, it's not the only thing that is integral to my understanding and appreciation of music...

Int: OK...let's talk about these things that are integral to your understanding and appreciation. What, I mean, if we were to list um...things that, give music this great import in your life, even if you were repeating some of the things you've already said...let's just focus on that for a second. I mean, what s it about music that gives it this great import?

I-3: I suppose one of the aspects is the, interaction with people who are equally as passionate about something, and the creation of...the active creation of a product that...is a work of art, at the end of the day...and the satisfaction that..which that brings. It's a sense of accomplishment that...I suppose is difficult to, to attain in other areas of your life...

Int: OK...[intrigued]...

I-3: Um...It's also, you know, I guess it's, it's equally skill and a talent, and, the fact is – I suppose this is kind of um...very selfish - but it's something which not everyone can do, or can pursue, and so that makes it, quite attractive, um...

Int: OK, so a sense of, of uh...unique purpose...

I-3: Ya.

Int: All right...Performing. How important is it for you to perform in public. Why...if...why not just learn the music and...and perform it for yourself? Enjoy it...? Again, aside from professional considerations...

I-3: I think performance adds an extra element of...I guess...pressure, to the music. And, regardless of, if you're performing for money or not, it's, it's great to share, to share something as beautiful as that with a whole bunch of people. Um...even though it's not entirely selfless, because you yourself are looking for the satisfaction of a...a good performance, or people's praise – at the end of the day it's...it's just fantastic to share something that you're incredibly passionate about, and...and enjoy.

Int: OK. OK...um...this thing about the satisfaction...let me... I'll come back to that again... Let's just...in terms of, of content now – the music that you perform. Do you...have a specific...requirement...of the music that you perform? Are you...the music you enjoy performing – um...if you're able to define it in terms of, style or genre or anything...uh...and, what is it about these types of music that you most enjoy, that makes them thus?

I-3: Anything that strikes me as...as being something which, which I feel I can connect with. Um...is the broadest way of answering that, but more specifically...um, I really enjoy classical...music – not the broad term, but, as in the, the period. I've got particularly...nimble, fingers, I guess, and it's, it just fits really comfortably under my hand and I don't have to...it's not effortless, but I don't have to, contemplate as hard on...on what I'm doing, it's, it's more natural, for me. But um...aside from that, I enjoy pieces that require a lot of emotional involvement. Um...I feel that it's particularly satisfactory to perform...pieces like that in a public situation because...in some ways you do bare a part of your soul to...to the audience, because without it you end up with...really, a *bland...a bland* product, that's just made up of notes rather than...and kind of a dialogue or connection that you're trying to, to make.

Int: Hmm...and in terms of that uh...this emotional involvement with the audience...or, sorry, the emotional involvement that goes on in your performance, and this attempt to, as you say, connect with the audience – uh, do you ever feel vulnerable? I mean, if you just think...if you imagine a situation where you're performing in front complete strangers, every single one, which is not really what we do here, because we know a lot of people in the audience, but...you're performing in front of complete strangers and you are...engaging in this activity where you...'bare your soul', and really, express...um...you wouldn't do that in the street...do you ever have feelings of vulnerability on the stage? What are the nuances of..performing to...firstly, a large group of people, and secondly, a group of people that you're not necessarily close with?

I-3: I think, every performance situation is different. Um...the make-up of audience is...changes...and...it is a frightening thing to really, let yourself go...and engage, on that level, with the music, and, I suppose, in both your actions and, expressions, with

regards to the music, it is...scary because, it is an attempt to, to connect with a very large group of people, and...ya, it's...it's not an easy thing to do.

Int: Can you expand on that 'connection'? What's that like?

I-3: I think initially, obviously, whilst you're playing, it's...you're focussing on what *you're* doing. So...essentially, you are saying something, and the audience's response in terms of, you know, their acknowledgement whether it be clapping, or you know, occasionally whistling, or whatever...it, gives you an indication of their appreciation of what you've, essentially 'said', or communicated to them. And...it's often very easy to tell whether an audience has warmed...to you, or whether, they've not been particularly impressed with the way you've communicated with them.

Int: And...OK...so that uh...connection, you feel is...revealed or not...in terms of their response *between* the pieces?

I-3: Ya...I'd say so.

Int: And, is there ever any other sense of...of, some kind of connection happening? I mean in terms of while you're actually playing...

I-3: I guess the level of background noise that...[laughs]...that goes on whilst you're performing, in terms of people coughing or, you know, moving their feet or...if you have any sense of peripheral vision off the stage, in terms of into the audience, and...in terms of people fidgeting or, looking around...I know that, that if you've truly captured their interest then...it's usually dead-quiet. And that's not only out of you know, respect, for you as a performer, but...simply because, they're so interested that, they're not gonna do anything else...[laughs]...

Int: So there's a...tangible sense of...

I-3: Ya, it's...it's a very tense silence.

Int: Right....and how does that feel while you're sitting there?

I-3: It's kind of scary. Because it's all eyes on you. I mean, it's...it's...the most satisfying point in that silence is when the last note has...just died away, and you're done and then there's that pause, where it's just, finally all sinking in. That's a good silence. It's a very...ya, very comforting silence. Because you know you've done your job.

Int: Ya. All right. On...we're change tack a little bit. On South Africa. You're South African? Do you consider yourself South African?

I-3: In part, yes. My entire family is British, so, I can't claim to, be entirely South African because I've been brought up by British parents, with, um...I suppose, their own, culture – even though they live here. Their own ideology, which isn't entirely South African, obviously.

Int: You say you'd consider yourself South African *in part*...which part? Or, in what way? In what situations, in what...is there a specific time when something's happening that you feel most South African? Could you...elaborate on that?

I-3: I'd say...I'm kind of on the fence post with regards to cultural identity in terms of, uh...either being South African or British, because I can't claim to be fully and completely either. Um...but, I like to...adopt the...I'd say the more positive aspects of both cultures, if that makes sense – the whole, I guess, friendly attitude of South Africans and...this great vibrant culture that...or various cultures that you have here – that kind of cultural acceptance. I mean obviously...this country's got a long way to go in terms of discrimination and...that, but... Ya, I don't know, this country's incredibly vibrant – more so than, I'd say, England. Just the people, they're just more colourful.

Int: Can you elaborate on that? Colourful...?

I-3: Different backgrounds, different ways of looking at things...um...different ways of approaching people. Um...mannerisms as well. It's a very...there's a lot of pride, in this country I think, which is...which is great.

Int: And in terms of...the British now – have you found that their...mannerisms and ways of looking at things are less diverse?

I-3: [quickly] Yes. Definitely, um...you have to remember it's a much smaller country, and even though there are, you know, immigrants into the country – populations of, you know, people who are Muslim, Indians et cetera – it's very much...white, middle class...people that you interact with...who...I guess it's just one big culture, whereas South Africa is one big culture but it's got various little offshoots and branches, depending on, ethnicity and...cultures, language groups, that sort of thing – so it's more of a melting pot.

Int: OK...And so, if I ask this again – in terms of all that you've just described now, what does being South African mean to you? ...is it, directly related to simply...being

here...and a part of all this...cultural conversation, if we can call it that, cultural um...discourse? Or is there something more specific? Has it got to do with having been born here, or not really?

I-3: No, I'd say it... I don't think it's got much to do with, being born here, necessarily. It's more an appreciation or...an acceptance of, a variety of ways of looking at things or doing things, and interacting with people who may not always share your...your viewpoint on an issue which, you know, maybe other cultures think are black-and-white...in terms of, you know...etiquette, or um...just general ideology, I suppose. Way of life... I think you really...your mind is really opened up to...to different, ya just different ways of looking at things, and I think in that sense you become more accepting of...difference, as a whole.

Int: So South Africans you feel are more tolerant of...difference.

I-3: Well that's a huge generalisation, obviously...

Int: Right, but that's what we're doing here anyway...[laughs]

I-3: But...on the whole...we're generalising anyway, so ya...

Int: OK...alright...do you consider yourself African, in any way?

I-3: That word's got quite a few connotations attached to it. [sigh]

Int: Hmm...let's go through them...

I-3: No. No is the...the broad answer...

Int: OK. Why?

I-3: Well, historically, the connotations that are attached to the word mean that you are black, in inverted commas; that you...do not speak English as, a mother tongue; that you belong to a third world, or developing...country, or area; uh...that you may not be as technologically advanced... These days, I suppose the connotations just involve, being a part of...being a person who resides, or has been born and...and raised in...the continent. So in terms of the values and acceptance of...of the way things are done in Africa, then yes, I would say I'm African, because I have an understanding of the issues that, that face this continent. Um...and just the perspectives, in general. I don't have a westerner's...um...I'd say, narrow, perspective, or outside perspective.

Int: OK...and, is this...how does your...do you, um...your South African-ness, and your sense of African-ness, or your sense of not-South African-ness, or not-African-ness, are those one? Or is there a difference?

I-3: Well...that would be like having a split...very split identity, or sense of cultural identity.

Int: Well, what you've just described – you have anyway...I think all of us do...

I-3: Well...I...Ya, I think so, um...

Int: None of us is only one person...

I-3: I'd say...

Int: We're talking specifically about, you and your sense of South African-ness or not-South African-ness, and the same with regard to African-ness...where...

I-3: It's one and the same in many situations, because I don't feel - when I'm here – I don't feel entirely South African, but if I was in England, I wouldn't feel entirely British, either.

Int: Right...And in what way are you caused, in South Africa, to feel not entirely South African?

I-3: I suppose uh...the way, the way in which I know the rest of my family behaves – I'm not talking in terms of discrimination, but I'm talking in terms of, um..traditions, and, accent, I suppose, and...general concerns in life. Um...you know, their surroundings and their lifestyle, it's very different...so...

Int: [different] from?

I-3: well from here, I mean, England is a first-world country and...they don't worry about things like power cuts, or...the water going off, or...the fact that they won't have food on their plate that evening. I mean, not that that's a concern for me, particularly, but, no-one really worries about those sorts of things...or malaria, or AIDS...so much. It's just not a...part of their daily, monthly or yearly concerns. So in that sense, they have a...a different outlook on...I suppose on the way they view other people, as well. I suppose everything is at a different level...poverty is...means something different there, than it does here. So in that way, I think, your perspective

is...or my perspective is, different. Because I'm always comparing the one with the other.

Int: OK...that's interesting – and...the [inaudible] leads...quite well onto my next question, which is...How do you view your musical activity, in the context of South Africa? And with respect to your sense of South African identity – is there a connection? Or, are they entirely foreign? What...

I-3: I'd say there's a...a small connection. The problem is, in South Africa, western art music is...it's still regarded as kind of an elitist...form of music. It's not...widely listened to by the youth of...of all ethnicities, I'd say...it's not the most popular genre. And...the link between South African-ness and, I suppose, performance, is that audiences here are...I'd say more, accepting of...I suppose, ingenuity, in performance. So, I suppose, if you take the typical example – or controversial example – of Bach, how do you perform, Bach? Um...I know that, if you attend a concert overseas, there's definitely the sense of expectation of the performer to conform to...uh...their 'educated', in inverted commas, way of...of viewing Bach – in terms of ornamentation, expression, dynamics, et cetera. Whereas I feel, in this country, I wouldn't say it's due to a lack of education; it's more, a different way of looking at music in terms of, 'if it sounds good, then great'.

Int: So there's a kind of...democracy about it...

I-3: Ya, they're not as worried about...the, historical correctness, of what you're doing. But that, again, is a generalisation.

Int: And...from a personal point of view, where's the connect for you? Is there one?

I-3: Between my South African identity, and music, or?

Int: ya...as someone who is South African, and who performs, predominantly, western art music, do you, are you comfortable? Do you feel at home, in that, here?

I-3: Ya, I do. Um...I kind of enjoy the feeling that, I can, add something, a little bit extra or maybe, personal, to the music that may not be entirely regarded as historically correct, or technically correct. Um...so that sense of individuality, and acceptance of that individual decision, to do something, even though I may not be regarded as an expert in the understanding of, Haydn or...Bach. But, if I think it sounds good and, the audience accepts it, then that's great – there isn't a debate over whether or not it was a good performance because of, that kind of idiosyncrasy that has crept up in the music. And I think that's due, in part, to...a very diverse range of music that you

have access to here. I think enjoyment is, is a huge part of music in this country, especially...you look at choral music – there're hundreds of choirs – and definitely, it's viewed as, people sing not because they have to or because they're...I suppose, for want of a better term, trying to show off, it's...you really get a sense of that they're singing because they want to, and they enjoy it. And it's that attitude which, I feel is...maybe not uniquely South African, but definitely a feature of music performance in this country in general.

Int: OK...Do you ever have the sense of, a conflict...in these two things? The...South African-ness, and the classical music?

I-3: Occasionally, ya. I think as, a classical musician, or especially, sort of, aspiring performers, you're encouraged to adopt the thought pattern 'foreign is better', 'European is better'...and, because it's, I suppose that's where classical music stemmed from, and there's hundreds and hundreds of years of tradition of the practise of that music and...so, in that sense you...you occasionally think on a global scale, 'is what I'm doing acceptable?', and in that sense you, you can question, the identity that you've adopted as a performer, in terms of a South African performer. Um...is it regarded as...inferior to, say, someone who's a German pianist, or... 'cos there're a lot of stereotypes and stereotypical attributes that are given to Asian pianists, or German pianists, or...Italian performers – simply because of the long history of tradition and, in inverted commas, 'excellence', that stemmed from these countries.

Int: OK. Excellence in inverted commas, why in inverted commas? What are you referring to?

I-3: Well if you think about um...well, obviously you've got Russia and the infamous *Russian technique*...and...sort of different schools of thought, in terms of...of how pianists should sound, or...look, and what they should perform and...I suppose, it's often difficult to, to go against the flow.

Tape ended

Continued:

Int: last question. Um...I'd like you just to go through, for me, the types of music, by genre if you will, or however you'd like to categorise them, that you listen to, that you enjoy.

I-3: Obviously, classical music, or western art music as a genre, is a dominating force in my life, both playing and listening. Um...but aside from that, I couldn't live without

trashy pop music, I honestly couldn't. There is nothing better than spending, you know, five hours, or whatever, engaged with this harmonically complex music, which gives you a headache sometimes, and then, you know, listening to something like Britney Spears. You know, it's just music for music's sake – it's just there for pure enjoyment. Um...it's, ya it's kind of a catharsis, I guess...that little, indulgence [indulgence], I guess. But also, aside from that...um...soft rock, indie rock, bands such as Coldplay, or, Kings of Leon...umm...golden oldies from the sixties and seventies – obviously that's, music that my...parents really enjoy, so that's kind of my bread and butter, growing up...[inaudible]...you know, those sorts of bands...aside from that, I've got a...sort of recently developed an interest in Latin Jazz, or Afro-Cuban music, um...just the rhythm...um...really, really excites me...gets the blood pumping. Uh, trying to think, if there's anything...well I suppose, as a musician you're trained to be open to other forms of music, so...I think I listen with a pretty open ear, and uh...try to connect with as many genres as possible.

Int: OK...just back to the...trashy pop music – uh...you spoke of a catharsis, and uh...an indulgence. Can you elaborate on that indulgence? What are you indulging in?

I-3: The simplicity of it, basically...and the commercial aspect of it. I mean, to be honest, the majority of songs that are produced...that make 5fm's Top 40, or whatever it is – they're not gonna last. I mean, let's be honest about it. I mean, a few will become classics, but...it's just something which is easy, I guess, as a generalisation, for the western ear to...just enjoy. It's the beat, it's the lack of really, in-depth lyrics or...you know, it's very commercial and factory-produced, I suppose. And I mean, there's, there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. It um...it serves a purpose. I mean, music's purpose as a whole is, I suppose, A - to provide a...um...a sense of uh...communication that is not conveyed through lang...uh, in terms of language or words, but aside from that, it's always had a niche in providing enjoyment.

Int: OK, great...just one more question, quickly, just picking up on something you said. Um...right, these other forms, that you mentioned, that you enjoy – soft rock, indie rock, the Beatles, Queen, latin jazz, et cetera – do you perceive an influence on your approach, or your understanding, performance or whatever, to the music that you perform? In terms of your, classical, uh...western classical music...from your interest in those other types [of music]?

I-3: Honestly, I can't, I don't notice an influence. Um...in terms of the fundamental, or theoretical make-up of the music, I can't apply Britney Spears to [laughs]...to Bach or...or Beethoven, you know, it's kind of a far, far-reaching connection that you're trying to make. But, I would say that, the pure, unadulterated enjoyment of...a trashy pop song – that same sort of enjoyment has to be applied to your

performance of, a Beethoven sonata, or a Chopin etude. It's gotta be ...you have to believe as whole-heartedly in your performance of that, as...a pop artist believes in their song. You have to be able to bring that enjoyment across, and that, I suppose is the link.

Int: Great. Thank you very much, that's it.

I-3: Cool, OK...

Int: And, one more question: ...how does being a musician impact your interaction with others and with society? Do you feel a great sense of difference, of uniqueness within society, and specifically South African society?

I-3: I'd say yes...um...from the perspective that...as a musician, you belong to, really...I suppose, it doesn't matter whether you're in a University environment, or, a performing environment – you always connect with people who tend to have the same values, or the same interests as you, and...music is such an all-encompassing, sort of, pursuit, that...I suppose you do tend to adopt, maybe mannerisms, or *lingo*, of the musical world, which, you know, I wouldn't say 'common people', but non-musicians, may not understand, and maybe your perception of...of things, are just completely different. I know that um...the life I lead as a student, as a music student, is very different to maybe that of a...a BCom student, in that once they've finished their written assignments, that's it. Whereas, it doesn't matter how much practicing I do, or...how much I engage with different types of music, there is no end to um...end to that sort of um...aspect of the work. You can always...do more practicing. You can always...explore more genres of music to, broaden your horizons or whatever. And, I think it's...it's also an attitude of, determination and, I guess, kind of a...a discipline that you have to adopt, which is...you may not see in other people, which is - I suppose it's a little bit elitist, but it's...it really is a...a difficult career path, and if you're gonna pursue it, it has to be an all-encompassing thing that you are...are devoted to, which may be different to...to the way other people interact, in the world. Maybe their goals, their goals are different...Ya...

Int: And...in terms of your interaction with...people – if you can think of specific um...instances...how have you found that difference? How do others' goals differ? Are they seemingly less, uh..ambitious? More ambitious? How different?

I-3: I'd say in general, it's...it's a very different ambition. It's more a case of, 'I'm here to get a degree. And the degree will entitle me to...search for a job, which will...at the end of that day earn me money, so I can stay alive and sustain myself and...hopefully better my position in society, or be able to buy myself a nice fancy car.' Whereas I

think if you undertake the study of something which is...such a huge part of your life in the first place, whether it be, you know, if you look at other arts subjects, such as drama, or...fine art – it's more of a...a personal enrichment, I'd say. And the outcome is that, you will have a degree and that will make you employable, but, at the end of the day, you are still pursuing...your passion, which is...I think it's very different... Because, OK, maybe you do pursue...monetary wealth, but...it's...I'd say in most instances if you're brave enough to tackle...music as a career, you going for, personal growth, and understanding rather than...simply a job that pays the bills.

Int: Right, right. Great, thanks. Thank you very much.

Interviewee No. 4, Part 1

21 October 2009

09:12 am

Music Library Annex

Department of Music and Musicology

Rhodes University

Grahamstown

Code I-4

Interviewer: [Introduction]
How old are you?

I-4: Twenty.

Int: All right...Um...you're a pianist, correct?

I-4: Yes.

Int: Won't you describe for me your earliest musical memory, or your earliest memory of music?

I-4: Uh...I remember trying to pick out...the end of Beethoven 9, on the piano, and I was maybe like, six or something. That's the earliest I can remember now, but I'm sure...

Int: By that you mean Symphony number 9?

I-4: Ya, sorry...Um...and then I think that's when my parents [sent me] for lessons. Um...

Int: Was there a piano at home?

I-4: Ya, ya...the same one that's there now.

Int: And your parents – do they play the piano?

I-4: Um...well, not [at the time] I started, but my dad kind of, taught himself a little bit now. [Plays] basic tunes and sort himself through a bit of music, but at the time, no. My mom played guitar.

Int: I'm interested – why...was there a piano at the house?

I-4: My dad...had bought it, in Zimbabwe or something....for, I dunno, like twelve dollars at the time, or something [laughs]. And he brought it down with him when he came to South Africa. I dunno, [there are] lots of people who just had pianos in their houses.

Int: All right...on a bit of a different...

I-4: Oh wait, I also remember hearing the Mbira band at Vic' Falls – I'm not sure how old I was then...Marimba band, sorry, not Mbira band, Marimba band. And my dad bought me a..the cassette tape of them playing. I remember that...and...um...[long pause]

Int: OK...just to backtrack a little bit, how old were you at the time of the Beethoven Symphony number 9...exploration...?

I-4: ...probably 6, I dunno? I know I started lessons at 7 so I'm guessing it was around then. I might have been very far off – it might have been "Joy to the World" ...I'm not sure...but I think it was [the Beethoven symphony]...and I don't think I knew it was that, then – I think someone had probably adapted the chorus, or something, I mean it's the...well-known theme, not like the...second violin part or something [laughs]...um...

Int: sure...[pause]...great, thank you. Um...OK, on a bit of a different...track – how do you define yourself as a person. I mean, in the most general sense, but also paying attention to particular...identifications that...you feel are, you know, the most important. So, ya, whatever various traits, characteristics....things that you do...

I-4: I think one thing I'm...try and maintain is that I don't have any, necessarily fixed ideas on any subject. Um...I think that this way you're able to...to be open to new ideas a lot more quickly. I mean, even on like, moral grounds, and stuff, I don't have anything that's, you know, entirely fixed, I'm willing to question...everything. Um...I don't think that there's necessarily a correct answer to anything or...that there's one right way to do things. And I find that in keeping this sort of approach, and just paying attention to everything, and seeing what you can gain from any experience...I mean, I don't like to think that...you know, if you're standing in a line at the bank, I don't want that to be a boring experience that you have to get over. I think it's important to try and...see whatever's happening in your life at a particular time, and then make the most of that situation, or, see what you can get from it – not think 'this is a time that I need to pass so I can get to something more enjoyable'. Um...that's, kind of, what you could call the general idea that I hold. Um...and...you worry a lot less about things this way, I mean, you can't...you can't sit and worry

about your... 'ah, I have an essay for Friday!'... I mean you don't know what you'll be doing by Friday, things could have changed completely for you, and I think that um... by, by living like that you're able to... I dunno, just keep yourself more open to everything, and that... you don't get stuck into a routine, or nothing ever becomes boring. I mean, obviously you kind of step in and out of that because you've been... taught from a young age that certain things have to be... a particular way, but... um... I think the more you try and question everything, the more you can learn... about yourself, and about... I dunno, music as well. You know, I mean, it's important to listen to... everything. One thing that I found interesting recently is stuff about John Cage and how... he wrote that piece called Silence – it was later called 4'33", because that's how long it took the first time it was played - and one thought I had is, you know... but what I thought was interesting, is what happens in the piece, you just sit and listen to everything around you. So I wanted to know, what would it be called if during this time, someone in the audience had a recorder or something and played a piece by another composer, in it, then who gets credit for that? You know, because according to Cage's piece, everything that you can, hear, in the time that this piece is happening, is part of the composition. So then you know, it's kind of... [turns] everything a little upside down. But I think it's also important to accept that, if you're giving a piano performance, or even in your practicing... there's not gonna be complete... conditions that you want, and I think it's important to incorporate everything into your performance. That way when someone starts coughing during your piece, you don't get distracted, it's just part of it, you know, it's not always someone... baby starts crying... [inaudible]... it won't be a problem, it'll just be part of what you're... producing to the audience, because you're never gonna get away from... those kind of situations.

Int: All right...

I-4: Sorry... that's... a little off-track...

Int: No, it's fine... do you... I mean, you veered quite definitively there towards the piano and questions of music...

I-4: Ya...

Int: ...Uh, starting out speaking about what you think defines you... and you gave... I think we can safely call that a philosophical... view.

I-4: Ya, sure – call it what you want to!

Int: But um... so, is music central to... who you think you are?

I-4: I think it's more a...a case of what I've chosen to do. I don't feel that I'm sort of defined by music, or that I'm a 'classical' pianist [quotation marks editor's]...or anything...I don't think any of those terms really hold...much meaning. Um...I don't...ya, it's not...I don't think I'm defined by the music I play, does it really matter if I play anything...? I don't see why I have to play...a particular kind of...genre, you know...I just choose to. And I think part of it is just that that's how I've been brought up – I mean, I do enjoy playing that kind of music, and I enjoy the process of learning it. But that doesn't mean to say that I'm opposed to other kinds of music.

Int: Right. And...so – well, what I'm trying to get at is, you're not...well, I was...you're not – you don't think of yourself, I am a pianist, um...in terms of, who you really are.

I-4: Well I think it can be a useful...definition in explaining what you do with your time....but sometimes, sometimes I'll think like that, it depends how I feel at the time. But I don't...it's not a constant image that I have of myself, I mean...there's a lot more too.

Int: Does your...musicianship ever make you feel different from...greater society? I mean, how does it impact your interaction with others in society? Does it impact...?

I-4: Umm...it depends who I'm interacting with. I mean, with other musicians, then, I guess so...you know, if I'm talking to other pianists, then yes, but if I'm in a supermarket, I'm not gonna tell the people that I've been practicing that day! [laughs]...um...it doesn't matter to them. If it...if it seems relevant then I'll, I'll talk about it, or if...someone wants to know what I do...with my time...I'll talk about it, but I don't think it really changes things...although sometimes when I hear, um...like, loud rap music being played from a car I think "One day I'm gonna get big speakers and play Rachmaninov or something, driving through the supermarket."

Int: OK...but uh...I think I should have probably phrased the question a bit better...Um...Specifically, as a musician – and in this specific genre, of...quote unquote 'classical piano' – do you feel...do you have a sense of difference...of, otherness or...

I-4: I don't think that um...I mean, I feel different to other people but I don't think it's because of playing piano, I think it's just because we're all kind of, different. And um...even I'll be completely different to the next person doing the same thing...as me. I mean, that's only...a small part of what you do. And what's going on, in your mind, as you're playing, is completely different from person to person, you know...I think that's one area where we don't get taught so much – is how your brain should

be functioning when you're playing...or what's an effective way for it to function, I mean obviously you can find a different way to do it, but...I think that um...ya, I don't think it's the piano that makes me different, it's...about different people – one person different from the next person, it's the same...I mean I don't think an engineer considers himself any different – I think it probably...changes how you perceive certain events...around you. I mean, I think someone with a...higher musical understanding will...be more likely to hear anything around them and consider that as...you know, musical...sound. Whereas someone on the street will make the clear distinction between what I play on my...computer, CD player, is music, and everything else is...noise, or something. Although, I mean, some people might have an intuitive understanding of what...of every sound as...something acceptable – I mean, it can't be that some sounds aren't...and some are...So, ya I guess it changes some things...like, I'll get annoyed when people play what we consider to be bad music, in...

Int: hmmm [slight laugh]...[as if in acknowledgement]

I-4: ...in the shops, or...when a CD gets stuck on loop – I think it could be potentially more annoying for someone with some musical training than for someone who doesn't have any...but I don't think it makes me any different, as a person – I don't think the piano makes me different, it's one of just [many things – inaudible]

Int: Sure...I just wanna pick up on something you've just said – “what we consider to be bad music”...? Can you define that in any way?

I-4: Uh...I think it's...a lot of it's a question of complexity. A lot of pop music – someone with a good...aural training, will be able to pick out the chords and get very bored hearing one-four-five, one-four-five [laughs] over and over. I think classical music has a wider scope of...umm...listenability and complexity...Um...But at the same time, I mean, it depends how you're listening to something – you could listen to a pop song and find...something interesting every single time you listen to it, you could find something else. So I don't think...I think it's when you, when you're in your normal state of mind, things just click as being annoying. Um, because you...you've seen a greater (?) development of...sound and how it's organised. Not...not just the same thing that's, pretty much trying to sell, which I think is the reason why, you know, classical music has survived for several hundred years – because there's something universal in it...that, um...whether you understand it or not, isn't important, the point is that it's there, and it's something that a lot of people can have some, identification with. Whereas pop music is designed specifically for [inaudible], and in time to be successful and to sell. It's...designed that way, it's not designed to have a

lasting, a lasting impression. We're not gonna listen to Abba fifty years from now...or maybe that's a bad example, but

Int: [laughs]

I-4: ...but I mean like, Britney Spears...no one listens to the old songs that she wrote, because...I don't think, people, you know, place much value on them. They were just written at a particular time, to...even just to get a reaction or something so that would sell, a lot. And I mean, it's not necessarily that that wasn't the case with classical music, I think it was just...that...back then, your music had to be of a lot higher quality to become successful....you know, these days *anyone* can produce and record their own CD...and you know, back, when records were being made, it was probably quite an achievement to get something onto a record – you had to be good. But now, you can be anyone...you can record your own CD, and...sell it. Um...you could you know, it's a very easy...accessible thing these days...and no longer a sign of any kind of, achievement, so that the people who were successful three hundred years ago, had to be really exceptional, and had to have something, there that made them appeal to people...and, I mean, whether the people understood why it appealed to them or not isn't important, the point is that it appealed to them. And I think there's some common...humanity there, I think a lot of it might be to do with...how music reflects the human voice, and how, if you hear something that...if someone says the right things to you, it can change how you, how you feel I guess...and if you can imitate that in the music then...I think the composer is able to...um, influence people. And I think that's why it's universal – it's not in a particular language a lot of the time....I mean, opera is but...orchestral and instrumental pieces, without chorus, um...have captured something in their instruments that's inherent to the human voice, maybe...I'm not sure. But that's something I've been thinking about a lot of the time, like if you think about, on a piano...the reason something is percussive is because when...the first sound it makes – that explosion of air that's called the attack – is kind of like a consonant, like when you say 't' or...uh, 'k'...you know, it's that kind of explosion, and then the prolonged sound is like a vowel. Um, so the sound after the attack – the after-vibration that you hear is like a vowel in the human voice, and I think maybe composers, whether they understood what they were doing or not, is...I mean, to some extent they must have...or if they understood it like that...but I think that's one of the reasons that music can affect people, it's because it imitates something that they're...used to hearing. Um...I was also reading something the other day about how certain...you know, the intervals, like the minor thirds, and the major thirds, are supposed to be...that people associate minor keys with sadness and stuff...I think it's something to do with uh...the tones in the human voice, when you're talking, and you feel sad or something, I guess there are changes in the vibrations...and...you know, coz

there's nothing about a particular sound that you can say, 'this is a happy sound', or 'this is a sad sound' – it's what you've associated with that, in the past. Um, whether it's through your use of language...I mean, it'd be interesting to see someone who's never learnt how to speak, how they would respond to...to music, to...see if it's still the same. I mean, maybe then you could figure out why...it would affect someone.

Int: On the 'universal' point...um...do you think...OK, so would you attribute that sense of universality...uh...only to this...to this, I guess what you're calling a parallel in...uh...organised sound, to the human voice? Or do you think there are other elements to it as well?

I-4: Um...I'm not sure, I mean, what I think would be interesting to look at is why Indian music sounds different and Japanese music sounds different to what we have in western...culture, I guess. Um...because maybe the reason, you know, Indian music uses a lot of microtones – that's in-between semitones – might have something to do with how their...language has developed, in that part of the world, and the Japanese music might have something to do with their language, and how their society functions. Um...which is why...I mean, it's not...if you think about it, it's universal in the sense that everyone can take something from it, but I don't think any two people are ever gonna hear the same thing...in their composition. Like, if we hear a Beethoven symphony, it's probably gonna be the fiftieth time we've heard it, but you take it to some...I don't know...there will be many places that you take it somewhere maybe, in China – rural areas...where they haven't heard this thing yet – they're gonna have a completely different reaction to it, just as we hearing their music, a lot of the time find it a bit weird. You know, and like, how can they listen to this? But after a while of um, becoming accustomed to it, and how it's...structured and with some understanding, I think you can start having similar reactions to what they have when they hear that music. And so...I mean, ya, as I said I think it's universal in the sense that everyone can have some reaction to it, but not, that they're gonna have the same reaction...if that helps. Um...

Int: OK. Ya, that's great. Why did you decide to pursue music as a career?

I-4: Um...I don't know, I mean, a lot of the time, it's just kind of what I was [inaudible] [– offered??]...and at times I had a...a second(?) piano teacher, I really didn't enjoy it very much, and I was on the verge of quitting....[inaudible]...I really didn't like it, but I think...my first piano teacher was excellent...and then, she left town after a year. And I mean, I must have gone through about eight teachers before I got to university...you know, just in Grahamstown...so it's kind of been a...haphazard...training that I've had. And I've had...[inaudible]...with fixing, of technique and musicality since I go to university. I think when you're younger and

you don't have an understanding of what process you're following, a lot of things are just intuitive. You know, you just kind of play and...I think I was lucky in that, when I played people...enjoyed it, and responded to it. And now to try and refine that, it's been a bit of a struggle. You know, I found I took...to better kinds of music - or to different kinds of music, better. You know, and more dramatic and...um...angry kind of...well, not angry, but, like fiery, sort of, temperament music - I took well to, and could play well intuitively. But then anything slow, lyrical, melodic - I didn't do so well at. I think part of it is just, you know, when you're just...youthful, you've got a lot of excitement and energy, and you need to get that out. You haven't had enough experience in life to be, calm and...sorry what was the question again?

Int: Uh...why did you decide to pursue music as a career? Well, you mentioned something about enjoying the reaction of the audience...or...

I-4: oh, no, they reacted well, I think. I think I had some kind of natural, ability...you know, I wasn't...a prodigy or anything, but I could...I think I developed faster than the other people who started at the same time as me. So I think, I mean, my parents identified that there was some...you know, affinity for it there. And, I mean, then...I only really started taking it seriously at the end of high school, and even then, I wouldn't consider *that* taking it seriously from my point of view now. I probably think I didn't work much then. I can't remember how much I practiced, but I mean, I think it was...one of my friends in Pretoria - his dad gave me a CD of Rachmaninov, piano concertos, and I think that was probably the first classical music that I actually listened to...a lot. And then I got a bit more, and I mean, I just took to that kind of music, more so than pop and stuff. I mean, I listened to a lot of...[inaudible - garbage? possibly]...when I was younger, but I still played, piano.

Int: Was there ever a specific...moment, or...incident where, you made a concrete decision? Or alternatively, was it...a case of simply...going where you felt you were anyway...

I-4: I think I've probably made that decision a couple of times! [laughs]...

Int: I mean...you could easily have gone to study...something else, and simultaneously continued your musical studies, and enjoyed it...

I-4: Ya, that was my plan, initially. But I came out of high school - I mean, in high school at some point, I decided 'yes, this is what I wanna do', but then I kind of got...I guess I was picking subjects for university. I mean, I'd picked music as a subject at school, in I think Grade 10 - you had that option of taking it, you know, as you picked 6 subjects or something...it used to work like that, you'd pick 6 subjects to do...and

that was one of the ones I chose. And then when I got to university I was studying...First I was gonna do a BSc...with music on the side, and study [inaudible] Maths. I wanted to do um...kind of, problems doing like, Bio-engineering, if that makes any sense – like engineering based on natural...forms, and how...how things work in nature, and trying to transform that into a...mechanical, man-made...design. Um, and I wanted to do that...

Int: And so at that stage...music was...for enrichment, and for...or were you...

I-4: I don't quite remember, I still took it seriously and I still definitely wanted to do it, I think...um...

Int: I'm speaking now specifically, uh...about the difference between...having the idea of doing it, *as a career*...versus...versus uh...

I-4: As opposed to...on the side...

Int: Ya, we can call it that - on the side.

I-4: Ya...I think...I'm trying to remember now what my exact plan was. I think...because, I mean...judging from my results at school, I saw, just from the higher percentages, I was good at Maths and English, and, I think Music. But, I mean, I did...kind of, fine at everything, you know, there wasn't any weak subject, maybe Afrikaans wasn't as good...but, um...so then I thought, oh well these are the natural things for me to carry on studying. I don't know, I think in school I wasn't very, you know, open...to what was happening, I just kind of went along with what was going well. And I mean, I worked, very hard, but...and I think that probably accounts for why I did fine, in everything. Um...but ya, then I got to university and then I was gonna study...you know, BSc, then I changed to do...I initially registered for a BSc, and I was gonna go and get Maths and...Science and stuff...with music as well, and I'd spoken to the...Dean there, and he said – it was Pat Terry – he sings in the choir and stuff, so he was pretty happy to let me do that. So, in first year I ended up registering for a BA with, Music, Musicology, Maths, Computer Science and English...in first year, um...with a view to seeing...you know, from that degree you can change into any particular path...um...you know, I had the option to straight into second-year music, or second-year Science, because I'd done enough, or just carry on with a BA, and then I found that, English at university wasn't...nearly as enjoyable as I'd found it at school...um...so I didn't carry on with that...and...Computer Science wasn't...right for me, that was too boring. Um...And...too much, too much work to carry on with music on the side of that. Maths – Maths went fine but I didn't...didn't carry on with that. They gave me 74, instead of 75, so I was upset with them, after that! [laughs]

Um...and then music was going well, so I spoke to Dr Radloff and he, worked out what I had to take to...I mean, it's not catching up – I haven't missed a year anywhere, I'm still...at Rhodes for my third year, and *in* my third year – I didn't miss a year. Um...but I had to pick up Ethno and Sound Tech and do those both last year, which was fine. Um...so I think it was kind of, during my first year that I made the decision to switch to a BMus, I guess that could be a...you know, with some, knowledge of...what it entails, and making a decision to still want to do that, I guess that was probably it...which is probably a little late, but at the same time I don't think it's done any...that much harm to have had an education earlier. I think as long as you're...in the right frame of mind you can still...apply knowledge that you've gained from any...area of life, to music. I don't think that you gonna develop music primarily, *just* through a study of music – I mean, that would be like...I think you have to look at how composers lived, and a lot of them had several other interests and hobbies, and things they considered doing for a long time...I mean...I think Borodin was gonna become a doctor, and...you know, I don't think it's the case that everyone was brought up from a young age being pushed into this, which is the case with um...successful young pianists today, it seems that they've been pushed from a young age into this, not necessarily that they wanted to do that. And sadly, I think that is reflected quite transparently in their music... I think, at the end of the day it needs to come from yourself. And it's fine, I think, if they've been pushed from a young age and then, at a later stage decided for themselves that this is what they wanted to do. But until, I think, you make that decision and haven't been pushed there, then, you're never gonna quite, do it as well as you...as you're able.

Int: The switch to BMus...aside from, uh...the lack of enjoyment that you experienced in the other subjects that you were taking, was there any other...informing, you know...were there any other informing factors?

I-4: well, I mean, first of all, I don't think it was necessarily...entirely a lack of enjoyment, it just wasn't quite what I expected. I still...I still enjoyed the other subjects. I mean, there were parts of my music that I didn't enjoy as well – that didn't chase me away from that. Um...but I think it was just a case of somehow I decided that this is what was right, for me. You know, I just..just had a feeling that this is what I wanna do. Um...ya I mean, it's not like...um...I don't think it was even necessarily a whole about the music...department here that was like, 'wow, this is a fantastic place, and such a great learning environment' – I don't necessarily...feel that it is, in the traditional sense of the word, but I think there's a lot of knowledge available – it's just not how one would expect it to be presented. Like, in the library, there's a ton of...books, and a ton of ways to develop yourself...but I feel a lot of it you have to go and find out...or, you know, the...a lot of...

Int: Sorry, sorry...just to take a step back, just for a second. I just wanna explore that thing that you said now – ‘somehow this was what was right for me’, and ‘this is what I want to do’...Can you elaborate on the...types of feelings about music or about performing...uh...or about anything that made...I mean, why do you think, you wanted to do that, as opposed to...something else...

I-4: Um...I don't know...I mean, I don't think I can..safely say that it was a...you know, it's not a...it's not a, financially rewarding career choice by any means [laughs] but...um..unless you're...exceptional, and I don't feel that I am. You know, it's...it seems like more of a struggle, I think...in a way it's quite a challenge, I mean, I've always...I've liked to challenge myself, to some degree I think. I don't think I always do but...you know, to challenge your mind to do something that isn't easy, I think, if I had carried on, I could've studied, anything that I wanted, I mean..I could have done accounting, and...could have...potentially found a...career that was very...um...financially rewarding, but I think if..if you look past that, you can see that, in fifty years you can...you still wanna be happy, you need to have done something that you enjoy, and something that you...have an affinity for. You don't wanna find yourself...OK, well I'm wealthy but I haven't...made the most of the time I have on...earth, I mean...I don't know what happens when you die, but [laughs]...it seems that you have, say, eighty years to do something with yourself, and I mean...I think in order to...be happy with yourself at the end of your life, you need to have lived how you feel was...appropriate. I don't think there's...I think because it was a feeling, not a process of thought, you know, I don't know if that was just as lack of understanding of the thought that was going on, I don't know what that means...that you felt a particular way, it's just something that happens. And...so I don't think there's a whole lot I can say that, you know, I... I mean, I do enjoy performing, and I enjoy...um...sharing what I've worked on, with other people, you know, I just...and I also feel that it is a particularly challenging...career to be in, you know, it's not...like...a typically academic career where you can spend...weeks, working on a paper, and...have it turn out well – you can spend...[laughs]... months, preparing for a concert and it can still go badly, because you don't understand all the factors involved, you don't understand everything, you haven't worked hard enough, in the right places. I think, in a career in music there's always, a *lot* more to explore...whether it be new repertoire, new venues, new...ways of playing,...when, you can start playing in ensembles, or with an orchestra, or...you can, play modern...music that has some strange things for piano, [laughs]...just not very accustomed to it...um...but I think there's a lot of variety in a career like that, that can keep you...interested – that can hold your attention, I think if you...[because?]...part of it was trying to avoid a job where you, just sit behind a desk all day, typing letters for people, or...something. Even if that does make you

successful financially, I don't think that's important. To be able to live but...I'd be happier with a low, standard of living, as such, doing something I enjoy. I think I'd...

Int: Well I think by the way you describe it, that would be a higher standard of living for you anyway...

I-4: Ya, that's the thing – I think that's why I said it would be greater, in the end. I think also, though, that part of that is...that, being a musician, you have to...kind of accept that you're not going to be financially acceptable (successful)...and you have to adjust your viewpoint to that as well. I think if it was a successful career choice, I'd still be doing it, you know? Um...Ya...

Int: What...how important is it for you, to *be* a musician? Um...

I-4: You mean, to play an instrument, or to be *considered* a musician by other people?

Int: Both...and I mean, and why...is there something about music in particular that gives it this...I mean, just...to simplify it...um...how, on a scale of one to ten, of...the importance of being a musician, in life, and in your life...how would you rate it?

I-4: I don't know, that's hard to...say...at some stages I feel like I wouldn't be happy doing anything else...and at other times I think that there's a whole lot out there to...explore. Um...I mean, I guess, then...of a general impression, it is...rather important, to me. I do enjoy it...and, I am, happy doing that. Um...I think for a long time, if I stop playing or...studying music, I would feel like there's some kind of gap. Um...but...ya, I don't know, it's hard to say until, it's taken away, how important it is to you at the moment. I've never had the experience that I haven't been able to...study or, play. Some times are a little more challenging than, others! [laughs]!...I think to really answer that properly you have to...take it away for a month or two. Or, take it away, making it seem that I can never have it back, and see how I respond to it – obviously, if you took it away and said 'you can have it back next week', then, it wouldn't be the same, and said 'you'll never have it back', and then after week say 'Oh! Surprise! You can play again'...you know...it's not a tangible thing you can take away – a toy or something but [laughs]...um...I would say it's pretty important. I don't think it's so important to be considered, a musician by other people - only to the extent that, you can still get, engagements...or concert performances. Um...I think what's important to me is that I want to do, performance – not so much teaching, in the traditional sense. I'd rather try and support myself even just from that. Um...because I think once...you have an alternative, it becomes less important to do the performing and you won't be as good, as you could have been. You know, you need to devote a lot of your time to...do it well.

Int: Within...the scope of being a musician, how important is it to you that you are a pianist? Do you play any other instruments? And...as opposed to having another instrument as your primary...principle instrument, how important is...

I-4: that I play piano? Um...I'd say it's pretty important. Um...I have played other instruments. But also, it's what I've been brought up on – had I been brought up playing another instrument, then...you know...it makes sense to continue with the one you're most developed in. I can't play violin, I can't play cello, it would take me a long time to learn to do that, to the same level that I can play piano. I mean...so I think it's important, I mean, I'm also drawn to certain characteristics of the instrument that can do...can fill a lot more functions that other instruments can traditionally. You know, you can play an entire symphony reduced, on the piano. But to play it on other instruments, you need a hundred people! [laughs] so, I like that it has a lot of possibilities. One thing that does...you know, is a particular challenge on the piano is...that you're only ever really creating an illusion of...what other instruments do – you know, on a violin you can swell, a sound...throughout a note, or in a...in a wind instrument, you can make the sound louder as you go. On a piano, there's a very limited, possibility to do that, and you have to find a way around that, because I think that's part of what people respond to in music - that ability to, change a sound once it's begun. And you can do that on a piano, with the pedal you can make the sound slightly louder after you play – you play a note then push the pedal down...if you listen carefully, you can hear it getting louder, but to, bring that across to an audience I think would be very difficult and they'd have to be...in a very um...accepting (?)...mindset to hear that, you know, with well-trained ears...to pick up on the smaller changes in the sound – because a lot of what you're doing in performing, you can air (?) these to yourself and you can hear what's happening, but to bring that across is a different...story, I mean, you could play...for a well-trained musical audience, you probably don't have to make as much, out of your contrasts and...dynamics and all the rest of the little things, because they'll be trained to pick those up...I think uh...a normal audience – I think it's possible that you have to do more, to get them to respond. Um...and even with extra-musical things, you know, with moving, and expression...facial expressions even...you need to have a lot more variety to keep people interested. Um...

Int: The importance of being a pianist...

I-4: Oh, ya...so ya, I mean, I am drawn to, the possibilities of the instrument, and that you can also play 2 or 3 or 4...5 simultaneous voices in a fugue, I mean...your ear training to be able to do that has to be...to hear all those voices individually is quite a task, I think it's...said that most people can hear 2, um...what I think would be

interesting is to get...have someone sit and listen to, say, one person talking, for...ten seconds, and then, write down what they've just said; then have 2 people talking at the same time, and then write down what they've both said; and then 3, you know, to try and..increase your hearing, I don't know if there's a correlation between how many voices you can hear...and...how well you're trained, I mean I think then...[inaudible]...Gould was said to be able to hear 3 voices simultaneously, and obviously had either found a way to do that at a young age, or trained himself to...to do that, because, like if you're practicing a fugue, I think a lot of it you have to play and sing them individually...so that your muscles learn how to phrase that voice. So someone listening to it...you listen to it 5 times over, picking out a different voice each time, would hear them all phrased and musical. As opposed to you playing it, when you're probably just concentrating on the one that's trickiest or something...the other ones still have to...sound individual and...um...unique on their own, and not just make a stream of notes....so ya, I would say that playing piano specifically is important to me.

Int: Performing in public. Now you've already, kind of, answered this question, but I'd just like you to elaborate a little bit...the question is: how important is it for you to perform in public? You've already said that that's you know, what you would like to do as a career, so, I'll take the short answer as 'very!' [laughs]...from that point of view...but, as opposed to simply studying music and learning, you know, pieces, or writing and performing for your own pleasure – is there something about performing...

I-4: in public...

Int: Ya, I mean, what...

I-4: I think the difference, for me, I'm not sure how it is for most people...but what I've found...um...is that, you're in a different...level of consciousness on stage, you're not...you know, it's kind of, adrenaline and, whatever else is happening, but, your sensitivities are heightened – because you've placed the importance on this event, that this is something...um...you've thought, "this concert's important, I've gotta do it properly", and...I think that heightened, pressure, I respond well to that...which is why I'll never play as well in a lesson, or...in a practice room, as I will on stage. I think, for me a lot of the preparation is to know the work that you're performing exceptionally well, so you can...change things even on stage. If you suddenly think "oh, I wanna do this this way..." or...whatever happens, I mean, I don't quite understand all the processes...going on when you perform. But I think, to know it well enough that you can change...when you need to, you can change on stage. Also I think you're just, kind of more motivated to make the most out of all the things

you've learnt. Like, you've practiced in all these contrasts and dynamics and stuff that you...on stage you really...forced to bring them across almost, or...or...because you're under more pressure to perform, you do it better...you know, you're...everything is more, engaging, and I think it's a pity that there's no real way to...hear how you sound in a live performance from an audience's point of view, you know...you can hear from where you're sitting but, even if you stand at the piano and you play the keys standing directly...where you would sit, it sounds differently; if you lean around the side, and put your ear where the soundboard is, the sound is even different there already...which makes it kind of difficult, you know – it sucks that you can't hear, what you sound like in a live performance. I think it would be interesting. So I guess ya, public performance is important.

Tape ends

Interviewee No. 4, Part 2

23 January 2010

11:09 am

Music Library Annex

Department of Music and Musicology

Rhodes University

Grahamstown

Code I-4

Int: All right, [I-4], please tell me about the music which you most enjoy performing.

I-4: OK, um...I think what comes most naturally to me would have to be, sort of, late classical, romantic to early modern – that sort of era. So, not too much baroque or very modern – 20th century and later. Um...everything from Beethoven, Chopin, uh...Schumann...that, era – Mendelssohn as well...

Int: The romantic era...

I-4: Ya, pretty much. Uh, but I'm trying to expand that, obviously. It's quite...quite young to put myself in such a mould. You know, you can't...you can't be so picky...until you're exceptionally successful, when people will take you playing what you want, but a lot of times you're gonna have to...adjust, if you get asked to perform a certain work, or something, you need to be able to play everything...convincingly – even if it's not what you enjoy the most. Um...which I mean is sort of part of your journey towards becoming a professional musician, you have to be able to do everything...at a high standard. You can't just put yourself in a mould. Um...even though you do

find..some pianists will...later in their career, tend towards a certain, idiom. Like, you can look at um...Glenn Gould played mostly baroque, and Bach in fact. Or, someone like Andre Watts plays mostly Romantic music...but then you look at someone...like Cherkassky who has an enormous repertoire and can play anything, and doing it convincingly as well. So I mean, it's different for different people – it's a matter of how quickly you can learn pieces and memorise them...which, I mean, contributes to expanding your repertoire, but...I know what I like to play, but I'm also aware that you have to be able to adapt...your tastes, to a certain degree.

Int: And can you give any indication as to why um...you have the preferences that you have? Your reasons for liking those...

I-4: Um...I don't know, I just think it's a matter of identifying with the...with the music, and I'm guessing it'll change as I grow...get older, more mature. I'm sure the musical taste will change with that, but...I dunno, something about that music and that era just grips me more than other, stylistic periods...

Int: Sure, but there's nothing specific you could try and put your finger on?

I-4: I think a lot of it's quite fun to play, for a start. I mean...um...a lot of the composers at that time were pianists, or keyboardists on an instrument closer to the modern piano as well. So Rachmaninov was a very good pianist, and...Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn – all of them, were exceptional pianists as well, which means that what they've written is very...idiomatic for the piano, and or the shape of the human hand, and the physicality, whereas some music isn't necessarily...but even within those composers you'll still find differences within the style, and their writing for the piano.

Int: OK, alright...um...have you ever performed music...or do you ever perform music that is outside of the western classical genre?

I-4: You mean completely out of the...

Int: Ya, whatever, popular music, [if you were in a] band...

I-4: Ya, I used to play a lot of Scott Joplin. Actually, the first piece I ever played, or that I remember properly performing was "The Entertainer". So I mean I've always liked that style. Um...I did a year of jazz piano, didn't really perform though [laughs], I wasn't at any...um...but I mean, I'm happy to try new styles...and I mean, if you play music by more modern composers, you're going to get that anyway, because there's

such a mix of...cultural...[inaudible]..in the writing of modern composers, that...it's gonna happen to you whether you're looking for it or not.

Int: Right, and you're open to that...

I-4: Ya, no definitely. But I would like to stick mostly to western...music.

Int: To the canon...all right, thanks very much. Um...next up – on South Africa, and South African-ness – firstly, do you consider yourself to be South African?

I-4: Ya, um...ya, I mean I do have citizenship of Ireland as well, but I don't really...I don't consider myself Irish. But ya, I [consider myself] South African.

Int: And, what does that mean to you? I mean, how do you...define your South African-ness...can you try to pin that down in any way - not necessarily to any one thing, but, you know, how do you define being South African, and what makes you South African?

I-4: I think it's um...a matter of having lived here as well...just experiencing all different aspects of the culture. And...um, you know, there are lots of things that can be pinned down, to specific countries, like the sports they play or the food they eat, and um...the words you use – how you talk, and the languages that you're exposed to as well. Uh, but...another part of being South African, that it is a very, um...multicultural society, and there's influences from other countries so you have to be open to those as well. Um, which is, which is a part of being South African. I mean, maybe...I don't feel as strong a sense of tradition and heritage as someone who's lived in...I dunno, Spain, or something, where they can trace their roots quite far back, but I mean, being a descendent of settlers, you know, we haven't – I haven't, and my ancestors haven't been here for that long...but, I still feel a sense of belonging to this country. Um..ya

Int: Sure...and that sense of uh...belonging, um...do you think that...can try and expand on that sense of belonging? How do you...can you try to flesh that out? How do you...kind of, shape that sense of belonging? What do you do...or how does it take shape in your life? That sense of belonging to the place – I mean, if you had pinpoint, let's say, three or four concrete things that contribute to that sense of belonging...?

I-4: OK...um...well I think one of them is just that you feel comfortable...in, an area, or a country. You feel that that's...where you're most likely to cope with different things, coz if you go to other countries you find that everything is done differently, or most things are done differently, and that it's quite confusing or embarrassing if you don't

know...what's going on – you feel like a bit of an idiot. [laughs]...you have to ask the people around you, you know, simple things like if you go to a restaurant how much do you tip...in other countries they tip maybe, 20%, maybe 5% or something, but it's something that you don't know. And that can be quite a...harrowing experience, [laughing] as you...have to...work those sort of things out. Um...of course it helps if you're with people who're from there. And then, you can just sort of experience it without having to...to go through the trouble [laughing]...than, doing it on your own. But...um, that's a part of it. Another part that I find quite important is how, how you speak and...the words you use for different things – how you identify then and trying to keep what you feel is important. I mean, if you were to go and live somewhere else, some things about you are definitely gonna change. But in order to have...I think in order to say that you're from a particular place you need to fight to keep some things the same, so that you don't completely change to how...other people, live. You keep something of yourself, or what you feel is important. I mean, it's gonna be different for everyone, but...you need to decide what's important to you...and hang on to that. I think that's the best way for me to actually...figure that out, would be to go and live somewhere else for an extended period of time and see...what you find slips away from you and what you...feel is important to keep...the same. Because you're gonna have to adapt to some things – you can't do everything the way you're used to. And I mean I've done a fair amount of travelling overseas, but until I think I've actually lived somewhere else, it'll be quite hard for me to define what is, you know..what defines my identity as South African.

Int: Right...right...um...Do you consider yourself African?

I-4: I would say not as much as South African, I think South Africa's quite unique, even within Africa. Um...it's one of the more developed countries, I think...not as far as it could be, but I mean, that's also part of...an African culture – is that things are done...quite differently from the west. And I think there's a more...a sense of sharing and community. But I think part of the problem is that people in Africa try to define themselves in western terms, when the society has developed quite differently. And that's why you'll find a lot of African statesmen, you know, struggle to do...to keep things the way they are, and are actually very anti-the west...like, take Robert Mugabe, I know he's not a stellar example, but he is really...closed off to British...influence, interference...the US, and all those things which he considers to be western. Um...he wants to do things the way they're done in Africa, which is different. But...unfortunately most of the media we're exposed to is from, like, a western perspective. If you watch BBC or CNN or Sky...news, it'll be their take on what's happening in Africa, and judged according to their...beliefs, and guidelines. Whereas, someone in Africa could find the way something is done acceptable, someone overseas might...not think so. Um...I mean there will be some things in

common, between the two, but it's not...that much, you know... Even politically, uh...all our systems have been imposed on us, there was no presidency or...judiciary or anything before settlers came. Everything was done very differently. And the boundaries and borders and all been...[inaudible]...which is why, you know...I find people who've lived here for longer, and have longer roots, you know, will not take well to that system governance. I mean, I think it's...probably not as bad as it could've been, but to some extent there's probably some resentment that things have been changed. You know, what we...what western people consider as development and progress, might here be considered, by, you know, natives to the country – and by natives I mean people who've been here thousands of years, not just two hundred! [laughs] – um...might be considered [inaudible]...on how they would've done things...or not necessarily progress to them. I mean, expansion of cities and, industrialisation and all those things are, not necessarily, what they're used to or what they would've liked to see happen in the country. Maybe they...you know, we...a lot of the time they were probably judged for having lived a simpler existence before we got here, but at the same time, it doesn't really matter...if you're not aware that there is a difference, or if you don't want something else, then why can't they, just stay that way? Um...but, this is where we are, you can't...you know...

Int: you can't undo history, ya...

I-4: Ya...

Int: Um...how would you define African-ness? And...that link to, um, your sense of being African or not being African...how...

I-4: OK, so how would I define that, and do I fit into that?

Int: ya...or, how...yes..we could start there.

I-4: OK...well, obviously it's gonna be different for different people, but I don't know, I think, for me...being African is just being...part of the continent. I mean, I'm...from here, and...my roots can't be traced back that far – I mean, past the settlers...I mean, they all go back to England and Ireland –the UK – probably, as far as I know my grandmother's Irish. So I mean, already there...my family hasn't been here for that...for such a long time. But I mean, I feel pretty firmly rooted in...Africa. My dad's Rhodesian and my mom's South African, and I'm not sure how long her side of the family has been here, but I definitely consider myself part of...Africa. Or more so southern Africa...I haven't travelled further than the southern border of Zambia, so I mean, I don't know that much else in Africa...which is sad – I've travelled more

elsewhere. But, ya...I mean, I'm definitely from...Africa. Sorry, this isn't something that I really...

Int: think about very often?

I-4: Ya...it doesn't really cross my mind...

Int: that's fine – that's the point, you know, why you should take a minute to...think about it. Um...OK...so for you, it's got a lot to do with...um...roots, genealogy...

I-4: Ya...well, I mean, that would be, if I thought about it now. I don't know, maybe if I took longer to dwell on the question I might come up with something else. That would be my immediate response, sure...

Int: OK, so to summarise, if we could, your sense of identification...with Africa – you feel that you are African, but at the same time you're really aware...I mean, what is it that causes you to say uh...is it literally only the sense of your family having come from, you know, let's say, before a few hundred years ago...the north? Or...or...um...

I-4: Well, I can say that it is actually more than that, in the sense that I've grown up here. You know, I didn't grow up where my family originally came from. So, all my...most of my experiences have been, in Africa – South Africa. Um...having lived here and grown up around the people here – which, I mean, is something that I think I'm proud of; that I can say that. You know, it's not...not everyone in the world can. Obviously! [laughs]...and, I think we need to be proud of that. Even though, you know, the country has...flaws. But I mean, it's still, a very healthy, functioning society, you know...it's not...it's not, civil war or anything, I mean, there are problems, but it's not...it's not as bad as it could be. And it's certainly not as bad as...some countries further north in Africa...where there's...incredible problems...ya!

Int: Sure, right, right...and certainly elsewhere in the world...

I-4: And I think ya, I mean, that's something that I'm very happy about. It's very unique upbringing – to live in a country like this, you know, where it's not...I don't know, maybe a country like Germany is a little bit more...or a little bit less accepting of other cultures, and very steeped in national pride and heritage, and who *they* are. I think the South African community is unique in how it embraces other cultures while still maintaining its own identity, which in itself is split into uh...several different groups, you know, there're different groups of people from all over the world. Even the natives...were split into different, um...demographics. You know, there were...Zulu people, Xhosa people, Sotho...Ndebele further north...And uh, you know,

Khoi-San – all those different communities before the settlers came. Um...and what we're living in now is sort of the...early stages of that combination of all the different influences, and...that that has actually worked out as well as it has is quite impressive, I think. [laughs]. You know, for those people to have been, overrun by...invaders, basically, and to have accepted them as part of the country, in such a short space of time, is quite [inaudible – impressive...] And even for all the oppression of Apartheid, it's still...you know, there's no...there is resentment, but it's getting filtered out, you know, with younger generations of people growing up in a combined society. Someone like myself – I didn't, you know, live through the segregation of Apartheid like my parents would have; I didn't, you know, you don't really see where it came from, you still see the after-effects now, and I mean it hasn't been that long. 16 years is not a long time in the greater scheme of the country's history, it hasn't been that long for things to...to pan out and sort themselves out. And I think that we're at the stage where we are now, is quite an achievement, and that there's not still fighting and...unrest. Ya, I mean, that...the children who've grown up, just coming out of that era, and being the first ones where the schools have been combined – beaches, public facilities, everything was separated, and just suddenly that was gone in the space of like four years, that all changed - and that it's worked out as well as it has is quite impressive. And I think that needs to be kept in mind, when we look at the state of the country, you know...that, you know, there are issues in bigger cities and smaller cities, rural communities, but they're not...that they're as good as they are is quite...an achievement.

Int: Right. Do you have um...just speaking about the...let's just call it the...social turnaround, within that four-year period that you spoke of – do you have memories of that time? Of um...you know, your life, I mean, of being cognisant of these changes happening around you?

I-4: Not particularly, I mean, I was...if I was born in '88, I was 6 in '94, when major changes happened, although as I said, I mean, they started in like 1990. I...I have memories of my life at that stage, but I think at that age you don't...you're not aware of...huge political changes. Memories...what I heard from my parents is that a lot of people thought there was gonna be chaos, and...you know, hoarded up food and...stocked up and got ready for...crisis, basically. I remember...riots, when I was young, probably between the ages of 4 and 6, driving down High Street [Grahamstown] and being told to duck...there bricks thrown...through your car windows or something, I mean, I don't remember what that was about, but that might just have been striking or something! I think, um...but then going through junior school and stuff and you do projects on...that era, of time, then you learn about it from that more than from what you can remember when you were that

young. I mean, I was never in...separated schools or anything, I wasn't here, for that. Um...ya, but I mean it was an interesting time to have grown up through. I think you could possibly learn more from someone who is 30, 35, who went through school, you know, though junior school being separated and then, high school being...integrated, or whatever. You know, they would have had quite different experiences. But I mean, I was never in a situation where that was the case.

Int: All right, thanks. Um...just to step back a bit now – we were speaking about um...identification, and uh, specifically with respect to a sense of South African-ness, and a sense of African-ness. Now, regarding your...music performance activities, um...how do you view that in this context? In the South African context, and the African context...is there any sort of connection? Do you find that they are mutually exclusive? Um...

I-4: Ya that's quite a...quite a tricky one – for someone in South Africa to have, or like myself to have such a strong sense of identity with that music – with western music. But really, none of it came from this side of the world! Until more recently - there are South African composers. I don't think I've ever played...or, like two pieces, by South African composers, I'm just trying to think now...I'm guessing when I was younger, going through like Grade exams and stuff, there were probably...some...although even then, maybe not, coz those were all British – Royal Schools, Trinity – I never did the UNISA exams, where I'm guessing they would have included South African composers. But it might be the case that I've never played a piece by a South African composer! [laughs]...but I feel that, that's part of the beauty of the society here, that people still have a strong sense, and link to *that* music. Because, if you look at the Afrikaans community, a lot of them could've come from The Netherlands, or something, where...or, which is at least closer to where that music comes from, you know? Coz I think it's safe to say that the early western music came from Europe, specifically, and more recently America. Um...and then, it became more global. But, ya, I have very strong sense of identity with that music, but I think that, you know, studying it in South Africa is quite different to studying it either in Europe or America, or now, China, or Russia, you know, have become...where the more recent music has been very popular.

Int: How...I mean, you say that studying music here has gotta be different – how so?

I-4: Ya...I'm thinking that South Africa, is a very competitive environment, with regards to the classical music. I think a lot of that might come from the Afrikaans tradition – you know they...can be very competitive, although so can everyone, I mean, it's not...it's nothing unique to them. But, a lot of good musicians from South Africa have been of Afrikaans descent, like Stephen de Groot, for example. Um...although he was, I

mean he came from a Dutch family, but...he was then...[South African...?]. I think his grandparents were Dutch, as far as I know. So, I mean, I think maybe that's why those people have a strong sense of identity with the music, um...for myself, being of, I suppose, British descent, I don't really feel any connection to their music than I might. You know, like Elgar, or...thing is, I mean, some of it...

Int: Oh, you mean British music?

I-4: Ya...But, some of it doesn't really appeal to me. But I think ya, South Africa is very competitive in the classical [music], which is a bit...sad. I think what would be nice is to see more...sort of, you know, music festivals and master-class kind of environments rather than just competitions, which seems very prominent, to me. Everything is about being the best where there could be more of an environment of learning, as well. I think also a lot of people in South Africa feel that to have some success as a musician, you need to have studied overseas and returned...at some stage, which I think is...is partly the case, but...I'm not sure why it is, maybe the teaching facilities are more established overseas, as opposed to South Africa, where...all the institutions are no more than a hundred years old, for the most part. Maybe 150, but...you look at like, Paris – the French conservatory's been there for...far longer, as far as I know.

Int: It might also be a case of [there being] greater opportunities...

I-4: Ya, and more performance opportunities...in a bigger city, like London or...or New York and... OK, if you look in the big cities in South Africa there are...there are a lot of performance opportunities, but I don't think that there are as many who support the arts – it's a very small percentage of the South African population, if you include all demographic areas, you know, that will actually go and watch a concert, whereas, in Europe, that is their...national music – that is their heritage. In South Africa, it's just a small percentage of [the] peoples' heritage...which could be part of the uh...part of the process. And that's why you'll find a lot of outreach programs in South Africa, teaching music in rural communities and exposing people to that sort of music, so I think there's huge room for growth. But right now, as it stands, I think there are many more opportunities overseas. And perhaps more performers because of that. And just...statistically the more performers there are, the more chance that there will be some exceptionally gifted people out there. And not to say that there aren't very good teachers in South Africa, I mean, there are...but just not as many. The fact that I could name, in a list of twenty or thirty people, all the recognised pianists, for example, in the country – coz that's what I know – you know, it would only take that long, but you look at like London, or Chicago, you'll get that many, if not more in one city...over there. I mean, I think that's part of it as well – it's just not that established here yet.

Int: Right...um, just to draw it back to yourself, um...given this uh, situation, in South Africa, what sort of feelings does that...bring up, if any, about yourself, and about what you do, and about...who you are, I mean...do you ever have a sense of conflict? I mean, I'm assuming from what you're saying that you don't see it as this completely separate thing, that you know, classical music and South Africa don't mix, that's not your view. But, from a personal point of view, do you ever have a sense of conflict or...or difficulty with that? Or are you simply someone who's made this certain choice, who's from a place where that's not a popular choice?

i-4: Ya, um..well to be fair, I don't think that's a popular choice in any country!

Int: Ya, sure! But especially here...

I-4: Ya, it...I think you can often end up with feelings of resentment...to, where you've come from, because your choice isn't as widely supported.

Int: Have you ever...[had these]...

I-4: Ya, but at the same time, there are a lot of people trying to...to expand the arts in South Africa. I think another part of the problem is that...a lot of the exceptionally talented pianists come from Russia, or Europe, or the States, and ya, more recently Asia – China, Japan, Korea...um...South Africa is geographically very far away from those places, and if they wanted to come and do a tour, you know South Africa has a lot of opportunities for them, but then if you look at the surrounding areas, you know...those countries aren't necessarily...accepting, and there won't be as many opportunities for them to come down here...it's quite an expense – you know, plane tickets and...all the rest. And, for it to be worth their while, which isn't necessarily going to be the case – if someone wanted to go to France to do a tour, there are 7, 8, 9 other countries within...you know, a 3-hour flight's distance, where they could tour...for 6 months. Whereas, you come to South Africa, you can go to, Joburg, Pretoria, Durban, Cape Town, Bloemfontein, maybe PE – that's it. Where are you gonna go in the surrounding areas – you could go to Harare, Bulawayo, in Zim...I don't know as much about the other places, but, you know, it's not as worthwhile for them, and so you won't necessarily get all the successful people coming out here. But it's nice to find that when successful people do come, they're very generous and willing to...share their knowledge and help, the community. Which is good, that they're not just like...coming here to get...exposure, and...performance opportunities.

Int: When you say help the community...help the community in what way?

- I-4: Oh, I mean, help classical music, is more correct, I think. A lot of them are willing to give master classes to students and... Ya, I mean, I think a lot of the pianists that we get here are younger people, on the brink of a very successful career. People in their late twenties, early thirties...people like Spencer Myer, Kotaro Fukuma...or, people who have won the UNISA competition and have a tour, as part of their prize, you'll get them as well. But I mean, they all...they've been very supportive and helpful. Well, that's my experience of the ones who've come to...to Grahamstown, anyway. You know, they are willing to help. And...it's not really for any gain of their own, because you can get paid in Rands, and take it back to...anywhere else, really...[laughs]...and convert it – you can buy yourself lunch for the day. So, I mean, they are, generous and supportive.
- Int: OK...um...just a little bit back, to the feelings of resentment that one might have towards the country, can you just telling m a little bit more about that...?
- I-4: Ya, I mean, I think it's a thing that you don't wanna get caught up in, coz you can be left feeling very sorry for yourself and, you know there's no...not that much happening here. But really, you have to take it upon yourself and make that sort of thing happen. There are opportunities out there, and there have been successful people from here. Um...and to start saying, you know, ah...well this doesn't work...and...that sort of, way of thinking about things isn't healthy. It's not gonna help you – you might as well just accept where you come from and where you are, and what opportunities you have, and make the most of them. It's not...it's not impossible...to be successful from here. There have been lots of people who have...that have done something...[inaudible]...as far as your state of mind goes...it is a good thing to do!
- Int: All right, thanks. OK, last question. Um...can you try and go through the kinds of music that you listen to, and enjoy listening to...and what reasons you have for that...
- I-4: OK, um...well I think it's probably safest to start with...western music. Uh...pretty much whatever's on my computer at the time, you know, I have a lot of music, to choose from.
- Int: In terms of recordings...
- I-4: Ya. And...ya, I mean, one thing that I do, if I'm working on a particular piece is try not to listen to it, while I'm playing – so that you can come up with your own interpretation, even if it does take 3 times as long! Um...that's something I find important. Um...but, ya I mean, I have favourite pieces that I'll listen to.

Int: Can you go through some of them?

I-4: Um...Some Chopin – the substantial works, you know, the ballades, the fantasy, the scherzo, etudes,...and concerti – Beethoven, Rachmaninov, Schumann...and then sometimes, I'll listen to a piece with a score, with a particular pianist in mind, and see how they interpret what's written there. You know, if you're looking for ideas. Another one – Schumann, C major Fantasy, that's a favourite.

Int: Anything outside of, piano music?

I-4: Rimsky Korsakov – Scheherazade, um...Beethoven Symphonies, Rachmaninov symphonies, Brahms...oh, violin concertos, Mendelssohn – E minor, Beethoven Violin Concerto.

Int: And uh...what about outside of classical music?

I-4: I like Muse.

Int: The band "Muse"?

I-4: Ya. Um...even though they use a lot of classical music, which can be poorly done, I think they do it...they do it nicely. Um...Ravi Shankar – his collaborations with [inaudible]...Uh...some Michael Jackson....um...there's another, I'm just trying to think...

Int: Well, let's just stop for a second, uh...specifically the, excuse me...um...the works outside of the classical realm – what draws you to the things that you like?

I-4: when...when you can see some...you know, creativity, in the work. And that some...thought has gone into it. I mean, I don't like...most popular music. It just becomes annoying because...it's at a very appealing level and a basic level of, um...complexity, you could say...that you can identify exactly what's happening and it just becomes...increasingly predictable to listen, even throughout different artists – you know exactly what's coming, you know, verse, chorus; it's always in four. You know, there's no variety. I think, when you can look at a group or an artist, or a modern composer who can change and develop through their work, instead of just recycling – you know, they have one successful album maybe and then recycle it...repeatedly [laughs] – it becomes a bit annoying. You know, someone who you can see has put some thought into it. And...it still has to sound good, I mean, you can put a lot of thought into something and it sounds appalling! But, um...you know, where

you can see that they've put some effort into it, and have come up with something appealing - to me. You know, it doesn't matter how successful they are. Um...ya, I mean, there are a lot of a lot of actual composers who just don't do classical music, or western music – it doesn't mean that they're not capable musicians, they are still. They've just chosen to do something else with their talent. I mean, anything that shows some...inspiration or...creativity.

Int: and, I assume you like...you like to have a sense that some work has gone into it...or some...planning, or...

I-4: Ya, that it's not just out there for...to sell...necessarily. Although, I'm guessing a lot of what I listen to does sell, and then sometimes that is with good reason – you know, that they have created something unique, and...they have become successful because of it, [inaudible – I also like]...Queen, the Beatles...you know, that era of music as well, which was very popular at the time. But I think it's nice that that music is still popular, because that shows, to some extent, that there was something appealing about that music, and that's why...

Tape ends

New tape

I-4: but then again, there were a lot of musicians who have not stuck around. And that's also a judge or...the worth of the music. If you look back at the time of Beethoven, or something, there were a lot of composers from then, whose music hasn't lasted. And I think, part of it is that there's something universally appealing about it, I mean, there's a reason that it's still around. If you look at Salieri, or something, his music can sound very similar to that of Mozart or Haydn, but...then there was something missing...that has meant that it hasn't lasted, and that you won't hear it as much. Although, it could be the case that they just had unfortunate circumstances. If you look at Bach – his music was pretty much lost, until Mendelssohn, who revived it, and a lot of his music has actually...has definitely been lost...because people didn't realise at the time what they...were witness to, and didn't think it was important enough to...to look after it, which of course [causes] problems for modern performers trying to figure out what actually he wrote down. If you look at a manuscript, for most of the composers...were, habitually untidy! I mean, you feel sorry for the editors, even though you get annoyed having to read all the remarks about every bar, and why this should be an 'F' and not a 'G', in this chord...because you don't know that they're actually right – they're just trying to make the most common...grounding for that. Um...ya, so it does get frustrating for us, but at least it has survived, even if it, and most likely, isn't in the form that they...wrote it in the first place. It's their own fault for being so untidy!

Int: OK. All right, I think that's pretty much it, thanks [I-4].

I-4: No problem.

Interviewee No. 5

21 October 2009

10:33 am

Music Library Annex

Department of Music and Musicology

Rhodes University

Grahamstown

Code I-5

Interviewer: [Introduction]

[I-5], please tell me how old you are, if you don't mind...?

I-5: Twenty.

Int: Please describe for me, your earliest musical memory, or your earliest memory of music, whichever best describes it...

I-5: Um, my grandmother was a, pianist of sorts. We didn't have an actual piano, but we had like, a keyboard – clavichord-type effort – and, um...and she used to play on that. And so that was my first experience, with it. And...ya, from there, I was...very excited by what she could do, so I wanted to do it as well, so I imitated.

Int: OK, and how old would you have been when, I mean, if that's the earliest memory – her playing – how old would you have been?

I-5: Maybe eight?

Int: OK. And you started lessons, at what age?

I-5: Well, I started lessons...I had a few – it was always intermittent because...of, circumstances. But I...so I had a few when I was...quite young...so between like, 10 and 12. And then I...I started at 14, again.

Int: OK. Um...you say, it was intermittent because of circumstances – are you able to elaborate on that?

I-5: Ya, well...I mean...when my parents separated, my dad left...my dad took the house, and so um...the house contained the piano, and then my mom, who I moved away with, um....you know, couldn't afford something like that because we were staying in a...smaller place. So there was also, a noise aspect. So, I couldn't really...like,

continue...lessons, because I couldn't practice. And, so for...like a large part of my...large part of the time, I actually [was with her?].

Int: OK. And so...lessons proper, and consistent, started at age 14?

I-5: Ya, 14, 15...about there...

Int: SJoe...that's rather late by comparison to...others...

I-5: Ya...it is...

Int: OK, now onto a little bit of a different tack...um...what do you think defines you, as a person? How do you define yourself? Are there...certain traits and characteristics that stick out? Are there things that you do that, you know, for you, say who you are?

I-5: That's a difficult question. OK...um, well...I mean, aside from...how I look, there's um...as a person I think I am...diligent, in some respects. Uh...I don't, [laughing] I don't wanna say all these things 'cos they might come across as arrogant...but...

Int: Please be honest...

I-5: Yes...that being said, I think people would, you know, probably say that I'm moderately intelligent, and, um...well-spoken. Maybe they'd throw in funny if they liked me, and then...ya, I mean...but also, just from my own point of view, I know, that a lot of people don't know that I'm actually very driven, and, competitive and...ya,, and I suppose...but at the same time I'm not...like, vindictive. Like, I'll support everyone around me. Like, I'm not jealous of other people's success. But, you know, I do want a little for myself. [laughs slightly]

Int: Anything else, in terms of...of um...things that you do in your life? I mean, for example, is...being a musician –

I-5: Oh....yes...

Int: Is this central, or...very significant to your sense of, self?

I-5: OK, ya, well...sorry, I didn't... I thought you meant...

Int: Well, I meant everything...

I-5: Oh, OK, well yes, in the grander scope, then definitely. Being a musician is quite important, you know...

Int: Perhaps being from a certain place is also important – I want you to include whatever, whatever you consider as...significant...

I-5: Oh, OK, well...ya. I mean, I suppose...ya, then my identity as a musician is significant. I mean it's...it's, you know, it's what you study, it's what I spend most of my time doing. It's, you know, just, like a lot of the standards by which I measure myself are musical, you know? Like...um...and then I suppose, you know...you, like uh...gay white male, probably. Ya, I think that's all, like, important. And...it's like...ya, it is, it's what makes me...so ya, but I definitely think, musician is probably, like, quite crucial.

Int: OK. Does your musicianship, um...and in particular, your musicianship in terms of the style in which you, and the genre in which you...you know, you perform, and you learn – classical piano music – does that make you feel different from greater society? And...and how does it impact your interaction with others in society?

I-5: Well, to me, like...the classical music, and also the pianist's a kind of mythical figure, you know? Because...classical musicians are, as a rule, very, cosseted in society, you know? They...like, there's a few of us...it's a, sort of, *old* art form, and it's...like, glamorous – you get to go and...you get to be on stage and have all eyes on you, and performing these fabulous and difficult tasks in front of...you know...hundreds of people. And then um...it's also...ya, it's like a...like there's a legacy of...a rich history of...great performers and pianists as well. So, to me, it's sort of, you know, a very glamorous, idealistic kind of, role. And then, um...ya, and I suppose, I don't know...I know of pianists who are very arrogant because of what they can do. And I suppose, I mean, that kind of behaviour wouldn't inform my...behaviour, but, I do, sort of, you know, feel like, a little, not superior, but special – different, to everybody else, because of the fact that I'm a pianist, and I can do all these things that, you know, other people can't. Well, yes...ya, the fact that it impresses people, and excites them, and moves them.

Int: And then, as far as the interaction with others goes, specifically...well, actually, not specifically – all others, whether musicians or others who are maybe musicians but not professional musicians, or others who are not musicians – is there...is there anything about the way that you interact with them, which is directly informed, or less directly informed by your being a pianist, a musician?

I-5: Not...nothing specific comes to mind, I mean...at the same time I want to relate to everyone a personal level – not on like a...sort of, professional level. Like...people are

people, and it wouldn't really...like being a classical musician, or being a doctor, or being a plumber, wouldn't necessarily change the way I dealt with people. I mean, I've always... I think it's important to...to kind of, hear what everyone has to say, and also, you know, um...and judge everyone by their own standards, because... I mean, while I may be working on this, and...I may be interacting with someone, who, say, is an amateur musician, I'm not gonna be patronising toward them or...or, um, you know, superior – because that's just not who I am, I would never...I mean, I just think it's bad manners. So, I mean, however it may inform it, it wouldn't necessarily translate into any action on my part. And even though I may *think* that, this person is a fool and knows nothing, I would never act on that.

Int: OK. [laughs]... Why did you decide to pursue music as a career?

I-5: Well... I think, sort of the...appeal of being a musician is quite something. And also, um... I really wanted to challenge myself, because, I mean, when I was in school, it's not...it's a lot of stuff really did come easy to me. Like, I found, like... 'cause I didn't do music as a matric subject – I did history and business economics, maths and all of that. And I found like if I worked at those things I could *easily* master them. But it wasn't like, something that gave me, like, decisive pleasure. But, when it came to music, it was something that I not only enjoyed working on, but also, um, enjoyed mastering, and getting better and better. And I think the fact that it takes much longer appealed to me more, because, ya, I enjoy that feeling of being stimulated, and having something to work toward – like a much grander goal – whereas if I were to do something like a...to study commerce, or like...a humanities subject...then it would be different because it would be a very, kind of, straight forward, in a way. You just learn, or you...you research, and...I don't know, there isn't that aspect where you get to...constantly work and constantly better yourself at one specific thing...which I think appeals to me. Ya...

Int: OK. Great, so you really enjoy the challenge...

I-5: Ya.

Int: Great...um...

I-5: I mean that's not the only side of it I enjoy – I also enjoy the, kind of, artistic side to it. I mean, you know, as much as it is a challenge, it's not like we're learning to...be typewriters –p or...stenographers, yes, but it's like, you also get a chance to, you know, be creative, and develop your own style and your own...I mean, you know, while...you're in a process of developing a musical identity, and I think that's more

exciting to me than, say, like...creating an academic identity, to use your catchphrase.

Int: [laughs], OK, great...OK, how important is it for you to be a musician? I mean, you are studying music now, and pursuing it as a career, and aside from –it will take on - uh...an important role as far as financial considerations, occupational considerations, but from a point of view which doesn't recognise those as important, how important is it for you to be a musician? And...are you able to pick out certain things about music that cause it to be, one way or the other?

I-5: Well, um...

Int: I guess, another way to put it would be to say that if, money and the provision of...a lifestyle, if we can call it that, were not issues, how would you...how much...would you still have the same intensity of enjoyment, and...would music still be so central? And...can you elaborate on why you think that is – what is it about music?

I-5: Oh! I see...well, ya...yes, definitely. Well, first of all, I mean, to me...I remember I had a...an internship at my brother's company, and basically I was working as an administrator. And the pay was fantastic, but I hated what I was doing, and like, it's always been my view that, um...I'd rather do what I wanna do than...work toward a lifestyle or money or anything. And that's not really crucial to me – I'm the kind of person who can live off samp. But, um...so, I mean that...never really factored in, because I mean, I could always be doing something that's far more lucrative – I mean, let's not kid ourselves. But, um...it's a sort of a compulsion, it's something that I want to do, and something that like, now, having done it for two years, I can't really imagine my life without it. It's just...it's, ya...it's not only how I construct most of my time, like I, large sections of my day are devoted to my instrument – practicing. And if I wasn't doing that I wouldn't know what to do with myself, you know? Because I've managed to sort of, um...accommodate my life to study, and to work toward it. Um...and...it's a work I enjoy, it's not something that I think is, like, laborious. And... I also enjoy...ya, the kind of expressive, and physicality...and also, ya the collaboration that's very often, you know...because...and it's also nice for me to be...

Int: By that you mean performing with others?

I-5: Yes...of course. That, and also the fact that, I'm surrounded by people who are like-minded, which I think is...much more here than it would be in a department that didn't, like...that...or a subject or discipline that didn't necessitate such consistent work. Because I think...well, ideally we should all be working daily on practicing, and

also, working together, and...I mean, if you're in that environment, you get, like, a much closer bond than compared to...other things, I imagine.

Int: OK...I'm going to refine the question now a little bit – within the scope of being a musician, how important is it for you to be a *pianist*. Opposed, now, to...other instruments...and if so, what is it about the piano?

I-5: Well, it's not really the piano itself. I think the piano, as an instrument is actually very obstinate, very difficult, and nonsensical instrument. I think it's...the reason I study it is because I don't know another...and...because, I'm probably on a higher level on this one than I could reach, like, logically, in another instrument. But I think, ya...the piano is the instrument best suited to express...what...well, on which I'm most able to express what I want to, and most...conversant with, and most technically facile with...So I suppose...it's not the instrument specifically, although, as instruments go, it's probably the better choice. I mean, there's a much larger repertoire, and also, more commonly studied, and...there're a lot more pianists...and I mean, I'd rather do that than study, like an obscure instrument. Ya, I like the fact that lots of people do it....because you have to work that much harder to be...

Int: OK...[pause]...and once again, the element of challenge...reveals itself as important. All right, performance.

I-5: Yes.

Int: How important is it for you to perform in public? Why not just learn and play music, and play it...for your own pleasure?

I-5: You know that's actually...like, it isn't that important for me to perform in public. Like, I mean, the more...because, really...since I've been here, this has been my most, um...like, it forms the crux of my performance experience. And what I found is that, you know...like, I often think that, it isn't crucial for me to perform – like, I could study music and be a musician without performing. So, like...it's something I do, and I see its benefits – not only on my playing, but on my esteem, and my growth, as a musician. Um...but, you know, I don't really...know...now, if that's the trajectory I wanna build my career on, like if I wanna, work towards being a performer...because, I mean, it's...it's OK, but, there are other things that I enjoy doing. like, I enjoy accompaniment, and I enjoy chamber work, and...ya, so, I don't know...I mean...could live without performing, and a lot of the time, it isn't...especially positive, for me. Like, I guess on the one hand I'm self-critical, but also, ya...I mean, you know, seeing as it's still quite new to me, compared to...people who've been doing it longer. It's also, ya...it's also challenging because, you

know...it's...it's executing difficult tasks under the scrutiny of audiences who, often, are very critical and, um...also, ya, and judgemental. And I also found that, you know, you are only as good as your last performance. If you played, like, badly, people expect you to play badly the next time. Or if you play well, the same applies. And it's sometimes difficult, or all too easy to live up to the standards people set for you. And so, you know, for me – being a kind of, sensitive person – I'm more likely to...you know, fulfil these, expectations of me...others' expectations...and not just others' – I mean, like, my teacher's expectations, and also, people who are also pianists, who're my friends – like, their expectations of how I should play.

Int: And...do you see that as something...well, I suppose it could be positive or negative...

I-5: Ya, I mean...yes, I think the ideal is that you're able to separate what everybody expects of you and to perform according to...you know, as well as you can, and...judge yourself. And...you know, of course...I'm not [rooting out?] criticism or anything, but I think...to be able to separate yourself from what everyone wants to hear, or expects to hear, and you just give them what you're gonna give them, is...I think the big challenge for me...because, ya...that's probably why performance is so...like, it's not essential for me because I've found, you know, that...it's difficult for me to separate what everyone else expects of me and wants of me, and to just kind of...do my own thing.

Int: Ya, I think that's half the challenge...with performing.

I-5: Exactly...because I find, like, even recently when I was working for – I was trying to prepare a program for the UNISA competition – and, I was...and I played it for my teacher...and she said no, look, all of the notes were there – and they were, it was a very accurate performance – but to....she said, it felt like I was apologising, for myself. And I mean, you know, that probably was the case. To kind of be able to...not only have that accuracy and have all the music there, but to kind of, give it your own...like, filter it through your own lens, is kind of, a challenge, and also to be convincing and do it properly – and I think that's my great challenge.

Int: OK...all performers' great challenge.

I-5: Oh, yes. But we're talking about me, specifically...

Int: Yes, yes...alright, [I-5] could you tell me about the music that you most enjoy performing...

I-5: Well, that's quite limited...the...I mean, the performance I've done. Like, I've never performed a classical work. Um...well...not really...but I do enjoy performing more modern works. Like, early twentieth century, kind of...era...I mean that's my favourite era, I think...well, for now, I do enjoy it. And also baroque works, I like performing those.

Int: And what is it about these types of music in particular that...draw you to them?

I-5: well, I mean...they're polar opposites. Coz I think, like, the modern music...well, the kind I like – I'm talking about like...specifically John Ireland, but like, that is kind of...lush...in its...and it's also...lush and um...sort of, grand, but um...also...I can't think of the word, like...colourful, ya, it's very..there's a lot of, like, sounds...painting...and, like you know, the kind of, getting different...sonic effects. And...as the complete opposite, I like baroque music, because it's sort of...very architectural and – I'm assuming that's a word – and...and, ya...and it's also, it's nice because you kind of...like, I know, when I've performed it, sometimes I'll just get these moments where I kind of, feel like a structure is being built, or, you know, that I'm building on top of a structure, and it's a nice feeling, and I enjoy it. I mean, I enjoy...that's why I enjoy playing it.

Int: Great...um...alright, a bit of a change of tack now... On South Africa, and South African-ness. Do you consider yourself South African?

I-5: Yes.

Int: What...what does being "South African" mean to you? How do you...define your South African-ness? And...what...what about you makes you South African, and what about you makes you not South African, if anything...?

I-5: oh OK...well, no, I mean I'm still South African...because it's the place where I, you know, grew up. I grew up in Johannesburg. And, um...ya, I mean...

Int: Is that the only thing?

I-5: I'm trying to think! [laughs]...I mean...I don't know. I'm not...especially...patriotic. like, I'm not given to that sort of, you know...it's not who I...like I'm...I'm not the kind of person who'll stand up and scream and run around when like, South Africa scores a try. It's just...but I mean, at the same time, I do, like, identify with South African people, and...ya, I don't know...I can't really articulate it. Like, if there's a movie and there's a South African character I'll be like, "Oh, OK! Yes, you know, we're from the same place." Or, you know, when I'm with foreign people then I'm definitely aware

of the difference. And not just language, but also, like, I don't know, like a sense of irony about the...kind of world we live in, coz it's a very...like I think it's – I like to make fun of South Africa coz it's a...a very...it's a bit of a ridiculous place, like with the...just the levels of unequalness...like it's, you know...and the fact that it's...like...decaying infrastructure, I think is...you know, great fodder for...poking fun. Coz, ya...it's sort of that 'you think you've got it bad', attitude...

Int: Um...Right.

I-5: But beyond that, I'm not sure how one would...actually...what would make someone *feel* more South African than the next person.

Int: OK...do you...alright, next one – do you consider yourself African?

I-5: Yes.

Int: And...what does that mean to you? How do you define that one? Is it, different in any way from your sense of South African-ness?

I-5: No! I mean, to me...well, this is a recent change of outlook – but I always thought, you know, that identity, like, African, isn't necessarily the domain of only black people. Uh...it's sort of a, it's a constructed identity. I mean, isn't all identity [constructed]? But, you know...and I feel like I'm not going to, you know, first of all, embrace this supposed guilt that I'm ...like, that...for my whiteness, and then claim to not be African but European – when I've never even left South Africa – it's a bit like, illogical. I mean, I'm as African as everybody else who is in Africa. So...I mean, from that perspective...and also, ya, it's like...like I'm used to, like, the climate of Africa, and, the people of Africa. Like, it's as much my country as anybody else's, and my continent. Not the whole thing of course, I mean, just...

Int: Well, why not?

I-5: Well, ya, I suppose, ya.

Int: OK. OK, now in the context of these...of this sense of South African-ness an African-ness, how do you view your music performance activity? Are they...integral to it? Are they...in a way autonomous from it?

I-5: Ya, they very autonomous from it. I mean, coz it's sort of a...like, to me it seems as if there's a kind of...not sect, but like a small...margin of society in South Africa that's really...like, cares about western European art music. It's, ya, it is, it's a bit of an alien

identity actually. The two are probably at odds with each other. I mean, you know, on the one hand you do get, like, South African composers, and organisations like SAMRO and UNISA, who are very much, like, pro the...classical music. And I mean, classical music traditions are present in South Africa - choral traditions especially come to mind. But, ya it does seem a bit antithetical, because it's a very staid, western, tradition. I mean, it's very formal, and formalised...and it's also, you know...just the interaction between audience and performer, is completely antithetical to a typical..typically African um...interaction between audience and performer, and also ya...and the role of the performer is different, I mean, in classical music. Ideally, the performer should be like...uh, a middleman between composer and audience. Whereas, I think, with some African music styles, it's...not. It's about the person who's performing. Well, I suppose, I mean..today...more about performer than composer, but, I mean...to me that would be the ideal – not such a self-promoting thing. It's tacky...

Int: OK, in terms of this...sense of, classical music and South Africa being at odds with each other...or, these different identities, being at odds with each other...um...how does that play out, I mean, in terms of your daily, or your regular um...performance activities, or even just your studies – is there a relationship? Is there some sort of middle-ground? Is it something that you think about often? I mean, how does it...affect you? If it does...

I-5: Uh...I mean...Ya, it's not really such a big deal. Like, I mean, there's much, well I feel like there's much less support than there would be in a society that was very much pro-classical music, instead of viewing it as some sort of foreign object. And also, you know,

Int: You mean in South Africa in general?

I-5: Yes, ya, I mean, ya, South Africa...coz it is, it's kind of...and it's also a bit of a dangerous, like, dangerous thing – being a...it is colonial. Like, it's all white European males who wrote a bunch of music, and we still performing it, I mean...you know, it's a little iffy from the outside looking in. So, I mean, I can understand that. But at the same time, it's not gonna...it's still I think, you know, I mean, that aspect is more...important....to me, and it's something I do more. Like, I mean, my entire days are mainly structured around that – like music, and also, you know, my own stuff. But...ya, and so, like being South African or African never really comes into play. And when it does, it's just...like, in a performance context, it'll be...you know, it'll just be...I mean, I'm just thinking, an audience-based thing...um...like, you know, it's a very small, select group of audience members, and I suppose that's kind of...symbolic, of the kind of...way it is in South Africa. I mean if you just take the Guy

Butler Monument, I mean, it's on top of a hill, looking *down* on everybody else. And the only people who ever seem to be attending these, uh, these, like, Grahamstown Music Society Concerts, bar, like, Festival times, is just, you know, old, white people of middle or upper-middle class origin. So, you know, it's sort of...I mean, because it's such a small, little shelled-off, ivory tower-type environment, you know, then I feel like being a South African never really comes into play. But when I've done things like, outreach, where....like, I'm just thinking...an example when I was playing with a school choir in a location, like it was...it was, I don't know, it was different because...then it's not such a..high, like it wasn't – it was different to...coz it was a choral accompaniment, and it was different to other choral accompaniment I'd done because these kids weren't looking at music, they were just...they were just taught and...so the music I was given was just a piece of paper with some chords on. So...there I was trying to figure out this stride bass pattern...um...and ya, so I suppose, then, I felt more...like...I felt like it was a more African situation. And *there* I felt more...you know, like in tune with my identity as a South African, because it was a..it was people who live, like, a couple of kilometres away from me, you know, that sort of, realisation that I'm not just alone...or, like, locked up...or, you know, in a...a small cult. Ya...

Int: [laughs]...it does seem like a cult sometimes, hey...

I-5: Yes

Int: Great, thank you...um...do you think that they are - this practice, and the environment and sense of identity – do you think that they are mutually exclusive? I mean, other than those sorts of times where you are, um...such as the one you've described – accompanying a choir – um...and, the situation where it's a little bit removed from 'the score', and the tradition of writing everything down...um, other than that, do you think that they're mutually exclusive? I mean...

I-5: What do you mean by that?

Int: Uh...is there ever going to be a time and place where – that you can imagine – this western-derived tradition takes on an African identity? In the sense of African- or South African-ness...

I-5: Hmm...well, I don't know. I mean, that's kind of treading dangerous ground, I think, because that would be kind of...you know, drawing further...like, lines between western art music and African...the concept of African-ness... I think, you know, that context was specifically an African context – when I was accompanying that choir. Not because I was not playing from notation and...I mean, I've done that

before, you know, just playing from chords, you know, or just playing along, with someone by using your own ear. But that's not...that's not...

Int: That's not particularly African either...

I-5: No, no, no – exactly. I think what made that an African thing – it was hardly the fact that it was, like, an underprivileged African community...but also because, um...it kind of, brought to the fore my own feeling of being African, in that I...am...I'm a citizen of this country, and of this continent as much as they are. And I felt like, a sense of...empathy, and also...sympathy, no not sympathy...well, sympathy mixed with...I can't think of the word...there is one. But ya, um...I felt, like a sense of...solidarity with these people. And I think, you know...because I'm not...ya, that's what I mean. And it's that sort of...I mean, I'm just thinking now that outreach is probably, one of the...times when I've felt my...that the two...you know, coalesce. But generally, I'm not sure how else to answer your question.

Int: [laughs]...ya, well...it's a tricky question, I mean, it might not even be relevant. Alright, last one – what type of music do you enjoy listening to? And if there are specific genres or performers that appeal to, are you able to cite any reasons, and specifically any extra-musical reasons for that?

I-5: OK...well, ya...I mean, my musical taste is rather shocking...[laughs]... I mean, I'm almost embarrassed to tell you that, being a good interview candidate, I'll do my best...ya, no, I like...to listen to, you know, orchestral music – such as Beethoven, Mahler, Sibelius....and then I also like...ya, I like Wagner Operas – especially Tristan und Isolde. And then I like...the piano music of Scriabin, Ravel, Beethoven, Chopin...and then, ya, and then when I'm not listening to classical music – which is probably most of the time because most of the time I'm sick of hearing classical music, and I'd rather not – then I like to listen to..ya, just basic mainstream popular music – pop. Uh...ya, thinking of artists I like – I like, mostly female artists, which probably is quite telling...[laughs]

Int: [laughs]

I-5: I like, Madonna. Not just as a personality, I actually do like her music – I'm the...one of those hardcore fans. I actually have...all of her CDs, from the first Madonna album where she's sitting on the thing and she's like eleven years old, to like...

Int: wow.

I-5: I know...[sarcastically] I'm not proud of it, but...but, ya, I guess...an extra-musical reason way I like her...you know, I've always been interested...well, not interested, but...that strong, independent...and...also, you know, slightly fabulous female has, kind of, always appealed to me. And I think that's...ya, that idea, plus, you know, it's like, that...kind of. I mean, it doesn't necessarily always have to be female, but that kind of...sexually ambiguous, powerful image, has always been a big thing for me. And also, ya, there's that glamour and allure to it. The same as there is to...um...like, classical pianists. A lot of them also have that kind of...air around them, that...I really enjoy. Ya...um...who else...ya...no, but generally, like, really...gay pop music, is it. [2nd tape cuts out] Oh, great! We're out of time.

Int: No, we're not...

I-5: Oh...

New tape

Int: OK, so, can you elaborate on that point for me – the sexually ambiguous, powerful image, the...

I-5: Oh...no, well the sexually ambiguous part is just...that just relates to Madonna! [laughs] Like, I don't know if Alfred Brendel is all that sexually ambiguous...

Int: [laughs]...

I-5: That's the side of her, as a performer, that I like and which appeals to me... Ya, I mean, that I felt sexually ambiguous – the joke of my life! But um...no, it's that sort of, I think that idea of a confident, commanding and powerful performer, which she is, and which a lot of pianists who I admire are – that's the kind of thing that I...hope to be able to project myself.

Int: So it's aspiration that you...

I-5: Yes, definitely. Yes...ya, because, I mean...you know, it's a long established tradition, and I'm not really looking to...break the mould here. I mean, I'd be happy to just follow in their footsteps. Ya...I mean, I do think that...classical music, and a lot of...so much of piano music is actually valuable music – it's beautiful, and moving, and...I think it's...if not important, then it's, like...or necessary...it still enriches, the life. Like I feel like...people who don't have an appreciation for...the finer music of classical music, have a much less rich life. Even though they might have a great life – it's less rich...you know? That's what my...

Int: OK...OK, great. Is there...OK, your musicianship, and the piano as your instrument – is there a connection there to your homosexual identity? Or, are those kind of coincidence...?

I-5: Well, I don't know...I mean, you know that's also, I feel dangerous. I mean, it's one thing to say...you know...saying that being homosexual and being an artist is like saying women should be in caregiving positions. I mean, I wouldn't like to...make that point coz...coz I don't know. I don't think...I mean, to me, I think that, with homosexuality, there's a lot of baggage that comes with it, just because of the kind of society, and the...reality of, you know, I mean, the fact that it's illegal in countries and that it's not...you know, you can't marry someone of the same sex. Or you can't, you know, or that you'll find such widespread, kind of, prejudice. Um...you know that does give you a lot of baggage, and a lot of pain, which I think is...is, probably why, you know, homosexuality is associated so much with art – because pain informs so much of art, and...There're a lot of very famous pianists who were also incidentally homosexual. But I don't think that, um, you know, if I was not homosexual, that I would not be a pianist, or...vice versa clearly it doesn't make any sense [laughs]...ya so, I mean, to me it's always like...to me, homosexuality, as much as it's a component of my identity, is just at the same time, a sexual preference, that I feel is inherent, and it's not something...it's not something...

Int: ...a choice you decided on...

I-5: No, exactly, and I mean...indeed, if it was a choice, I don't think it's a choice very many people who are gay would have made. So, to me, it doesn't really...inform a lot of, you know, my actions... I mean, I can look at it now, having...you know, lived with it...with a sense of irony. It is...you know...you do get a lot of...crazy homosexuals...[jokingly] but um...ya, it never...it doesn't...I mean, ya, all the things you would associate with it, like weakness...and just things that I've felt have always been associated with it, like, you know, nothing physical, but emotional weakness, or like, hypersensitivity, you know – the negative stereotypes...um, you know, I don't feel that I have those characteristics, like I think I'm...I mean if not physically strong, then at least you know, I'm a, kind of, resilient person. And also, I don't feel that I'm, you know, hyper-emotional, or you know, or, shallow, or highly sexed, or any of those things. So...my identity, as a homosexual is probably far different to, one you'd envision for, you know, anybody else. Because for me, it's a personal thing, it's not something I really speak about. Even to people I'm close with, I don't, it's not...I mean, I feel like I'd be a private person no matter what. And also, it doesn't really inform my personality...well, I mean, it has led to...you know, being that I've been exposed to kind of prejudice and a lot of harassment – that sort of thing – like,

difficult stuff like that, I mean, it's made me a stronger...person...and...ya, it's definitely given me like a reservoir of...anguish to draw on, I mean, should I so choose, but...I don't know, I don't know if I would say that, um...it's as, related to...[my being a musician]...in the same way as being South African is, you know... It's sort of irrelevant – you don't need to be South African to play the piano.

Int: Right. Great, thank you very much, [1-5]

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Note: The responses appear exactly as the respondents completed and returned them. Any errors in spelling and grammar have been left unedited. Only minor format changes have been made for easier reading.

Questionnaire Respondent No. 1

Questionnaire returned on 27 November 2009

Code Q-1

1) Please provide your age and state whether you are male or female.

24, female

2) Please state whether or not you are studying music at an institution of higher learning (please name the institution, if yes) or are otherwise pursuing a career in music, also indicating your principal instrument.

I am currently busy with my Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance at the University of North Texas, Denton.

3) Describe your earliest musical memory/your earliest memory of music...

My earliest memory of music occurred when I was around the age of three. My grandparents were looking after me while my parents were out, and I happened to be particularly restless and difficult that evening. They tried to entertain me in various ways, none of which worked. Eventually, out of desperation, they seated me at the piano. Suddenly I was completely calm and started happily plonking away at the keyboard (which must have sounded horrific!). I think that I can say that from then on, piano has always been my 'happy place', where I am able to forget about my worries and problems.

**4) a) What do you think defines you as a person? What are the various traits/characteristics that you think make you who you are?
(this question in particular is intended to be viewed as broadly as possible – please include as many points of reference as you wish. These *may* include, but are not limited to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, social groups.)**

It might sound clichéd, but I believe that a great part of my identity comes from being a musician. By this I don't mean that there is nothing else in my life apart from music - on the contrary, I have a wide variety of interests of which many have absolutely nothing to do with music. However, the path that music has taken me, has had a great influence on my personality in various ways. Having played piano seriously from an early age has forced me to learn valuable traits such as perseverance, self-discipline, dedication, focus, working

towards goals, the ability to handle criticism, how to express my feelings and creativity, bouncing back after disappointments, and so many more. Inevitably, especially at a later stage where being a musician is so much about expressing your own artistic individuality and ideas, music becomes an integral part of your personality, where it is impossible to separate yourself from your musicianship. I think it is a normal and necessary part of growing as musician to have a personal identity that is closely intertwined with your musical identity. In the end, getting up on stage and playing is all about expressing your own unique voice, experience and perspectives, not only about music, but also about life.

Being far away from home for some time has also made me realise how integral my South-Africanness is to my broader personal identity. I am not only very patriotic about my country; I also take pride in the traits that I believe come from living in a diverse country such as SA - tolerance towards people of all backgrounds and cultures, warmth, humbleness and openness. These are characteristics that many international friends have noted they associate with South Africans, and I believe it is not coincidental.

b) Does your musicianship make you feel different from the greater society? How does it impact your interaction with others in society?

Yes and no. Yes, because of course as musicians we like to believe that we are busy with something that is in some way elevated from the mundane things of everyday life. We are pursuing careers in music because we really have passion for it, and not because it is an easy path, and certainly not because it is an easy way to make money! This obviously differs greatly from the reasons why many people choose the careers they are in. I also believe that music is the only career that really combines the spiritual, the emotional and the intellectual in equal measures. On the other hand, this is a very idealistic way of viewing music, and of course all of us know that we don't always feel all that passionate and inspired about music - often it is just a large amount of sweat, hard work and frustration! So from this aspect, music is also a job as any other - one with ups and downs, troubles and joys. I guess in some ways it does impact my interaction with others in society - because music is such an integral part of my personality (it is not only a job, but also a way of life) it is perhaps more difficult to communicate with people who don't understand anything about it, or who don't respect it. Also because we are so absorbed in what we do, we tend to stick around with other musicians in our free time as well - it is just so much easier to choose company that really understands what you do. However, I guess people pursuing other careers could probably say the same thing, so I don't know how valid this point is.

5) Why did you decide to pursue music as a career?

It is not so much that I chose music as career; it is just that I could not imagine my life without it! By the time that I had to decide what I want to study, I was already used to spending 4 hours a day on my instrument, so it just seemed like the most natural choice to make. It was an intuitive decision more than anything else, but if I think about it rationally, I would say that what draws me to music is the way it challenges me in every aspect. As I mentioned before, it demands a lot of one emotionally, spiritually and intellectually. Furthermore, it is always changing, posing new challenges, letting you express your own individuality and creativity, and demanding utmost dedication and focus. And it is

impossible to do if you are not completely in love with it. I just really like the way it engages me on every level, and how it is always a process rather than an end destination (this particular aspect also makes it very frustrating at times!) Of course there is also something alluring about going up on stage, touching people's souls with music, and getting recognition for one's massive amounts of hard work. I just could never imagine myself in a 9 to 5 job, doing exactly the same things, day after day, year after year...

6) How important is it for you to be a musician? (aside from occupational/financial considerations...as if they did not exist)

- **Why? What about music gives it this great import in your life?**

It is very important indeed, because (as I explained before) it is not just something I do, it IS me. Music is way of viewing the world, of expressing myself to the world, and also of having a special place in the world.

7) How important is being a *pianist*? (as opposed to playing other instruments...)

- **If it is very important, what about the piano/piano music makes it so?**
- **If it is not that important, why? What is more important?**

I would not say that my experience of music is directly related to being a pianist - I am sure it would have been very similar if not exactly the same if I played another instrument. Of course I have a special affinity to the piano - it is the instrument I first fell in love with, and I love its sounds, its possibilities, its touch, and even its physical attributes. However, I would not say it is not important to my musicianship that I am a pianist - if I was exposed to another instrument at an early age, I might have felt the same affinity to it, and I am sure I would become a musician anyway (except perhaps if it was the flute....!!) Of course the most important of all is being a musician in the best and most honest way you can, regardless of the instrument you do it on.

8) How important is it for you to perform in public, and why?

- **Why not simply learn and play music for your own pleasure?**
(this question is particularly important, please answer as comprehensively as possible, elaborating every point.)

To me it is not only important to perform in public, it is essential. Aside from the practical considerations (it gives you something to work towards, it lets you earn - some - money...), an important part of cultivating our artistic personas is expressing that individuality to the public by means of music. What would be the point of finding our own voice if it is never heard? There are two things that I find most satisfying as musician - the first is to be able to express myself completely on stage (those goose bump-moments that there are no obstacles - technical or otherwise - between you and your music) and the second is feeling that I am able to touch people with the gift I have. For example, there is nothing better than someone saying that they had tears in their eyes while you were playing. I think there is something in our personalities as musicians that greatly feeds off this special energy.

9) Tell me about the music you most enjoy performing...

- **Why? What about this music/type of music draws you to it?**

Late Russian Romantic music - in particular Rachmaninoff! I know, how cliché... Of course the affinity I feel towards this music relates directly to the expressive possibilities it offers. Whereas in earlier music there are certain stylistic constraints that need to be adhered to (which restrict your individuality, to a certain degree), in late Romantic music, anything is possible, as long as you do it with conviction and feeling, and in good taste. People also seem to have less rigid ideas of how it should sound - you don't get purists in Romantic music as you would get in Baroque or Classical music. Of course, on a basic level the music is also really beautiful to listen to and to play, and even physically enjoyable to practice. I am simply more able to throw myself emotionally into late Romantic music than any other type of music, and this is very rewarding.

10) On South Africa/South African-ness/African-ness

a) Do you consider yourself to be 'South African'? What does being 'South African' mean to you? i.e. how do you define your South African-ness? (What about you makes you South African, what makes you *not* South African, if that is the case?)

I definitely do consider myself South African. The first obvious reason for this is that I was born and raised there, and until now have never lived in any other country. I also feel that my mother tongue - Afrikaans - makes me distinctly South African, as it is spoken in no other part of the world. The fact that I am proud of my country and its diverse people also contributes to the sense of belonging I feel there. Furthermore, as I have mentioned before, South African people have certain common attributes that I would like to believe are also strongly represented in my personality.

b) Do you consider yourself 'African'? If so, what does being 'African' mean to you? How is it different from your sense of South African-ness, if applicable?

I do consider myself "African" in the sense that I feel belong in Africa. I also feel a strong sense of kinship with my fellow Africans. In my mind, I do not feel that there is any difference between my South Africanness and my Africanness. However, I can understand that some people might want to make a distinction between South African with European ancestry and South Africans with African ancestry, in which I case I would obviously fall in the former category.

c) How do you view your music performance activities (specifically the genre 'classical' music) in the context of your sense of South African/African identity? Are they integral to it? Are they autonomous from it? What is the nature of the relationship, if there is one? (this question is particularly important)

I believe that they are integral to it. As I said before, I believe that my musical personality is very much intertwined with my broader identity. At the same time, my South Africanness also constitutes a major part of me as a person. By implication, my music performance activities are also to a great extent an expression as well as a result of my identity as South African. The experiences I have absorbed in my 24 years of living in a diverse country such as South Africa could never be separated from my musicianship. I think that in South Africa

we are used to be exposed to so much variety - in the broadest sense of the word, but also in terms of music, and this exposure obviously also influences how I view classical music. Furthermore, the fact that we are quite far removed from the Western Music tradition does pose unique challenges. Not only are we geographically isolated from Europe and America, we also have to deal with the fact that many European/American people don't believe that anything worthwhile could come from Africa/ South Africa in terms of classical music, just because we are not backed up by hundreds of years of musical tradition. There are so many silly prejudices (for example, a Russian actually asking me - "What? You play piano in Africa as well?!") which do not upset me, but just make me more determined to prove that I can be South African, as well as a good classical musician. I think this is a unique challenge that we, as South African musicians, should face head-on, rather than shying away from it.

11) Please list the different kinds of music (including specific performers/bands et cetera, if applicable) that you listen to. Please also describe any reasons that specific genres or performers appeal to you, citing in particular any extra-musical reasons.

Classical music - mostly piano music (performers such as Volodos, SOKolov, Richter, Horowitz, Argerich, Rubinstein, Pletnev, Hamelin, Kissin, Rachmaninoff, and many more) but also chamber music (with piano, mostly!) and symphonic music. These specific performers appeal to me for various reasons, but the most prominent reason is that each of them has a unique voice. Specific composers I like to listen to, include Bach, Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin, Brahms, Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, Medtner, PrOKofieff, Shostakovich, Rzewski, Kapustin, Piazzolla etc.

Other genres - Dave Matthews Band, Counting Crows, Pearl Jam, Smashing Pumpkins, Muse, Pixies, Abba, Queen, Tracy Chapman, Bob Marley, Rodriguez, Manu Chao, Cesaria Evora. Some of these I feel kind of sentimental about, because it is some of the first (non-classical) music I listened to in my life, such as Pearl Jam, Pixies, Smashing Pumpkins, and for that reason I still like it today. The others appeal to me often because of the mood it puts me in - either it calms me down, or it makes me nostalgic, or it makes me feel happy, or it makes me want to dance. Anything that I have some emotional reaction to, I usually like. Often it also just depends on the voice of the performer. I know, these are not very intellectual explanations for someone who is supposed to think and talk about music all day long!! But I do believe that we also sometimes just need to switch off rather than analysing why we like certain types of music - I think I have enough of that in my daily life, so when I listen to music other than classical music, I do it just for enjoyment.

Questionnaire returned on 8 December 2009

Code Q-2

1) Please provide your age and state whether you are male or female.

24, Male

2) Please state whether or not you are studying music at an institution of higher learning (please name the institution, if yes) or are otherwise pursuing a career in music, also indicating your principal instrument.

Yes, Piano, just finished MMUs at University of Stellenbosch, starting with Professional Studies Diploma at the Cleveland Institute of Music January 2010

3) Describe your earliest musical memory/your earliest memory of music...

I guess that would be the tapes we listened to in the car driving around when I was a small child. I remember specifically the ABBA tapes my father used to listen to; they are earliest music I can remember. Of course he also listened to other music from the era but that is vague.

4) a) What do you think defines you as a person? What are the various traits/characteristics that you think make you who you are?

What defines me is not dictated by the points of reference you suggest. If there is one thing that I have learnt so far is that a person should not try to define himself too absolutely, because in the end all you do is limit yourself. So yes, I am white gay male, which has to do with my skin colour and my preference of companionship, but not much else. There are, of course, stereotypes that go with any group or identify, and one cannot be help to be swept up by it. But in the end, what I think defines ME as a person (which is your question), is a combination of the way I was raised, the people around me, and the information I have, so far, subjectively, assimilated. I hope I'm answering the question coherently?

b) Does your musicianship make you feel different from the greater society? How does it impact your interaction with others in society?

Yes it does, to quite a great extent. Unfortunately I am blessed with many friends, family members and acquaintances that couldn't care less about the music I study (Western Art Music, Classical Music, and Serious Music, whatever you like to call it) which can lead to some unfortunate debates. I am seen as a music snob because I am not entertained by popular music, and I am frustrated that people close to me can have no appreciation for an art I consider devoting my life to.

5) Why did you decide to pursue music as a career?

It's what I do the best, and also what I enjoy the most. If I pursued any other career I would have been frustrated and always wondered what my life would have been like, had I pursued my passion.

6) How important is it for you to be a musician?

Very important, I become uneasy if I do not play piano for a certain period of time. - Why? What about music gives it this great import in your life? I guess it's programmed into me that one can never practice enough. And I really cannot live without it. When I have a choice on what music I listen to, it is either Western art music, or silence. Music happens in my life without thinking, and living without it would be empty for me.

7) How important is being a pianist?

At this stage of study I don't think I could change my instrument even if I wanted to. However, there is no instrument I would rather play. - If it is very important, what about the piano/piano music makes it so? I am passionate about piano music specifically. There is almost no Western art genre where the piano isn't featured prominently (except certain vocal genres, but what do the singers know anyway) and other instruments just do not excite me as much as the piano does. I have some respect for other instrumentalists, but in my (very limited and biased) experience pianists have to do all the work. And we do it well.

8) How important is it for you to perform in public, and why?

It is quite important, not only because I find it enjoyable to have a successful performance in front of an audience. I realise it is necessary for me to perform in public in the form of concerts and competitions if I ever want to make my mark in the music world. - Why not simply learn and play music for your own pleasure? Why does a doctor not simply learn anatomy and never work with a patient? While I recognise the importance of understanding a musical composition from various perspectives (theoretical, analytical, musical), being unable to put them to practice in the form of a performance would be utterly frustrating to me. I realise other people find pleasure in musical pursuits outside of performing on stage, but that is not the life for me. Indeed, if I had to study music without ever playing, I would probably choose an entirely different career altogether. Of course, some people might enjoy learning music just to play for themselves, but I like to share what I have learned with other people. After hours, weeks, months of practicing, I want to share the music I have studied with an audience. I want them to hear how fantastic the music is, I want them to hear how I myself will play it. I want acknowledgement that what I'm doing is beautiful and successful.

9) Tell me about the music you most enjoy performing...

Romantic music, mostly. That is, music from the era, such as by Liszt and Chopin.

- Why? What about this music/type of music draws you to it?

Romantic music is accessible to both music academics and most of the general public. It is generally easy to listen to even though one might have no education in music. And of

course, some Romantic literature is technically demanding, so you can show off a bit of that pianistic technique. In general I enjoy playing two types of piano music the most. The first is the show-off, virtuoso music, such as many Liszt pieces (the Mephisto Waltz and his Hungarian Rhapsodies come to mind). These pieces are often the pieces that put you apart from amateurs. With these pieces you make an impression on judges at competitions. At concerts, ending off a program with such a piece can bring the house to its feet. The second type is the lyrical, slow, Romantic music. I try to never just “play” the music, but actually “feel”, or “express” myself while I play. This is the easiest for me with lyrical, romantic pieces such as these. Often I would find myself enraptured by the music while I play. When this happens, I have found that many people attending the concert would tell me afterwards they were moved by it. So, even though I might impress people by playing fast and furious pieces, it is most satisfying to hear I have moved someone emotionally by playing a piece as beautiful as possible.

10) On South Africa/South African-ness/African-ness

a) Do you consider yourself to be ‘South African’? What does being ‘South African’ mean to you? i.e. how do you define your South African-ness? (What about you makes you South African, what makes you not South African, if that is the case?)

Yes, most definitely. I was born in South Africa, as were my parents and grandparents. This is what makes one South African according to me, even though it might be a purely technical viewpoint. I might move to any country abroad, live there for the rest of my life, but I will always remain South African, because this is the country of my birth, the country where I was raised. Perhaps what makes me South African is the fact that I am proud of being an South African, I do not want to move to another country, I do not think the grass is greener on the other side, I do not complain about the problems in the country. Even though I might go abroad, my plan is always to come back to my home country and live here.

b) Do you consider yourself ‘African’? If so, what does being ‘African’ mean to you? How is it different from your sense of South African-ness, if applicable?

Yes of course, I am after all born and raised in Africa. Africa, according to me, has to do with the continent, not with other stereotypes. The nonsense the Americans started by calling black people “African-American” is truly irritating. If I should marry an American and become a citizen of the United States, I would be African-American, and I am not black. For many people “African” is synonymous with “poverty” or “safari”. I do not identify with any of these stereotypes. I am African because I was born here. It is different from being South African I guess, because South Africa is considered to be more Western / European than the rest of the continent; however I am proud to be considered both.

c) How do you view your music performance activities (specifically the genre ‘classical’ music) in the context of your sense of South African/African identity? Are they integral to it? Are they autonomous from it? What is the nature of the relationship, if there is one?

I do not see how my performance activities plays a role in influencing my South African identify, for I can perform anywhere in the world without influencing my South African-ness. However, I would, and have been, proud to represent my country internationally, and I would always boast about the quality of Western art music in my country when travelling abroad. Perhaps because I am a classical musician, I do not enjoy local popular music as much, and as such, do not share that type of culture with other South Africans, yet I still feel that the history of Western art music in South Africa is sufficient so that I can be part of a legacy that is connected with my country, as well as be part of a music community in South Africa that is unique.

11) Please list the different kinds of music (including specific performers/bands et cetera, if applicable) that you listen to. Please also describe any reasons that specific genres or performers appeal to you, citing in particular any extra-musical reasons.

When listening to music, I only listen to Western art music. When driving somewhere with someone else in the car, I will put the radio station on 5fm to accommodate the non-musicians in my life, however, when I am by myself I will listen to a classical CD. I do not own any CD's by any popular bands or musicians (I do however own a Jamie Cullum CD, which I was given as a gift, and told to put on when I am entertaining guests; apparently not everybody enjoys the music I listen to).

Questionnaire Respondent No. 3

Questionnaire returned on 10 December 2009

Code Q-3

1) Please provide your age and state whether you are male or female.

22, female

2) Please state whether or not you are studying music at an institution of higher learning (please name the institution, if yes) or are otherwise pursuing a career in music, also indicating your principal instrument.

Piano, University of Cape Town, South African College of Music

3) Describe your earliest musical memory/your earliest memory of music...

The earliest I can remember is singing along to a song in the movie "HoOK" (about Peter Pan, with actor Robin Williams- the song where the little girl sings to the pirates to save her & her brother's life. Old movie, I know it's lame but I was about four or five at the time.) When I first knew I wanted to learn piano was when I saw my sister play, I was about five. She would improvise at the piano and then pretend she was reading the music from a boOK (with words, like a fictional boOK). I was greatly disappointed after a few weeks of lessons to find out that I won't be learning how to convert words to music. I thought it would be like some kind of secret code that I would always have for myself. Nevertheless, even though I couldn't stand my first teacher, I knew after my first lesson that I wanted to be a pianist. It was the mix of the challenge, the solitude (in a good way), and the complete embrace of my attention (and therefore a temporary shutting out of the world) that first attracted me to the piano. Strangely, I only understood the beauty of the music later, which I think might be a good thing, because if I was loOKing for any beauty in those first couple of weeks I would probably have quit. (think: practising how to play C's for an hour). Some people think it's harder for children to do classical music than, e.g. sport because very few kids are really into it, but I don't know if I would have been that interested in music if everyone did it. At times it was lonely but it did make me feel special and unique, as though I was in possession of a treasure that most could never have.

4) a) What do you think defines you as a person? What are the various traits/characteristics that you think make you who you are? (this question in particular is intended to be viewed as broadly as possible? please include as many points of reference as you wish. These may include, but are not limited to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, social groups.)

I am a white, heterosexual female from a privileged background- obviously this affects who I am but I don't think it's at the core of my being. I can't think of one specific thing that makes me different from all others as I am very adaptable to most situations so I don't usually stand out in my weirdness. But I can describe my characteristics:

- A person who prefers to be alone but don't mind being in the company of good friends or people who entertain me. Generally, however, being around people tends to suck the energy out of me and I definitely need alone time to recharge and structure my thoughts.
- I sometimes have different personalities it seems- at times I am completely impulsive and carefree, and other times I am neurotic and controlling but I always go into these moods where they are appropriate and needed most. So in a way, everything is always thought out to a certain extent, even if it's that I'm "planning" to be impulsive. It makes me feel like I am one step ahead and more in control.
- I am very disciplined.
- I am very selfish with my own time and often put my own needs for my top priorities before others. However, on the lower priorities I am prepared to sacrifice.
- I am temperamental and easy lose my temper but most of the time I can control it so well you would never know. But then when I lose it, I really lose it badly.
- I am a bit obsessive compulsive.
- I am competitive
- Addicted to coffee, cigarettes and whatever can give me an adrenaline rush
- I am very determined and rarely give up
- Challenges excite me
- I try to be fair and rational and open minded and I generally don't really care what other people's personal choices are but I have boundaries that I will never cross even if they are not rational.
- I am religious- Christian but no specific denomination, I would prefer to make up my own mind. Generally I hate being told what to think- I don't mind that much being told what to do though.
- People often tell me to see a psychologist

b) Does your musicianship make you feel different from the greater society? How does it impact your interaction with others in society?

Yes, it definitely makes me feel different. I socialise with music students most of the time so it is only when I come into contact with non-musicians that I realise how all-consuming music is. We actually socialise with musical terminology ("and then she threw a cadenza and just started shouting at everyone- fortissimo! Molto dramatic!" - only musicians understand), our daily lives, concerns and stresses revolves around the music we play, music competitions, difficult musicians, and for someone to understand, they need to be in the business. I find that the longer I am a music student, the more I get bored with conversations with "other" people. And most of the time I don't know what's going on in the rest of the world because I am in a practice room.

5) Why did you decide to pursue music as a career?

If I didn't I wouldn't have been able to attend music concerts without crying. I would have been bitter and intensely jealous of any pianist. I would like to have a career that isn't behind a desk and doesn't end at 5, if something is more demanding it is also more rewarding. But piano was the only thing I could imagine doing for so many hours every day without feeling like I'm missing out on life.

- 6) How important is it for you to be a musician? (aside from occupational/financial considerations...as if they did not exist)**
- **Why? What about music gives it this great import in your life?**

Firstly, when you play something and you get that feeling of satisfaction, you can always achieve something new, reach a new goal even if you have been doing music for decades. Secondly, when you listen to devastatingly beautiful music, you know that you are part of the picture of that classical music. Also, the more you learn about it, the more worlds open up for your imagination - it never gets old and it's probably the only art form which no two people will ever feel exactly the same about. When I don't do music I become very depressed and, strangely, alone. I also feel like I lose control of my life.

- 7) How important is being a pianist? (as opposed to playing other instruments?)**
- **If it is very important, what about the piano/piano music makes it so?**
- **If it is not that important, why? What is more important?**

Yes it is very important for me that I'm a pianist. I know we don't really participate in chamber music quite the same way as a violinist (they can usually busk their way through rehearsals but we always have to learn our notes beforehand. Also, we play 20 times as many notes but get paid the same) and we can never really be part of a group like in an orchestra. Just the character of the instrument makes it inherently impossible to really blend on any sound/social level. But we are one of the few instruments that can really be solo onstage. (also an organ, but seriously, loOK at their repertoire) Because of the fact that our sound doesn't blend we can actually be heard with an orchestra even if they aren't playing pianissimo. Our instrument has the most colouristic and sonorous possibilities and can play harmonically as well as melodically which makes the music written for piano less monotonous than, say, a flute recital.

- 8) How important is it for you to perform in public, and why?**
- **Why not simply learn and play music for your own pleasure?**
(this question is particularly important, please answer as comprehensively as possible, elaborating every point.)

Because you learn the most about yourself and the music onstage. If you never perform a piece of music, there will be great parts of it that will always be unknown to you. Only when you try to explain or show the music to other people (in other words: perform) do you really force yourself to understand the music. All practicing for me leads to performance. I want other people to be able to get as excited about the pieces I play as I do. Also, when the audience reacts particularly well, the feeling of power is indescribable. Knowing that I have a public performance coming up will also make me push myself harder, to get the music to a quality that I might not have reached without some pressure.

- 9) Tell me about the music you most enjoy performing?**
- **Why? What about this music/type of music draws you to it?**

Hard to say. Concerto's are probably my favourite. The excitement of playing with an orchestra. The music I least enjoy performing would be Bach, I love practicing it, but onstage it makes me doubt myself and I tense up. I probably prefer late Romantic, early modern like Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev and Ravel. I enjoy the contrasting textures, the freedom to really dig into the sound if you want, the relative freedom of interpretation, the kinkiness of Prokofiev, the sound waves and then sudden moments of articulation of Ravel and Rachmaninoff, interesting harmonies without being too jarring, the contrapuntal elements of Prokofiev and generally the well thought out structures of the music of all three (but especially Ravel and Prokofiev).

10) On South Africa/South African-ness/African-ness

Do you consider yourself to be 'South African'? What does being 'South African' mean to you? i.e. how do you define your South African-ness? (What about you makes you South African, what makes you not South African, if that is the case?)

I am South African. I grew up here, both my parents are South African and my home language is Afrikaans which is an SA language. When I go to European countries I can feel the cultural difference.

b) Do you consider yourself 'African'? If so, what does being 'African' mean to you? How is it different from your sense of South African-ness, if applicable?

I don't know if I feel African. South Africa is in my mind quite different than the rest of Africa. I am also not very patriotic- in my mind you aren't South African because of a certain trait or characteristic, you are South African if you grew up here. But I feel like I grew up in a more 'international' rather than traditionally African way- my lifestyle is very un-'African'.

c) How do you view your music performance activities (specifically the genre "classical" music) in the context of your sense of South African/African identity? Are they integral to it? Are they autonomous from it? What is the nature of the relationship, if there is one? (this question is particularly important)

Well, there is no link between me being a musician and me being South African. However, being separated from Europe and America does make me feel left out and insecure about my abilities. I always feel that they must be much better than us because they have such a rich and far-reaching background with Classical Music. It's also hard to attend international summer schools and festivals with the Rand being so weak. And because SA can't afford many top quality international artist I often wonder what is the quality that we're getting from our concerts – it's hard if you have nothing to compare it to and recordings don't count because they only reflect a small percentage of overseas concerts and are most of the time not 'real' situations. I am also sad that we have so many talented musicians in our country who get very little performing opportunities because of lack of funding, venues and interest. My private listening experiences also depend on the limited stock our CD shops get, and how do I know what to order if I can't even listen to it beforehand. I also find that it is hard to get an audience who really loves proper classical music, a lot just want to listen to

some short, nice pieces which mean I often have to sacrifice what I want to play for lack of an informed/interested audience. Perhaps if more South Africans were interested in Classical music, there would be more people interested per area within Classical music.

11) Please list the different kinds of music (including specific performers/bands et cetera, if applicable) that you listen to. Please also describe any reasons that specific genres or performers appeal to you, citing in particular any extra-musical reasons.

Mostly only Classical - piano works and symphonies. Especially Martha Argerich, Daniel Barenboim, Alicia de Larocha, Nelson Freire, Marc-Andre Hamelin, Emil Gilels.

I also enjoy violin and cello music but would voluntarily listen to woodwind music. I never really used to enjoy singers that much but lately it started to change, first with the French Art song and then with an interest in the technical virtuosity of Cecilia Bartoldi.

Almost the only non-Classical music I listen to is Muse and Radiohead. I rarely listen to 5fm these days (it has gotten progressively worse with the horrible dance music) and almost never to Kfm. I am never exposed to non-Classical music except if I go out and then I find myself being annoyed with the music.

Questionnaire Respondent No. 4

Questionnaire returned on 4 March 2010

Code Q-4

1) Please provide your age and state whether you are male or female.

male in his late twenties... LOL:-D

2) Please state whether or not you are studying music at an institution of higher learning (please name the institution, if yes) or are otherwise pursuing a career in music, also indicating your principal instrument.

University of Cape Town: Piano

3) Describe your earliest musical memory/your earliest memory of music...

Ever since I can remember, all my dreams have always been accompanied by music... always... So, I think that would my earliest memory of music

4) a) What do you think defines you as a person? What are the various traits/characteristics that you think make you who you are? (this question in particular is intended to be viewed as broadly as possible – please include as many points of reference as you wish. These may include, but are not limited to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, social groups.)

Tough one! My past, my future and my presence define me... therefore me living my life... the art of life... and all accompanied by music...

b) Does your musicianship make you feel different from the greater society? How does it impact your interaction with others in society?

I think we are all different... it quite difficult for me to answer this question because even when I'm with musicians and or other artists, I always feel different...

5) Why did you decide to pursue music as a career?

I don't think I decided... who the hell wants to spend hours and hours in a practice room trying to pursue or achieve perfection while knowing all too well that it is humanly not possible... FOR ME, MUSIC WAS/ IS A CALLING.

6) How important is it for you to be a musician? (aside from occupational/financial considerations...as if they did not exist)

- **Why? What about music gives it this great import in your life?**

Asking me this question is like asking a doctor how important is oxygen, water, food and sex to all living beings... like I said, IT IS MY LIFE... A DIVINE ART... MY CALLING full stop!!

- 7) **How important is being a pianist? (as opposed to playing other instruments...)**
- **If it is very important, what about the piano/piano music makes it so?**
 - **If it is not that important, why? What is more important?**

I think... no actually I know... that the reason why God chose the piano for me is because of wide range of expression... it is the KING OF INSTRUMENTS as Lionel Bowman once said. It's really an extension of the soul.... my soul.

- 8) **How important is it for you to perform in public, and why?**
- **Why not simply learn and play music for your own pleasure?**
(this question is particularly important, please answer as comprehensively as possible, elaborating every point.)

It is crucial for me to tell "the story"... "the story" that all human beings know.. but none of us can put it into words... THE DIVINE STORY WHICH WE ALL POSSESS AND LIVE AND KNOW... art is the closest we can get to articulating "the story"... and music is the highest (lack of a better work) of all the arts... and for me, performing in public, is just a constant reminder of "the story"...a constant reminder of humanity... AND I GET EXTREME PLEASURE FROM IT. LOL :-)

- 9) **Tell me about the music you most enjoy performing...**
- **Why? What about this music/type of music draws you to it?**

oh my goodness, this changes all the time... usually, I end up playing pieces that "reflect" my life experiences from when I was born until then... actually, not just my own experiences but LIFE IN GENERAL... someone once said that ART IMITATES LIFE later Michelangelo (I think it was him) said no, LIFE IMITATES ART... and centuries later, John Ntsepe say: LIFE IS ART AND ART IS LIFE... WE HAVE THE GREATEST AND MOST DIVINE MARRIAGE... UNION, ONENESS HERE... OK... let me get to the point: PERFORMING (for me) IS ANOTHER FORM OF AN AWARENESS OF ALL THAT I HAVE JUST MENTIONED.

10) **On South Africa/South African-ness/African-ness**

- a) **Do you consider yourself to be 'South African'? What does being 'South African' mean to you? i.e. how do you define your South African-ness? (What about you makes you South African, what makes you not South African, if that is the case?)**

Good heavens... and we all know how "fashionable" it is to be South African these days... CIRCUS... LOL:-D anyways, yes I am South African... being South African just means being born at the BOTTOM OF EVERYTHING... LOL:-D really nothing more nothing less... WE ARE ALL HUMAN BEINGS... THAT'S IT!

- b) **Do you consider yourself 'African'? If so, what does being 'African' mean to you? How is it different from your sense of South African-ness, if applicable?**

THE ANSWER FOR 10a APPLIES HERE TOO.

- c) **How do you view your music performance activities (specifically the genre 'classical' music) in the context of your sense of South African/African identity? Are they integral to it? Are they autonomous from it? What is the nature of the relationship, if there is one? Do you ever have the sense of there being a conflict? Do you ever feel conflicted about what you do or where you live in relation to what you do? (this question/set of questions is particularly important)**

THIS QUESTION IS IRRELEVANT (well, for me) BECAUSE IVE SAID, WE ARE ALL HUMAN BEINGS... that's why Russians can play german music and South Africans can play Austrian music.. etc etc etc... WE ARE ALL HUMAN BEINGS..... and we are dealing with the "highest of arts" which we dare not hinder it with our HUMAN LIMITATIONS: race, colour, country, continent, family status, etc, etc ,etc...

- 11) **Please list the different kinds of music (including specific performers/bands et cetera, if applicable) that you listen to. Please also describe any reasons that specific genres or performers appeal to you, citing in particular any extra-musical reasons.**

I LISTEN ALL MUSIC THAT ATTRACTS ME... WHETHER IT BE CLASSICAL, JAZZ, POP, RNB, RAP, 1920s to 1990s... whatever... IF IT "TOUCHES MY SOUL", I LISTEN TO IT...

END OF APPENDICES