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# A BITTERSWEET SYMPHONY

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*THE EXPERIENCE OF WORKING  
LIVES AND CARING DUTIES IN  
CLASSICAL MUSIC*

**OCTOBER 2022**



PARENTS & CARERS  
IN PERFORMING ARTS

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# FOREWORD

This is the first in-depth insight report documenting the experience of parents and carers working in classical music. It builds on the 2018 release of PiPA's benchmark **Balancing Act** report, looking at the impact of caring responsibilities across the performing arts, and on our previous extensive research in the theatre industry. Conducted in collaboration with the Department of Organisational Psychology at Birkbeck, University of London, this report focusses on the personal and systemic challenges faced by parents and carers in classical music and their impact on intersectionality in the workforce.

It is clear that current working practices do not fit easily with the responsibilities of family life and that Covid has amplified this pre-existing issue. Musicians who are parents and carers make constant personal compromises in order to meet the frequently conflicting demands of their two worlds. This often comes at the cost of mental and physical wellbeing, and for many, especially for women or for those without family or additional income to call on, it results in people leaving the industry. Individuals can do only so much to square the circle. To build an industry that is inclusive of parents and carers, that retains talent it is currently losing, will require fresh thinking about accepted norms. I am pleased that this report is able to draw on good practice already being developed in the industry as the basis for our recommendations for sustainable and systemic change. The UK's world-class classical music industry and the individuals within it will benefit.

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## Nota bene

There are two issues which the authors wish to signpost to our readership. First, some readers might find aspects of the material of high personal relevance as they may have had similar experiences which they have or have not been able to share with others. However, it's been our duty to share the data 'as is'. Secondly though, while we made efforts to report the data accurately, we had to be mindful not to inadvertently disclose personal details which may have made participants identifiable, particularly those who took part in the focus groups and interviews. We had to balance accurate reporting with the need to keep the report to a manageable length, and the need to safeguard anonymity.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**This report discusses the barriers to sustainable careers faced by parents and carers, a sub-sector of every protected characteristic and socio-economic background, who struggle to meet the unique requirements of the classical music sector whilst supporting children, elderly or sick family members.**

We triangulated survey data from 410 participants, data from 25 participants in three online focus groups, eight participants across three in-depth interviews. We asked everyone about their current job structures; their earnings; how they had experienced changes in work opportunities; and their work-life balance. We then made comparisons by women and men, and by caring status.

Challenges faced by people with caring responsibilities include:

- The logistics and financial demands arising from touring and working away
- Unpredictable and inflexible scheduling adding to the complexities of childcare
- Lack of affordable, flexible, ad-hoc childcare
- The need for regular rigorous practice to maintain skills requiring dependable support without support mechanisms
- The requirement to meet inflexible demands of additional work, such as teaching, in order to sustain a career as a classical musician.

Traditional and accepted working practices combined with high job demands become significantly more challenging when people take on caring responsibilities. Classical music demands high standards to maintain quality and international reputation. Research participants reported lack of work-life balance and placing themselves under considerable stress to continue meeting such standards. There is greater impact on women, who are likely to work and earn less, and those without social capital. Only by re-evaluating established working practices, can we begin to tackle wellbeing impacts, inclusion and diversity, and potential loss of talent. We need to jointly craft sustainable, considered and flexible practices, HR policies and processes, to address the talent haemorrhage.

“Touring for months at a time [is my biggest challenge.] Leaving my family in order to work left many feelings of anxiety and regret re my family but for career purposes it was and still remains completely necessary as most of my work in the last decade has been outside the UK.”



## KEY FINDINGS

### JUGGLING CARING AND WORKING LIVES AND THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

**Financial precarity: the financially secure or those with additional income streams can more easily afford to continue a career in classical music and remain in the sector at the same time as supporting a family.** The long-term impact of the pandemic on parents and carers is multi-faceted with the financial repercussions and lost work opportunities still prevailing. Over half of our respondents report to be working less than before the pandemic, and nearly 40% had lost at least a day a week. The impact is that three quarters of respondents (65%) reported that income from music never or rarely covers unexpected costs and almost half of respondents (48%) reported that income from music never or rarely covers basic needs. This presents a significant risk of talent haemorrhage, specifically of freelance women who report the lowest median income of £12,000 from music (versus £20,000 for male freelancers) which is significantly below the threshold of the £19,305 living wage. Such low levels of income necessitate additional financial income to meet family responsibilities.

### WORK STRUCTURES AND CAREER SACRIFICES

**Gendered working structures: Work and caregiving structures in classical music are highly gendered; female talent appears to be under-utilised; mothers and female carers face greater career penalties.**

Women are more likely to be primary carers according to our data (89% versus 34% of male respondents). They are more likely to be self-employed than men (58% versus 48%) and men are nearly twice as likely to be in full-time employment (37% versus 20%). Looking at caring responsibility, 55% of parents and carers were self-employed versus 47% of those without caring responsibilities. More people without caring responsibilities worked fulltime (31%) versus those with caring responsibilities (17%); compared to more than half of families working with one child in the UK population having two fulltime working parents, and half of one-parent families working fulltime<sup>1</sup>. These figures are far lower than the national average and evidence an underutilisation of female talent.

Our data points to gendered experiences and prevailing traditional notions that women are to make career sacrifices when they become mothers and/or carers and take decisions to compromise. The perceived choice that mothers and female carers make to opt out of workforce opportunities is not a choice but a consequence of negative experiences in the workplace, where the structures to support women are not in place. The results suggest that women face greater career penalties, due to the part-time, precarious nature of self-employment, combined with a tendency to self-select out of opportunities because they are more likely to be primary carers. All these factors impact their earning potential.

### SOCIAL CAPITAL VERSUS LACK OF EMPLOYER SUPPORT

**Privilege: People rely on a network of support from family, partners or friends to help them manage work and family, and only 4% referenced a supportive employer.** The low-income baseline earned solely from Music means that many with caring responsibilities working in the industry have to rely on joint financial capital to make 'work' work.

The significant gulf (15-20%) between what music and household earnings cover likely excludes those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and compounds the impact on single parents. Equally, the data highlights the extent that social capital is used to minimise the impact of caring responsibilities. People rely on a network of support from family, partners or friends (mentioned as a key enabler by 40% of respondents) to help them manage work and family, yet only 4% referenced a supportive employer, and only two people referenced flexible working as a support.

Support to enable parents and carers to continue working comes from the personal and not the work domain, indicating that those who don't have help will struggle to stay in work. This is especially pertinent for those who face additional barriers to accessing work and the compounded impact of these obstacles to career progression is likely insurmountable. There is a clear need for more inclusive practices which include support for more flexible work structures.

## WORK-LIFE BALANCE, WELLBEING, AND THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF JUGGLING FAMILY AND WORK

**High job demands: The demanding nature of employment in classical music makes it impossible for many to manage work and family commitments.** Half of respondents (50%) are unsatisfied with their work-life balance and 82% reported managing work and family commitments as moderately to extremely stressful. The impact of the challenges faced by parents and carers is significant: finding and affording appropriate childcare; juggling caring with uncertain schedules; low pay and touring responsibilities, all with little, if any, support from employers.

**The pressures of perfectionism: The pressures of perfectionism: People are making a conscious decision to step away from their career in classical music because of caring responsibilities. Trying to juggle a music career with caring responsibilities had a profound emotional impact on quality of life which led to the artistic self being sacrificed. Almost all respondents feel the need to perform to exceptionally high standards.** We observed a link between caring duties and performance anxiety; the inner tension of not feeling insufficiently prepared, having been pulled in all directions, causing anxiety about whether a performance will be good enough, as well as a sense of failure about 'not having been able to make it work'. Across the focus groups and interviews, we heard that women habitually made conscious choices to put caring first and their artistic and other work second, self-selecting themselves out of applying for opportunities. Their responses carried a tone of regret and participants spoke repeatedly of being 'artistically starved'. In other words, parents and carers resigned for fear they would get a bad name or be sidelined. Four out of ten respondents said they were considering abandoning their careers.'

### RECOMMENDATIONS

During our research, several examples of Best Practices were shared that reflected experience we have had with music industry partners over the past six years. Our **key recommendations** are:

- **Best practice sharing** for UK industry stakeholders to engage with representatives from relevant music organisations where more structured timetabling and advance notice are the norm, as well as more family-friendly rehearsal hours.
- **Flexible working** should be considered and supported both formally and informally. Good business research is needed to consider long-term benefits in terms of retention, particularly in freelance roles where there is a potential under-supply.
- **Inclusion and intersectionality as a key focus:** genuine inclusion requires a culture shift and training to enhance knowledge, but also a change of hearts and minds and buy-in to the agenda of diversity at all levels. There needs to be continuous recording and sharing of diversity statistics to monitor progress, but also to identify potentially vulnerable groups. It is important to have diverse governance to ensure role modelling.
- **Enhanced** support for small organisations to ensure good practice but also to ensure breadth of cultural capital.
- Given the prevalence of **freelancers**, more support needs to be given to caregivers in this group, including organisational support, prompt payment of fees and equal access to benefits such as shared parental leave for freelancers and paternity allowance.
- Offer **training and career development** as part of music education at higher education institutions to prepare holistically for managing work and caring responsibilities.

Classical music demands high levels of performance to maintain its world-class standards, quality and international reputation. However, the combined realities of Covid, Brexit and the cost-of-living crisis are all having a profound effect on the workforce. These are exacerbated for those with caring responsibilities who appear to lack support to manage the pressures or navigate the demands.

In order to continue producing world-class performances and enabling our talented musicians, composers, opera singers and conductors from all backgrounds and circumstances to progress at every stage of their life and work, the industry needs to find better and more inclusive mechanisms to support and develop its talented workforce.





## RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

**This report sets out the latest PiPA research insights focusing on the experience of classical musicians and other professionals in this sector. More specifically, we investigate how people experience finance, work structures, and caring duties, as well as personal wellbeing, including personal and professional challenges. We report data on the impact of the pandemic.**

Our previous research (The Balancing Act Survey)<sup>ii</sup> highlighted that there are certain challenges more pertinent to musicians compared with artists in theatre and dance. Firstly, it is commonplace for musicians to hold down other formal employment contracts, such as teaching, to support household income and family requirements. This presents a myriad of challenges, including difficulties finding enough space and time to practice and hone their craft (i.e., compose, practice). Additionally, many secondary jobs such as teaching posts, which provide vital but minimal security, lack enough flexibility to accommodate performing and family commitments, pushing people to prioritise between the two. Secondly, touring is difficult for self-employed artists due to unpredictable and/or inflexible schedules. This was a moot point during the lockdown when many musicians worked less than previously, or not at all. Such lack of employment and work opportunity have thrown up additional issues, such as anxiety about supporting the overall household income, and what happens to professional identity for those who juggle caring responsibilities as well as complex and precarious employment structures.

There is little research on performing artists as a sector and, to our knowledge, there is no previous peer-reviewed research on classical musicians with caring responsibilities, which means that concrete data and, therefore, our understanding is limited. We compare data against the Balancing Act Survey which had 551 people working in the music sector.

### CONTEXT

Working in music is the original ‘gig economy’ where income can be dependent on each performance delivered, rather than linked to long-term contracts with stable employment rights and security. This is not restricted to musicians; other roles in the industry – e.g., promoters, legal professionals, technicians and administrators – also work in this way. According to Bain’s analysis<sup>iii</sup> of the Annual Labour Force Survey (Office for National Statistics Employment data for 2011-2020), an average of 83% of musicians are self-employed, yet little insightful data on these self-employed workers’ actual employment structures and ways of working exist. The same dataset also shows that female musicians are far more likely than men to work part-time, which tallies with the Balancing Act data, which showed that women were nearly twice as likely as men to work part-time.

Individuals need rich social networks and capital to ensure work opportunities. Formal and informal gatekeeping is highly likely to influence some people being given more high-profile opportunities than others. The soliciting and managing of opportunities are likely to be far more complex for those juggling caring responsibilities, who rely on family support to take them up. What little help is offered by the state is almost completely restricted to employees. For example, although legislation introduced in 2015 on shared parental leave enables employees to share leave, no shared parental leave and pay policies are in place to support self-employed parents and carers.

“Needing to rearrange childcare every single week, because my and my husband’s [both musicians] commitments change every single week. It’s relentless administration.”



## GENDER EQUALITY IN CLASSICAL MUSIC

There is widespread concern about lack of gender equality in the industry, with a distinct call to champion Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Classical Music. This includes Arts Council England's 'Creating a More Inclusive Classical Music'<sup>v</sup> report which highlights that, although women make up a substantial portion of the workforce and students, they are less well represented in senior roles such as orchestral principals, solo artists and artistic leadership, and are overrepresented amongst the educational workforce.

These findings are supported by other studies:

- Research by Donne<sup>vi</sup> based on repertoires by 111 orchestras across 31 countries in the 2021-2022 season shows that only 7.7% of scheduled concerts worldwide included compositions by women, of which 5.5% were by white women.
- A recent paper<sup>vii</sup> considers gender differences in representation in music education and in orchestras, and found that, amongst others, in the selection of principals, males are nearly twice as likely to be appointed.
- The same report identified that the average length of service in orchestras is shorter for women and the average age of women is lower than that of men: 'The point of maximum representation of women instrumentalists is at approximately 16-20 years of service, after which their numbers progressively decline. Men reach their maximum representation later at around 20-25 years' engagement; after that point, their numbers also decline but over a more extended period than women.'
- Rather than progressing to leadership roles in classical music<sup>viii</sup>, women are, on average, more likely to disrupt their performing careers to retrain in other fields such as education.
- In orchestras, some instruments and groups are gendered, e.g., harp and violin (female) and brass and percussion (male).<sup>1</sup> The result is a 'segregation by sex' in the orchestra, which may have profound implications for progression and retention for women due to a system of deeply ingrained traditional notions of "male" and "female" roles in classical music.
- Traditionally male-dominated workplaces are often designed to meet the needs of a 'stereotypical' affluent man, with a partner at home to look after the children and, even if this isn't the belief system of today, these traditional working practices still prevail. Long and irregular working hours, long periods away from home on tour, and a lack of flexibility are barriers to attracting and retaining female talent. Nearly 10 years ago, a newspaper article<sup>x</sup> made the case that the UK should learn from Scandinavia, where musicians habitually rehearse during more family-friendly hours to make work in orchestras more sustainable and to attract and retain women.

Our study also finds evidence of gendered disadvantage in the industry. The perceived choice that mothers and female carers make to opt out of workforce opportunities is not a choice but a consequence of negative experiences in the workplace, where structures that hinder support for women are prevalent: a culture of long hours; lack of flexible scheduling; long periods away from home on tour. These working practices do not accommodate flexibility for caregiving, leaving mothers and female carers with very little choice and preventing fathers and male carers from taking an equal role in caring responsibilities.

## WORKING FAMILIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PANDEMIC

Classical musicians were disproportionately affected by the pandemic due to the almost complete shutdown of the sector and scarce opportunity or support for freelancers. Rehearsing was a challenge for parents and carers faced with school closures and the challenge of home schooling, a substantial barrier to working during the pandemic. Still at the time of writing (autumn 2022), there is continued concern about touring given unpredictable travel restrictions and the prohibitive costs of visas due to Brexit, particularly for 'small enterprises' where these are disproportionate to any future income.

The impact of Covid was also evident in PiPA's Covid research (ibid), which identified that seven out of ten parents and carers (72%) working in Music, Dance and Theatre were considering abandoning their career. There were, however, unexpected positives brought on by the pandemic, including the benefits of home working, flexibility and better work-life balance, demonstrating an appetite for different ways of working in a post-pandemic world.

In this respect, parents and carers in classical music reflected the attitudes of those across other industries. Research focusing on working families in the UK as a whole shows that 65% of parents said that life had become stressful or more stressful during lockdown<sup>x</sup>. There was a unanimous vote for continuing to work flexibly – where nearly two-thirds said that they would like to continue working extremely or very flexibly. However, 13% said that this would not be possible even if they wanted to.





# THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Three questions guided our research; please refer to the Appendix for the methods and extensive data tables:

- How are classical musicians who are parents and carers experiencing their working in the context of the global pandemic?
- To what extent are diversity and intersectionality issues (such as class, gender, disability, ethnicity) relevant in this context? How do experiences converge and differ?
- What is the perspective of stakeholders other than musicians (including managers and employers, arrangers, and composers)?

# THE ROAD MAP TO THE FINDINGS

We outline our findings in four overarching themes integrating the qualitative and quantitative data gleaned. Taken together, they point to a culture of challenging working practices which have deep impacts on people's lives and which inhibit inclusion:

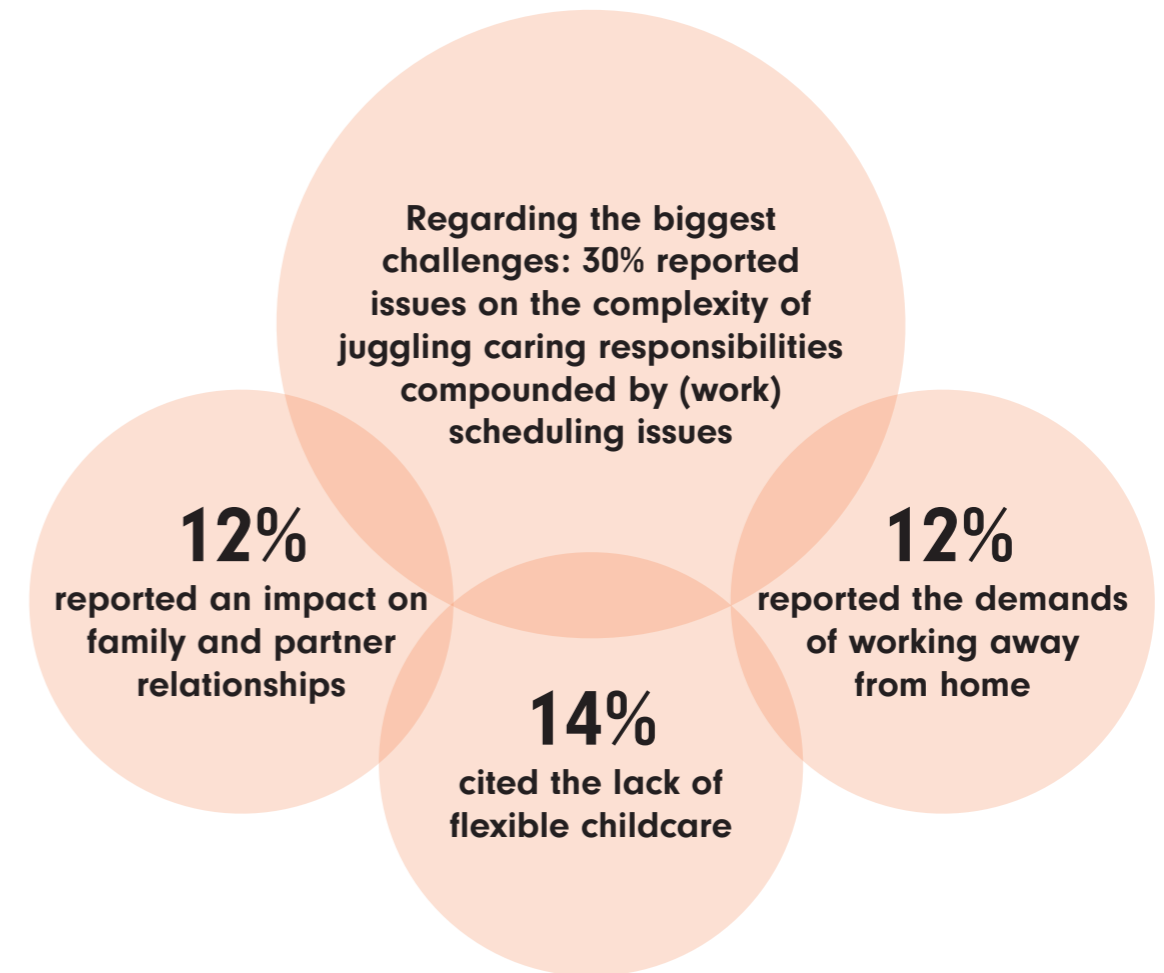
- **Juggling caring and working lives and the impact of the pandemic:** how access to opportunities has shifted provides context to the current research.
- **Work structures and career sacrifices:** we compare work structures and earnings between carers and 'non-carers' and between women and men.
- **Social capital versus lack of employer support:** we consider what support working carers draw on in classical music and draw on data from the focus groups and interviews to outline current working practices and implicit assumptions.
- **Work-life balance, wellbeing, and the emotional impact of juggling family and work:** we consider participants' experience of their work-life balance, wellbeing, and how the juggling act impacts their lives as performers, workers and beyond.

"The cost of childcare emptied all my savings and maxed my credit cards and overdraft; an instrument had to be sold to survive."

# JUGGLING CARING AND WORKING LIVES AND THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

In this section, we report the biggest challenges for parents and carers followed by an analysis of the differences in work structures before and after the pandemic to assess the extent to which it has further exacerbated these challenges.

Overall, over 50% of our respondents (about 220 responses) recounted a range of challenges with many reporting several at once:



"Participants described their working lives as fearful and precarious: a house of cards."

Table 1: What is the biggest challenge you have faced in your career to date around family/personal life?

Theme	% <sup>2</sup>	Description	Example
Parenting challenges/ family commitments due to lack of flexible working/ scheduling issues	30%	The demands of caring responsibilities and looking after dependants, and juggling this with work demands	"There are not enough hours in the day! Working as a self-employed musician with two children under 5 and a husband working a full-time job is exhausting and very difficult to juggle"
Flexible childcare	14%	The challenge of finding childcare, in particular at antisocial hours, on weekends, or at short notice	"Needing to rearrange childcare every single week, because my and my husband's commitments change every single week. It's relentless administration"
Juggling touring/ working away from home	12%	The demands placed by touring and working away, including on relationships, caring, wellbeing and mental health.	"Touring for months at a time. Leaving my family in order to work left many feelings of anxiety and regret re my family but for career purposes it was and still remains completely necessary as most of my work in the last decade has been outside the UK"
Family / Relationship challenges	12%	Challenges relating to family and relationships, including the strain on partners, maintaining relationships, and the health and wellbeing of family members	"Hard to maintain relationships due to antisocial working hours of my theatre career. Even though my last partner also worked in theatre, the lack of shared time off eventually caused our relationship to break down"
Mental and physical wellbeing	11%	The effect on health and wellbeing, both mental and physical	"Rehearsing/performing/travelling/planning babysitters while I had a difficult pregnancy after a miscarriage. Physically it was very difficult to keep up the standards of playing and there was little time to catch up on rest because my husband was too busy with his job and renovating our house"
Finances/ Insufficient earnings	11%	Challenges relating to earnings and finances	"The reality that I can't earn enough for the best future for my new baby daughter"
Work/ life balance	10%	The strain of balancing work with family, social, and leisure time	"Feeling like I have to prioritise work over my personal life and therefore losing sight of my goals and ambitions personally and socially"
Others' perceptions	10%	Where participants have struggled due to the perception and judgements of others. E.g. regarding what they are capable of doing or impact on reputation	"My agent no longer wanting to represent me essentially because I had very young children and could not be as ambitious as she wanted. It was a terrible experience and showed little understanding of my situation or empathy. As a result, my career has suffered enormously and now looks very different from what it might have done had I not had that experience or indeed children"
Career progression/ opportunities	8%	Challenges relating to progressing the participants' careers or finding suitable opportunities	"My other half is a successful opera singer who has travelled frequently throughout our marriage. My own career has always taken second place, and throughout my working life, decisions surrounding my work have been influenced by their needs, or the needs of my children. I have never been able to immerse myself fully in furthering my career"
Cost of childcare	8%	Where participants report high, or unaffordable childcare costs	"The cost of childcare emptied all my savings and maxed my credit cards and overdraft; an instrument had to be sold to survive"
Impact of COVID/ pandemic	8%	The impact of Covid and the pandemic, such as on health, careers, touring etc.	"I had to pull out of a performance opportunity abroad because of the risk of catching Covid and getting stuck there - two weeks away from my baby daughter"
Lack of family support	5%	The difficulties encountered when participants do not have access to family support and social capital	"Juggling two children and a husband also in the business who tours like me. Used to use grandparents for childcare, but no longer an option. Virtually impossible now"
Practice time	3%	Challenges related to finding adequate time and space to practice and prepare, and to maintain levels of performance	"Retain level of playing when very tired with young children & no practice time"
London-centric work opportunities	1%	The London-centric nature of opportunities, such as where participants mention the difficulty finding work outside London, or the need to travel to London for work	"Living 3 hours away from London, where lots of relevant performing work is based, means that 1) I often feel overlooked, because fixers assume it won't be viable for me due to childcare; 2) poor public transport infrastructure and high cost means that when I do take on London-based work, it is sometimes not financially-viable (factoring in cost of overnight stay/expensive train tickets and childcare)"

## PRE-PANDEMIC

During the focus groups, participants used a range of descriptions to make sense of their experiences of working lives before the pandemic. They described their working lives as fearful and precarious: a "house of cards", with persistent worries about the size and predictability of income at a frantic pace where "life was one giant rush". This is because childcare was not available out of hours, and often a complex patchwork of care was needed. Working lives were up and down, with participants reporting difficulties predicting what is around the corner, given the uncertainty of visa travel restrictions but also some hopeful opportunities for performance in the digital realm. A few reported being happy and fulfilled where some were able to craft the balancing act, making judicious use of support and enjoying good income. Incidentally, this group was largely male, working in more senior roles, with the ability to negotiate flexible and accommodating set-ups, and benefiting from the direct support of their families with, for example, childcare. These aspects mitigate the impact of caring responsibilities.

## DURING THE PANDEMIC

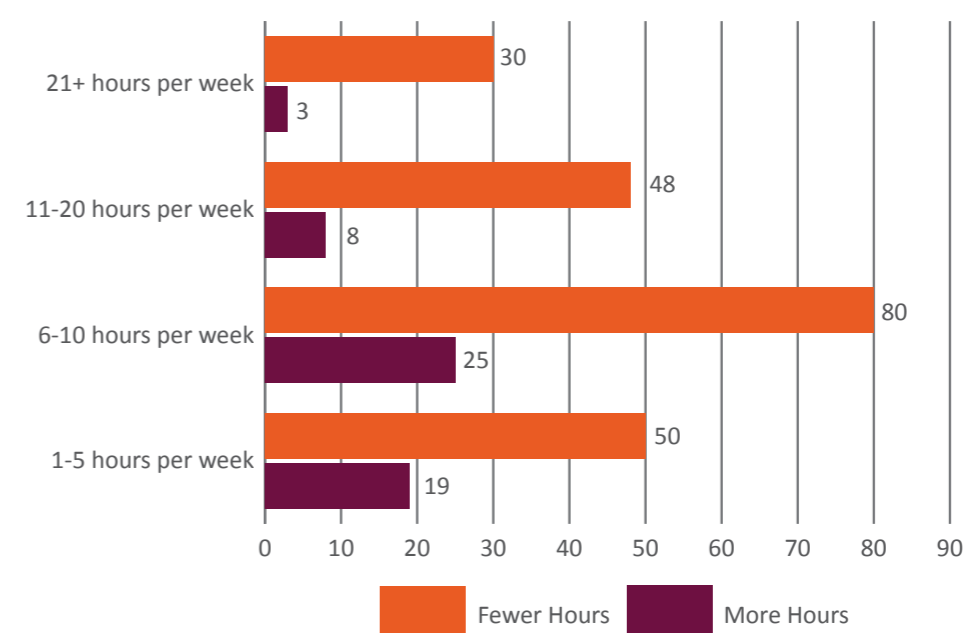
The focus group data highlighted how experiences varied where select participants valued the opportunity to spend more time with family and re-evaluate their priorities and careers. Others feared for their livelihoods and spoke of being 'artistically starved' during the pandemic with increased home-schooling and caring responsibilities, and diminished opportunities to perform. Uncertain and precarious working was heightened for individuals who had recently had a life transition, such as new parents and those now caring for elderly and frail relatives.

Some were using the opportunity to retrain and refocus for work in or outside the performing arts; to work at a more relaxed pace and re-evaluate overall life priorities. They talked about the opportunities but also heightened anxiety linked to performing in the digital realm.

Regarding the potential impact of the pandemic, 56% of participants reported to be working less now, 30% the same, and 15% more than before the pandemic.

When asked to estimate if they worked more or fewer hours on average than before the pandemic, nearly 40% (38.5) reported to have lost at least a day a week.

Figure 1: Hours gained or lost during the pandemic



This data was also substantiated by the focus groups, where people outlined how performance opportunities had diminished, compounded by the impact of Brexit, which has rendered talent from the United Kingdom prohibitively expensive, and amidst the ongoing uncertainty about touring.



# WORK STRUCTURES AND CAREER SACRIFICES

This section focuses on employment structures, contracts, income, and the impact on career progression by group.

## EARNINGS

Across our participants, median earnings<sup>3</sup> were £20,000 per annum from music, £27,000 from all work, and household income £55,000. We asked respondents to confirm their total household income over the past 12 months but did not specify pre- or post-tax. However, given the median earnings, it is reasonable to assume that £55,000 is the pre-tax total income as it compares so favourably with the current UK median household income of £31,400. In either case, the salary earnings are indicative of the relative privilege of the sample group which was also relatively London-centric.

Almost half of respondents (48%) reported that income from music never or rarely covers basic needs and almost three quarters of respondents (65%) reported that income from music never or rarely covers unexpected income. For all income, over half of respondents (52%) reported that it never or rarely covered unexpected expenses. This is illustrated below in Figures two, three and four:

Figure 2: Individual earnings from music only and basic needs

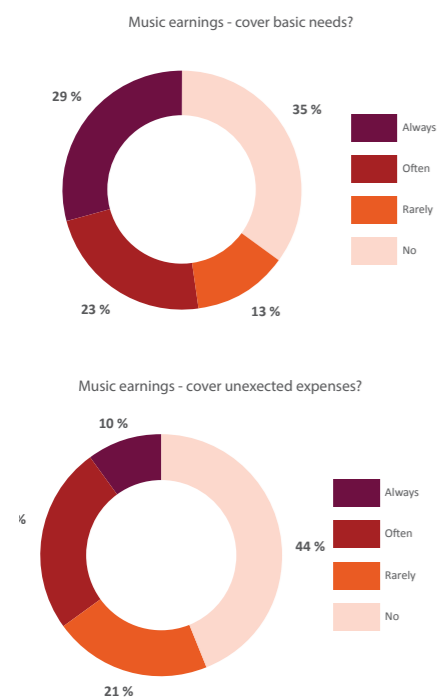


Figure 3: Total individual income and unexpected needs

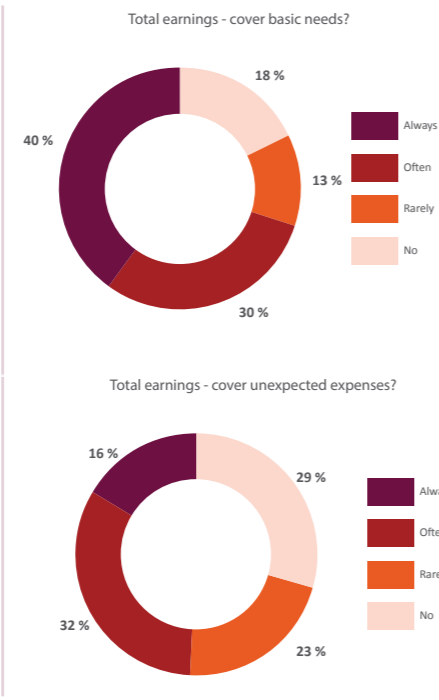
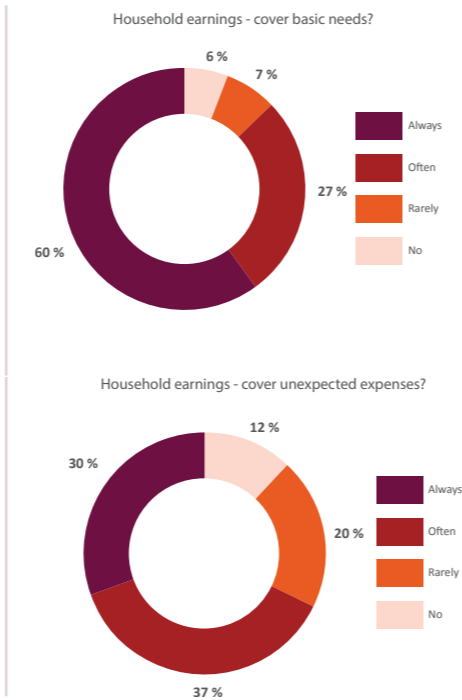


Figure 4: Total household income, basic needs and unexpected needs



There was a gulf between what music earnings and household earnings cover of 15%-20%. This means that those working in the industry rely on joint financial capital to make the job work, likely excluding those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as having a compounding impact on single parents. This tallies with observations from our focus groups. One (widowed) musician recounted how they had vacated their bedroom for the au pair and now shared the living room with their instrument, living in cramped surroundings.





## GENDERED IMPACT OF CARING RESPONSIBILITIES ON EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE

We looked at the way caring responsibilities are shared between partners, if co-parenting. Primary caring responsibilities are defined as doing 51% or more of caring duties. Nine out of ten mothers and female carers, versus three out of ten fathers and male carers, did 51% or more of the caring. Half of mothers and female carers, versus one out of ten fathers and male carers, did 75% or more of the caring.

Figure 5: Primary carers = 51% or more of the caring

	Total %	Men %	Women %
Secondary Carer	19.9	65.5	10.3
Primary carer	80.1	34.5	89.7
Total	100.0	100	100

Figure 6: Primary carers = 75% or more of the caring

	Total %	Men %	Women %
Secondary Carer	60.8	89.6	45.6
Primary carer	39.2	10.4	54.4
Total	100.0	100	100

As shown in Figure 7, in our sample, men were more likely than statistically expected to be in full-time roles compared to female participants. Women are more likely to be self-employed (58% compared to 48% of men). Women are half as likely to be in full-time employment (20%) compared to men (37%). Women are twice as likely to work part-time (18% versus 9% of men).

Figure 7: Contract types by women/ men

	Employed Full Time	Employed Part Time	Employed Fixed Term	Self-Employed/ Freelance	Unemployed/ Not in work	On parental leave	On Sick Leave
Secondary Carer	19.58%	18.40%	1.19%	57.57%	0.59%	2.67%	0%
Primary carer	36.73%	9.18%	1.02%	47.96%	4.08%	0%	1.02%

Comparing employment type by caring responsibility, 55% of parents and carers were self-employed versus 47% of those without caring responsibilities. Those without caring responsibilities were more likely (31%) to work full time than those with caring responsibilities (23%). This is shown in Figure 8:

Figure 8: Contract types by caring responsibility

	Employed Full Time	Employed Part Time	Employed Fixed Term	Self-Employed/ Freelance	Unemployed/ Not in work	On parental leave	On Sick Leave
Non-Carers	30.88%	17.65%	0%	47.06%	2.94%	0%	1.47%
Carers/ parents	22.99%	16.79%	1.46%	55.11%	1.09%	2.55%	0%
Primary carers (75%)	5.8%	11.7%	0.6%	28.6%	0.6%	3.9%	0%

Those who did not have caring responsibilities earned on average £26,000 from music alone (£27,500 total earnings) versus £20,000 for parents and carers (£30,000 total earnings). Household income was substantially higher for parental carers at £60,000 versus £44,000 for those without caring responsibilities. This indicates the importance of dual income households and financial capital in the family or immediate community in order to enable people with caring responsibilities to mitigate the impact of low income.

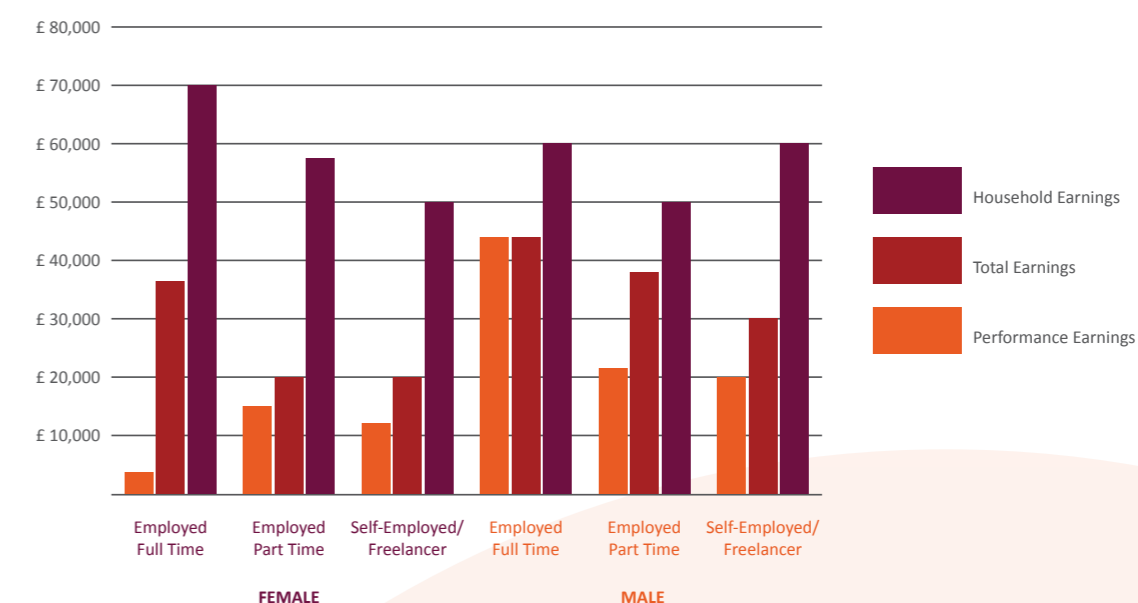
We undertook further comparisons by caring responsibilities. Using established questionnaires that allowed us to compare other studies, we found that:

- primary carers were more likely to turn down work than secondary carers
- primary carers were more likely to be passed over for opportunities than secondary carers.

Women earned £19,000 on average per annum from work in Music, compared to men who earned £30,000. The gulf was starker for total earnings, which were £25,000 for women and £40,000 for men. Household income was more comparable with £55,000 for women and £60,000 for men. This earnings gap, which disadvantages women, is significant, and larger than what we found in the Balancing Act, indicating that the pandemic may have accelerated differences in earning patterns.

Figure 9 outlines how earnings varied between women and men by work status, with self-employed female freelancers having the lowest earnings – below the threshold of the £19,305 living wage.

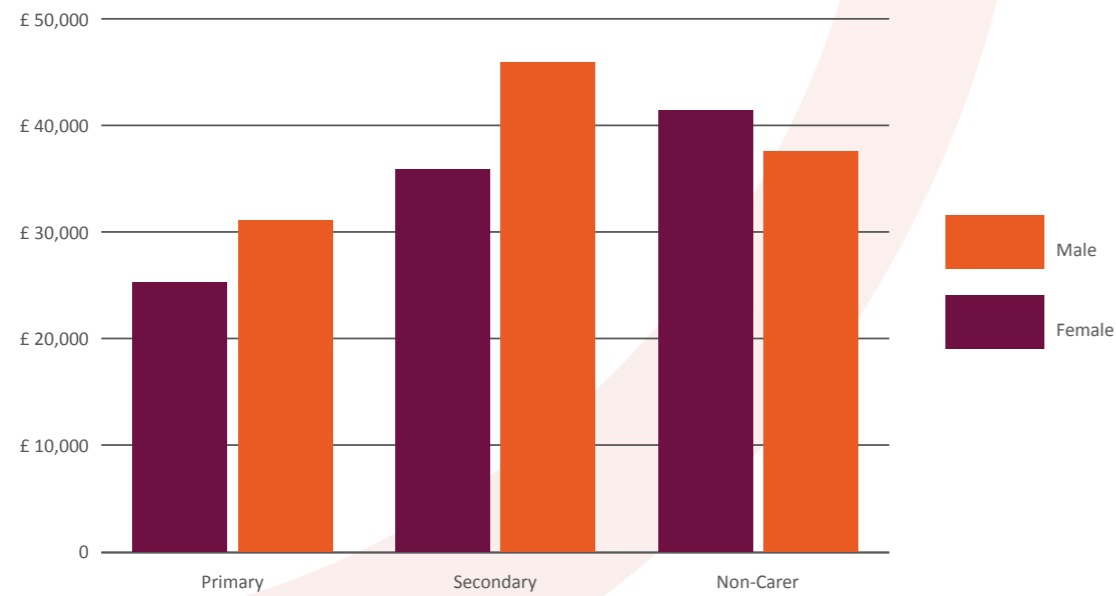
Figure 9: Median earnings by employment status



Men earned more in total (£42,000 versus £29,990 in total; from classical music only £35,130 versus £21,543). The graph below illustrates the differences also between caring status, with men earning more than women, and primary carers earning less than those without caring responsibilities.



Figure 10: Median earnings by caring status and gender



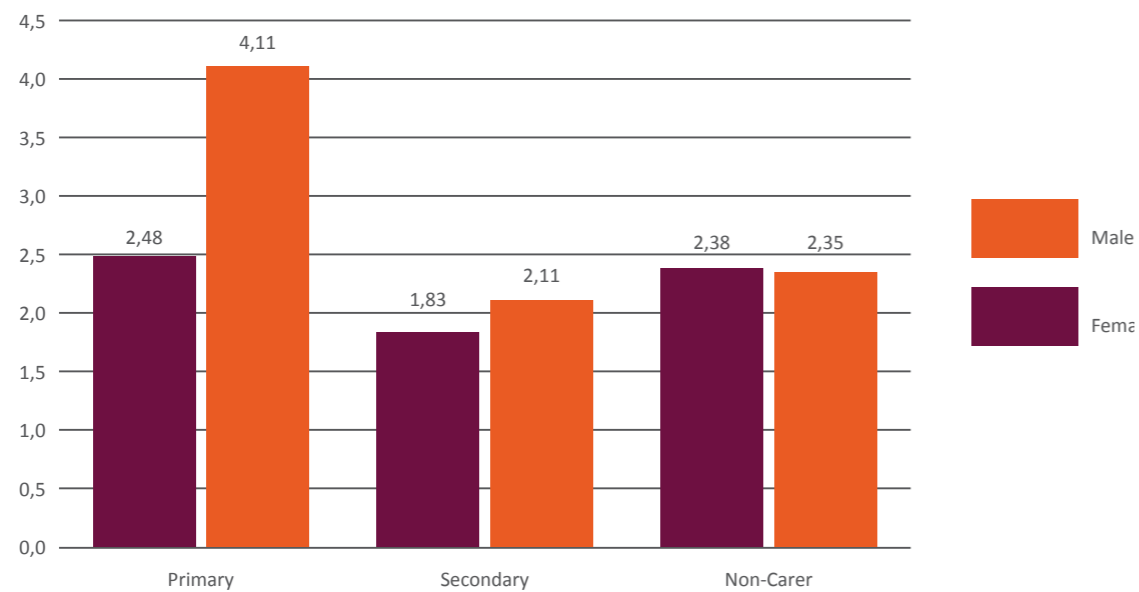
To summarise, women are three times more likely to be the primary carer (figure 5 and 6,) half as likely to be working full time in either a freelance or a self-employed context (figure 7) and there is a significant pay penalty that comes with this: self-employed women with caring responsibilities earn the least of all respondents, at £12,000.

We undertook further detailed comparisons by women and men and we summarise the statistically significant results. In all, the results suggest that women have greater career penalties and fewer opportunities as they are more likely to be primary carers which hits their earning potential. Women reported more job insecurity, are more likely to retrain, report more stress about caring and careers and were more likely to turn down work.

## JOB INSECURITY

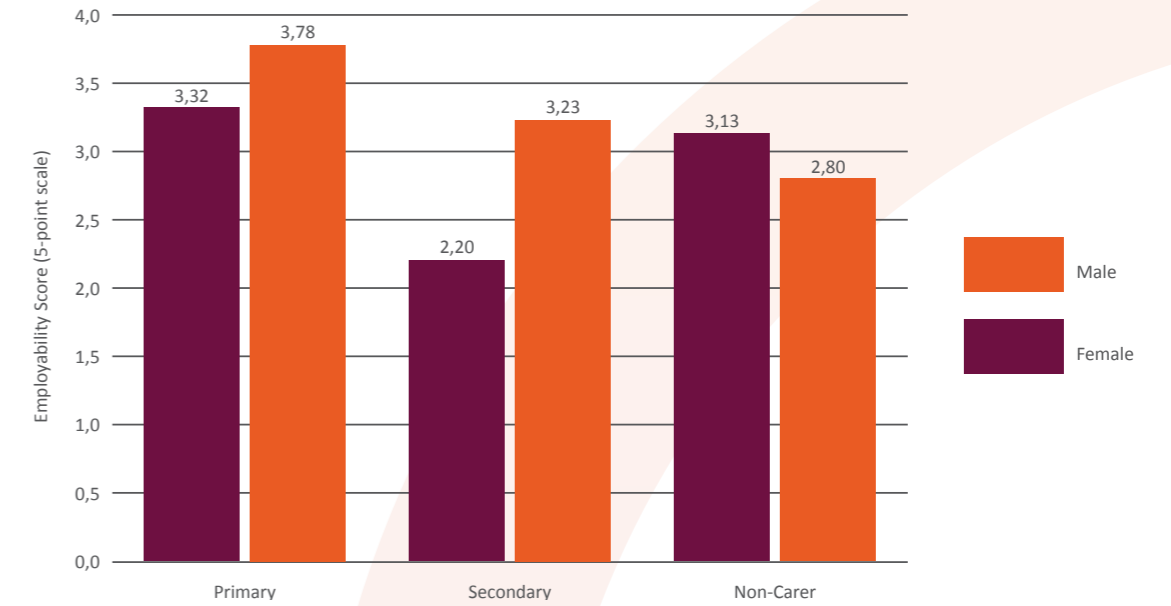
Regarding employability, we asked people to rate the statement 'If I were to lose or quit my current role in classical music, it would be easy for me to find a job of similar salary'. Overall, men rated themselves as more employable and primary carers feel more employable than secondary carers. It is notable therefore that this does not translate into earnings and would require further investigation to fully understand.

Figure 11: Employability



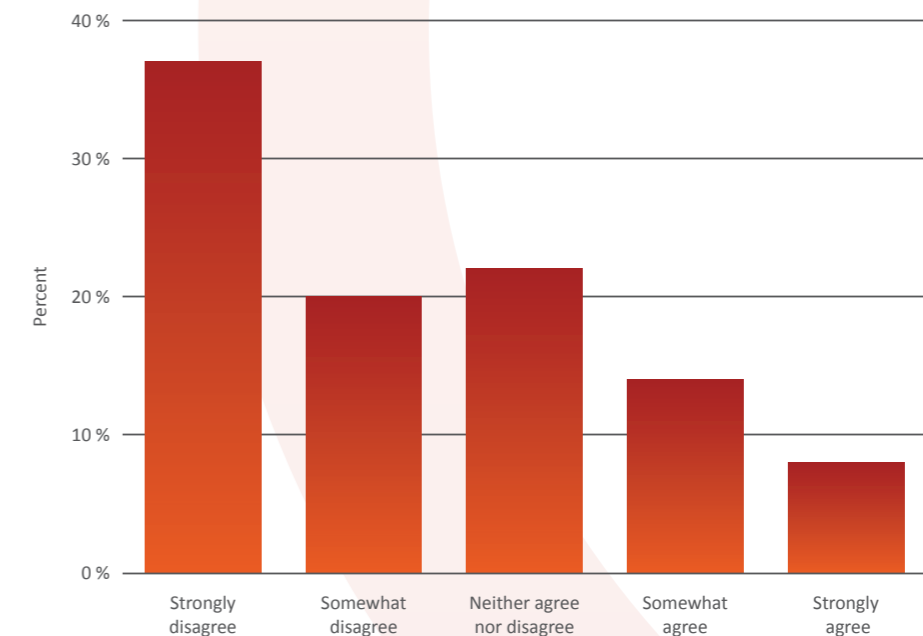
When questioned about job insecurity ('I am worried about having to leave my job/work before I would like to'; 'There is a risk that I will have to leave my present job/work in the year to come'; 'I feel uneasy about losing my job/work in the near future'), primary carers reported significantly more job insecurity than non-carers:

Figure 12: Job insecurity



39% strongly disagreed and 20% somewhat disagreed that it would be easy for them to find a job of similar salary if they left classical music now, as shown in Figure 13. These findings are similar to those in the Balancing Act Survey, where 54% overall disagreed but indicated that job security has slightly worsened.

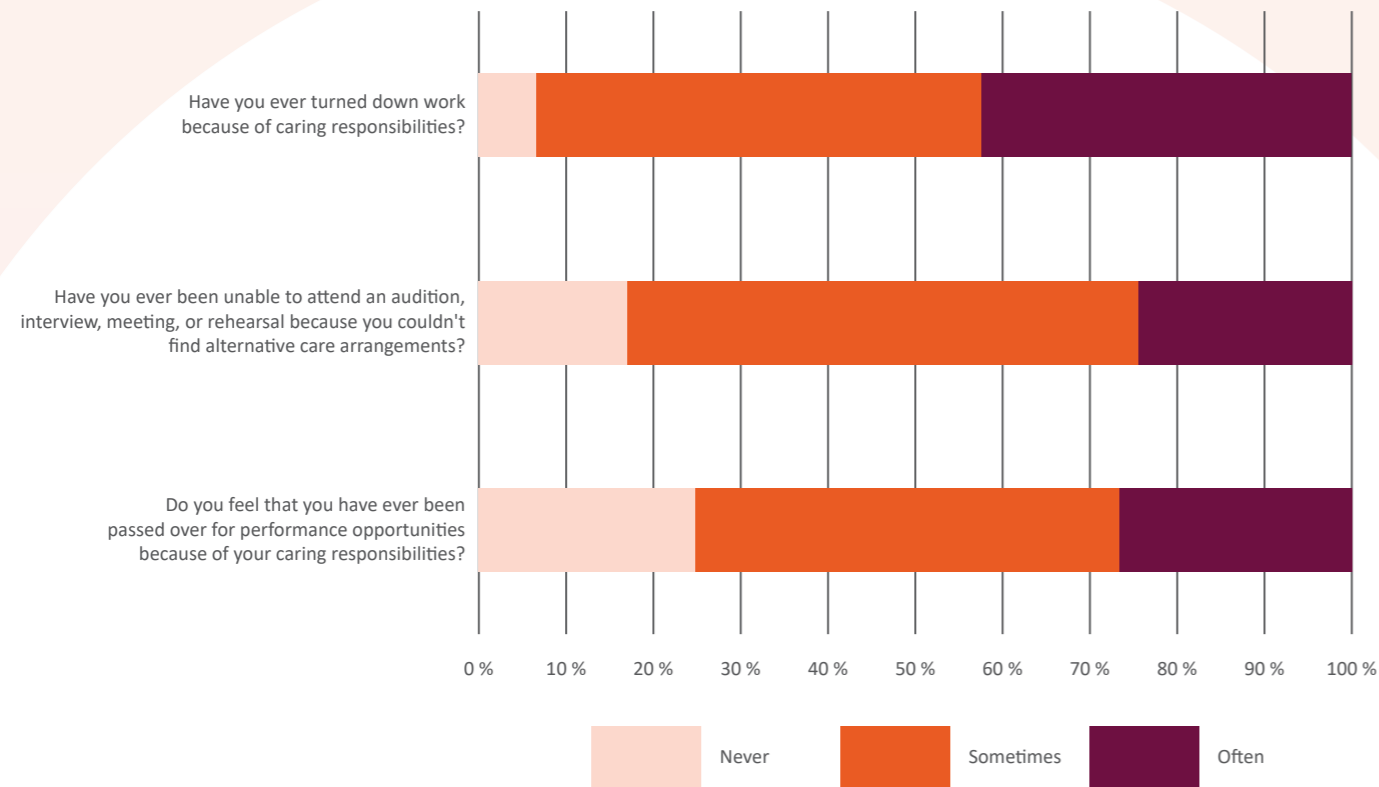
Figure 13: Employability question – ease of finding a similar salary





We included three questions concerning missing out on opportunities and turning down work as illustrated below:

Figure 14: Turning down work and 'missing out'



93% of participants said that they often or sometimes have had to turn down work due to caring responsibilities, with 42.1% reporting that this happens 'Often'. This was statistically more likely for women, of whom 45.4% reported 'Often' turning down work (vs 26.3% males).

The focus group and interview data provided insight into some of the specific factors driving job insecurity and the precariousness faced by mothers specifically. A female opera singer reported that she had lost a contract once pregnant as she 'just would not look right on stage'. Although she felt she could have sued for breach of contract, she felt this would be unwise given the close community. This was a pervasive theme. Participants sharply observed how the lack of opportunity took hold once their private lives changed and that they felt powerless to raise their voice for fear of getting a bad name or being side-lined.

Participants referenced how scheduling was often ad-hoc and unnecessarily haphazard, which increased the likelihood of needing to turn down opportunities, with many comparing UK practices unfavourably to working conditions in other European countries, where schedules and ways of working are clarified with a much longer lead time. An Opera singer reported spending weeks rehearsing without payment to only receive payment once a performance had been delivered, presenting a significant barrier to paying for childcare.





# SOCIAL CAPITAL IN LIEU OF EMPLOYER SUPPORT

We asked what enabled people to continue working, which we summarise below. We had data from 122 respondents, with approximately 50% confirming that they had caring responsibilities.

Table 2: What has enabled you to continue working?

What people say is important	Percentage <sup>a</sup>	Description	Example Quote
Family/ partner/ friends support	41%	Emotional and instrumental support from the family, partner, and friends	"My husband taking on non-musical work to support us"
Childcare	17%	Availability and use of childcare	"Some childcare (nursery one day per week and a childminder two mornings per week.)"
Determination	13%	Own determination, grit, and will	"It's my determination that got me through this" [becoming a parent]
Love of the art	5%	People's love of the art form and performance, including its relevance to society	"Love for what I do. Awareness of the importance of music in society"
Stable finance	5%	Stable (salaried) income and benefits	"My own sheer determination"
Other work	5%	Income from other work (for freelancers or those part-time). For some this involves a change in job role	"regular income streams outside freelance performing" "Switching to teaching rather than performing/touring"
Own resources	5%	Own health and resource, opportunity to practice, network	"more practising at home to stay in shape" "my network"
Supportive employer and flexible working	4%	A generally supportive employer with whom there is a relationship	"....and the good personal relationships I have built with those I work with." "The ability to work in the evenings once my child is asleep"

The findings tally with previous PiPA research which identified the extent to which parents and carers depended on various forms of social capital in order to mitigate the impact of caring responsibilities on career development.<sup>5</sup> In particular, support from the family/ partner/friends (mentioned by 40% of respondents), followed by available childcare (17%), and one's own determination (just over 10%). Only 4% referenced a supportive employer, and only two people referenced flexible working as a support.

This highlights that support comes from the personal and not the work domain, indicating that caring responsibilities are a significant challenge for parents and carers in classical music. However, for those who face additional barriers due to protected characteristics or who come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, the compounded impact of these obstacles to career progression is likely insurmountable. There is a clear need for more inclusive practices which include support for more flexible work structures.

The data across the interviews and focus groups substantiates this observation, where challenging and restrictive working practices influenced participants' decision-making processes at different stages of their careers. This includes whether they could become parents and maintain a career, putting off reproductive choices, reflecting on whether they could remain in the performing arts, and ultimately limiting work opportunities through their lifestyle choice.

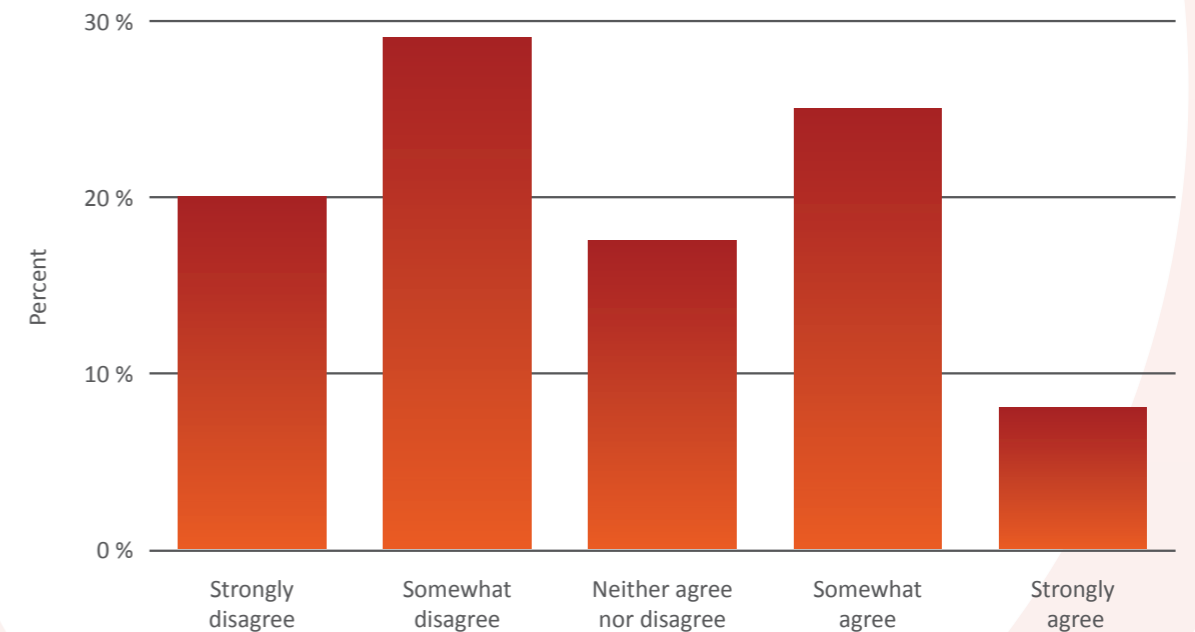
Focus group participants reported how requests for flexible working were habitually met with a 'no, this won't work' and requests not granted without exploration of possible solutions that they were aware of. For example, a focus group participant who is an orchestra musician in the string section had asked to reduce working hours from 5 to 4 days a week. This request was refused on the grounds that it would be too disruptive for the orchestra, which the participant felt was a decision made without due consideration. Mothers in the focus groups reported contracts being terminated once they had become pregnant. Although participants knew that such experiences were not right given UK equalities legislation, none would challenge these openly as they viewed the classical music sector as a small world and were concerned about the potential impact on their reputation. People spoke of their fear of becoming 'unemployable' but also not wanting to put smaller companies in difficult positions by, for instance, pursuing such issues through employment tribunals.

# WORK-LIFE BALANCE, WELLBEING AND THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF JUGGLING FAMILY AND WORK

The demands of performing classical music are artistically rewarding, yet likely also stressful. A high level of training and artistry is required within hierarchical and traditional orchestral set ups, combined with the additional demands of irregular work schedules, including touring. Research indicates, among other things, adequate practice and experience of flow is important to counteract any performance anxiety, meaning that artists need environments where they can perform at their best.<sup>xi</sup>

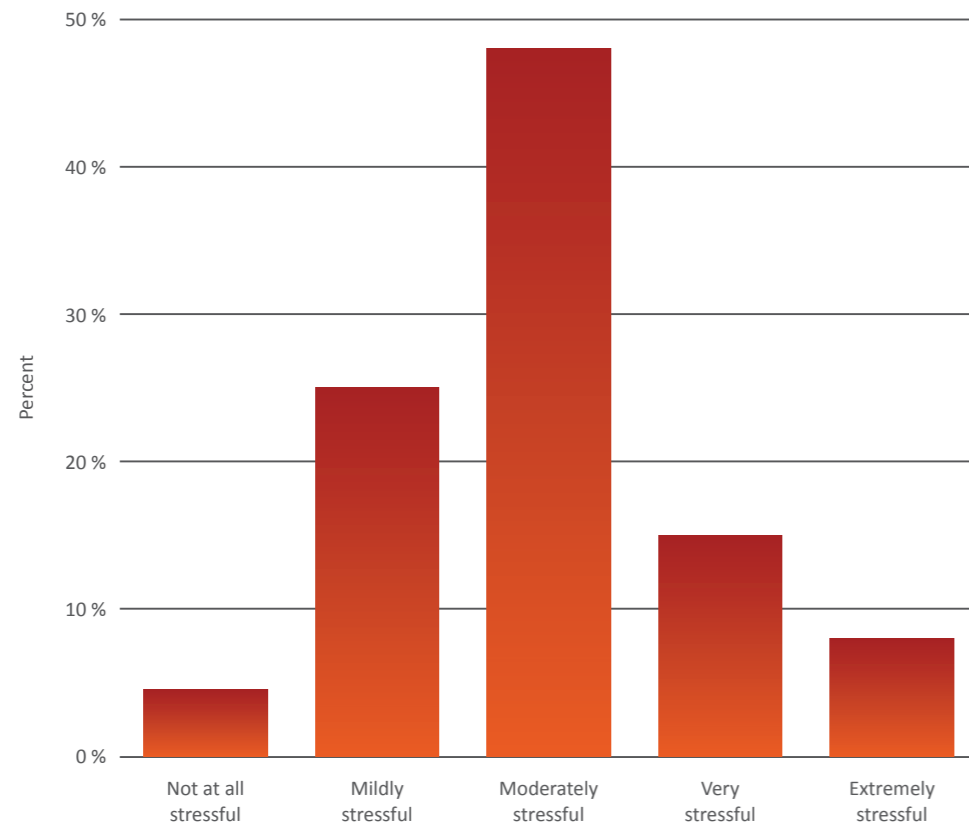
Regarding work-life balance, about 50% either strongly or somewhat disagreed that they were satisfied with how they were able to balance both their work and personal lives:

Figure 15 I manage to balance to demands of my work and personal/ family life well



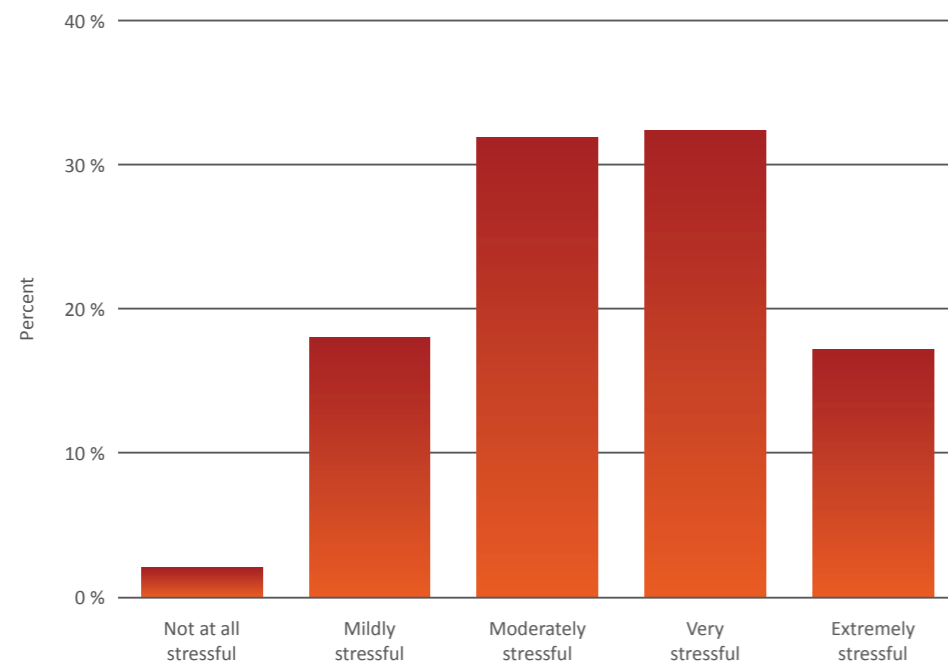
The majority of participants found their career stressful, including 15% who said very stressful, and about 8% extremely stressful as shown below:

Figure 16: Stress perceptions – In general how do you find your career?



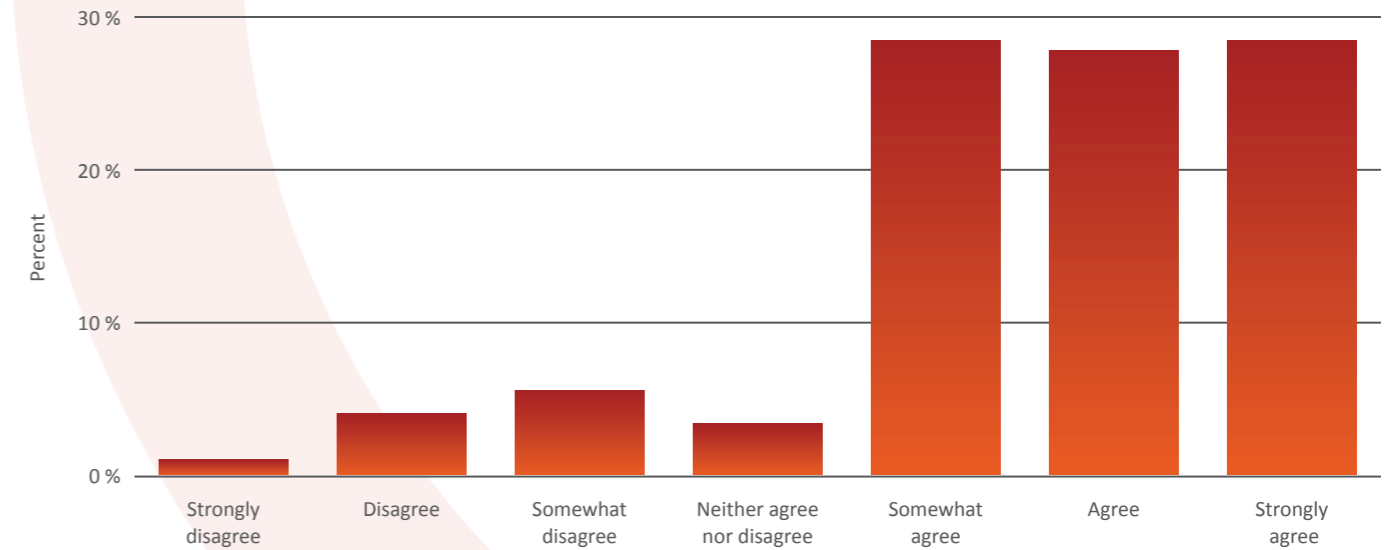
However, a higher proportion of participants reported feeling stressed about managing their career and caring, with 82% of respondents finding this moderately to extremely stressful:

Figure 17: Managing career and caring responsibilities



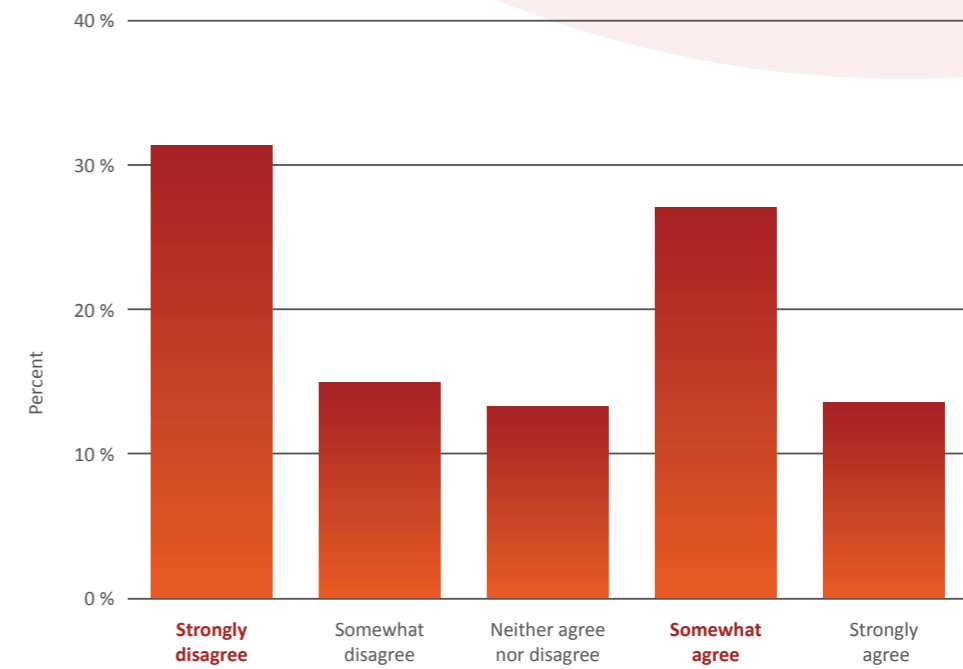
One reason for this might be that participants were on average highly perfectionist, which we measured with 12 specific questions, where the average score was 4 (out of 5; in most other occupations, we would expect a figure more like 2.5-3). Combined with the inherent stress and pressure that is synonymous with caring responsibilities, a perfectionist profile and expectation of professional performance could be potentially crippling. The next figure illustrates just how much pressure people put on themselves to perform perfectly:

Figure 18: I put pressure on myself to perform perfectly



Combined with challenging working practices, job insecurity and low baseline income, these contributing factors are causing participants to look for opportunities to retrain, or rethink their working lives, with four out of ten respondents **considering leaving their careers**:

Figure 19 'I think a lot about leaving the job.'





# CONCLUSIONS

## **We identified a profound emotional impact of the ‘juggling act’ on people’s lives at cost to the fulfilment of the artistic self.**

We identified a profound emotional impact of the ‘juggling act’ on people’s lives at cost to the fulfilment of the artistic self. Many made a conscious decision to step away from their career because of caring responsibilities; this carried a tone of regret among focus group participants who spoke repeatedly of being ‘artistically starved’. In other words, parents and carers felt they would become sidelined by the sector, and resigned in anticipation, before they felt the real impact of the juggling act. For those who remained in classical music, there was a link between caring and performance anxiety, as well as a sense of failure about ‘not having been able to make it work’. This was poignantly illustrated by one of our interviews with a former opera singer who had retired from performing to look after a parent. They said, “I knew it was time to go, even though I was at the height of my vocal prowess. The internal struggle became too much as singing requires every ounce of emotional energy we have. I felt no longer able to guarantee this to my audience.” Having moved to a role as a director, they are now retraining in a different profession to ensure sustainable income.

Across the focus groups and interviews, we heard that women habitually made conscious choices to put caring first and their artistic and other work second, self-selecting themselves out of applying for opportunities. Participants spoke of how parenthood ultimately made them reassess priorities and made them different, and more appreciative, rather than less valuable artists. For instance, one male participant who had achieved a level of success and felt secure in their role and status noted how rebalancing their priorities helped them grow as an artist, with a sense of liberation. Yet other participants, notably female, spoke of shying away from opportunities because they felt less able to compete for roles once they had children. Most participants spoke of finding alternative artistic outlets once they had children; for instance, engaging in community music, where, like other professions, women predominate in unpaid, voluntary work.

Our data points to gendered experience and prevailing traditional notions that women are the ones to make sacrifices and take decisions to compromise. Yet such ‘perceived’ choices are not a genuine choice. Participants spoke of how they had re-evaluated priorities once they had become parents and sought meaning, for instance, in community activities instead of large performances. In particular, women spoke of self-selecting out of opportunities and losing confidence. Participants shared occasionally harrowing experiences, such as being ‘told off’ when a costume no longer fitted during pregnancy. Women recounted how fixers would drop them once they knew that they were pregnant, and, in general, voiced how others held assumptions about what they could and would want to do once they had children. In response, musicians make personal sacrifices to continue working. One participant had reconfigured their home by sleeping in the front room and relinquished their own private practice space to accommodate an au pair. Faced with uncertainty, mothers in particular had made choices for portfolio careers (frequently synonymous with precarious ways of working) and retraining to add other income streams. Yet, there was also a tone of regret and a yearning to ‘satisfy the artist within me’. It is evident that there were additional and specific challenges and experiences based on the intersection of participants’ backgrounds. Single parents struggled substantially with their caring responsibilities. Those with young children consistently experienced more challenges than those with older children (or even others being cared for) who are more self-sufficient. In some situations, participants shared how older children were co-opted into being carers themselves for younger siblings or siblings with additional needs.

Participants from ethnically minoritised backgrounds were more likely to craft their own support system and professional networks from family and friends. This provided security for meeting caring responsibilities, but restricted professional networks and professional exposure.

Such issues are also pertinent for fathers and male carers. We spoke to a senior leader in music, who must live near their ageing parents to help care for them and consequently faces the challenge of a long commute to work. This created a scenario which they felt did nobody justice: their parents ideally needed even more support than they were able to provide; their own family also had specific caregiving needs (a child of primary school age and a partner with intermittent health challenges) and all this in addition to their responsibilities to their employer. The carer reported feeling pulled in many different directions. Some might argue that such complex set-ups are common with 6% of the UK population, which equates to just over 4 million people, provides informal care. However, in classical music this is further exacerbated by the precarious working conditions and the emotional investment needed to make the artform happen when people’s emotional resources are depleted by the lack of support and understanding to meet work and caring commitments.

Across all focus groups and interviews, participants reported the impact of prolonged juggling acts and the lack of flexible and affordable care. Several issues stood out:

- The juggling act is more difficult when children are younger. For instance, even for those in employment, there is a rush to get to nursery or school. Evening and weekend performances present additional challenges.
- The juggling act is more complex for single parents and those without social and financial capital. Having a readily available network of partners, family and/or friends is vital for mitigating caring responsibilities.
- Caring for the elderly was less understood than childcare. For example, participants spoke of the challenges of caring for elderly parents or a child or partner with health issues.
- The logistical arrangements needed to make touring work, such as taking a nanny on tour, which of course is only an option for those in more prominent roles with remuneration to fund such arrangements. For shorter stints away from home, participants reported a feeling of liberation to live as an artist without home constraints at least temporarily; but for longer engagements this is not an option.
- There are gendered aspects to being a carer and a classical musician, where women self-select out of opportunities, sacrifice career satisfaction and personal fulfilment in return for a complex set-up of combining different roles. This indicates a loss of talent and intellectual and artistic capital. Almost without exception, the male participants, who were also in higher level positions, mentioned a partner who had given up or altered their work to enable them to pursue their careers.
- Performance anxiety is exacerbated for parents and carers. Feeling pulled in all directions and stressed by the logistical and financial aspects of juggling work and caregiving, they worry that their performance will be compromised. They are anxious they haven’t been able to practise as much as necessary and have a heightened sense of failure at not having been able to manage better.



# WHAT WORKS

We asked all participants how the industry can move towards more inclusive ways of working and coded the data from responses given by 93 participants, representing approximately 40% of the parents and carers. Not everyone offered suggestions, which was unsurprising given that the music sector, and arts more generally, have deeply ingrained, traditional ways of working, which are accepted as standard and ‘part of the job’.

The ‘most requested’ change was advance notice on schedules and better timetabling, followed by addressing bias against certain groups of workers, and crafting strategic and sustainable ways of working:

Table 3: how can the industry move towards more inclusive ways of working?

What people want	%	Definition	Example Quote
Advance notice on schedules/ better timetabling	23%	Giving more advance notice of performance schedules, ensuring more inclusive rehearsal times	“Striving to work daytimes when possible”
Address bias against protected characteristics. Increased openness and transparency	22%	Ensure that people are treated fairly and without discrimination regardless of any protected characteristics including gender, age, caring status	“Not discriminate against parents assuming what they will/will not be able to do/cope with when considering them for a job “
Craft strategic, flexible, and sustainable ways of working	22%	Address casualisation of freelance work; ensure demands on people are reasonable and proportionate	“It should not operate as if we can all be available at all times and offer only casual work “  “This is always a challenge as we don’t yet have the capacity to work effectively from home in the music industry - online rehearsals for example are woefully inadequate as we’ve all found out during the pandemic. Other aspects have been opened up but there is much more to discuss here and develop in the coming years”
Better terms and conditions	12%	Ensure fair pay and conditions for all, including support for freelancers (e.g., cancellation payments)	“Better distribution of money...not just for conductors and soloists”
Not sure	10%		“My own sheer determination”
Subsidised childcare	9%	Onsite childcare; fund care while touring	“regular income streams outside freelance. Allocate funding for residencies etc. for childcare”

We learned of isolated examples of good practice. Focus group participants shared that they had heard about employers having gone out of their way to honour existing contracts to ensure that pregnant women and carers could continue working.

We also learned of the example of a prominent leader in music, whose family joins them on tour and how the company supports their way of working through bespoke travel arrangements to minimise disruption and maximise comfort.

One of the group interviews was conducted with administrative staff from a UK orchestra who shared how pre-planning is key to enable parents to continue working by mutually agreeing touring schedules where possible and spreading the cost of parental leave and informal accommodations. They gave the example of a musician who was unable to go on tour because they needed to support their child through a difficult period. Parental leave was arranged and the musician was permitted to join the last week of the tour and participate in two performances (“Thank you so much – I never thought I could still come and feel part”). This informal accommodation was a joy to the musician, who experienced a real sense of belonging. When participants were asked what the key is to supportive and inclusive practices, the overall consensus was “pre-planning” and “tailoring,” highlighting that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach but that organisations would benefit from creating a framework which is defined enough to give structure and clarity, but sufficiently agile to provide options.





# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The recommendations from this report are grouped as follows:

## BEST PRACTICE SHARING AND MORE ADVANCE SCHEDULING

We recommend **best practice sharing** for UK industry stakeholders to engage with representatives from relevant organisations where more structured timetabling and advance notice are the norm, as well as more family-friendly rehearsal timings. Learning from progress made over the past five years in the theatre sector would be beneficial. The next step will be to consider systems for more advance scheduling as our participants agreed that this is what would make the biggest difference to their lives. We contend that this is important not only for parents and carers, but for everyone.

## FLEXIBLE WORKING

**Flexible working** appears to be rare and people in classical music are unlikely to turn to employers for support. Best practice sharing of examples where flexibility, both formal and informal, has been successfully implemented would encourage wider uptake. Good **business research** is needed to consider long-term benefits in terms of retention, particularly in roles where there is a potential under-supply. More flexible and agile ways of working are likely to reap triple benefit: for people, for organisations, but also for the wider society to ensure that classical music is as inclusive as possible in its way of working. The industry needs to share information on prominent role models to cascade down that flexible working is a practice to benefit all. As one of our participants expressed it, “Crucially, flexible working needs to be a mainstay”. The myth of the ‘sacrifice’ of a choice between children/ dependents OR music needs to be dispelled in favour of “ok, so how we can make this work together?”

## INCLUSION AND INTERSECTIONALITY AS A KEY FOCUS

Genuinely inclusive ways of working benefit everyone in the industry. Our data demonstrates a lack of ethnic diversity and challenges for intersectional experience; for example, single parents, those with eldercare AND childcare responsibilities and ethnically-minoritised individuals. The social and financial capital required to mitigate the impact of caring responsibilities on career progression is challenging for most and, for people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds where such resources are limited, it is potentially prohibitive.

To become truly inclusive, classical music requires a culture shift to address persistent inequalities (for an overview see Bull, 2019)<sup>xiv</sup>. The industry would benefit from **Training** to increase knowledge, benchmarking against other sectors (where practice in this regard is more advanced) and from signing up to principles of best practice. It will be crucial to gather evidence on ‘what works’ and to continuously reflect on practice. Our data shows that those in management and administrative roles, as well as musicians, also struggle with expectations of the ‘ideal worker’ in classical music who works dedicated and extremely long hours. While our data provides a first snapshot of this issue, we encourage the industry to genuinely consult their current workforce, including freelancers, about people’s needs and how to address these. It is also imperative to instigate diverse governance, where different perspectives are represented at top levels. Strategic considerations about flexible, agile, and inclusive ways of working need to be bound up with the wider context of the industry’s future to reflect a diverse society. There were clear suggestions from our participants, such as removing age caps from eligibility for industry prizes. In the meantime, organisations would benefit from paying particular attention to intersectionality and providing targeted support, monitoring recruitment and retention statistics.

## ENHANCED SUPPORT FOR SMALL ORGANISATIONS AND FREELANCERS

It is clear that participants in our sample had varied work set-ups and structures, with some organisations being more advanced in practice. There were very significant challenges for small organisations in the context of the pandemic. More targeted support and subsidy is needed to ensure breadth of artistic output and to preserve cultural capital.

Self-employed fathers do not currently benefit from either paternity allowance or shared parental leave. When a self-employed mother claims maternity allowance, she can share that with an employed partner to take Shared Parental Leave, but it is not possible when the partner is self-employed. A clear process for accessing benefits, including paternity allowance and shared parental leave for freelancers, would empower freelance men to take an equal role in caring responsibilities. This would enable mothers co-parenting with a freelance partner, to have greater choice about when and how to return to work, as well as potentially ameliorating the current substantial pay penalty experienced by freelance mothers.

## MORE HOLISTIC CAREER PLANNING DURING MUSIC EDUCATION

It is clear across all data that people make career sacrifices once they became parents and that artistry is compromised at certain life transitions to sustain income. A significant enhancement of career planning, already embedded within higher education, would be to include practical support and advice about holistic life planning. Signposting to information about how to juggle personal responsibilities and caring and/ or family commitments would better prepare everyone for the possible eventualities of a career in classical music, offer equal networking opportunities and address inequalities in access to social capital at an early stage.

# APPENDIX – WHO TOOK PART?

We ran three focus groups with 25 participants in total (20 women, 5 men) with a range of roles and instruments represented as well as a range of caring responsibilities, including for elderly parents, people on adoption leave, and single parents. Participants were geographically diverse (see data summary tables below).

We had 410 survey responses, of which 69% were women, 20% men, 1% non-binary, and less than one percent identified as transgender. Regarding ethnicity, 79% reported as White and about 20% were from ethnically-minoritised backgrounds (where the next largest group was ‘mixed’ with 3% followed by 2% Black British; 1% preferred not to report<sup>6</sup>). The sample was highly-educated: 92.4% had at least an undergraduate degree, over 50% were educated to Masters level and 5% to doctoral level; 40% were based in London.

Regarding the primary role, 27% reported as freelance musicians, 17% as music teachers/ tutors, 12% as opera soloists, 10% as orchestra members and relatively small numbers across all other categories as illustrated below. Overall, about 23% worked in Opera and 13.5% in Orchestras. The average time in role was 17 years with a very large range of 60 years.

Table 4: Primary Work Roles in Music

Primary Role	Percentage
Opera Director	1.0
Opera (Soloist)	12.3
Opera (Chorus)	5.7
Choral Member	3.6
Music Tutor / Teacher / Lecturer	16.7
Orchestral (Member)	10.3
Orchestra (Principle)	3.3
Retired	0.5
Conductor	4.4
Composer	2.6
Other	7.5
Freelance Musician	27.0
Artistic management/direction	1.0
Non-music roles	4.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Breaking the data down by caring status: 63% were parental carers, 5% cared for someone other than a child, and 9% had dual caring responsibilities. 20% reported no caring responsibilities.

Finally, we undertook five in-depth interviews, with a musical director, an agent; an interview with a couple who work in classical music (one of whom is an administrator as well as a musician manager and the other a music director as well as musician); a group interview with three administrators from a UK orchestra and an opera singer who is now a freelance director. For the focus groups and interviews we report limited detail on participants’ background because of the small numbers to safeguard people’s anonymity.

# METHOD AND SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

## ETHICAL APPROVAL

This study received ethical approval from the School of Business, Economics and Informatics (BEI) at Birkbeck, University of London.

## THE METHOD: INTEGRATING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

We triangulated data from 25 participants in three online focus groups, eight participants across three in-depth interviews and survey data from 410 participants. We asked everyone about their current job structures; their earnings; how they had experienced changes in work opportunities; and their work-life balance. We then made comparisons by women and men, and by caring status.

## OUR RESEARCH HAD SEVERAL STAGES:

- The first stage was in-depth focus groups given the paucity of research data about classical musicians and caring responsibilities and also work-life balance in the arts. We applied heuristic analysis to better understand what is common and unique about personal experiences and to inform the design of a subsequent cross-sectional survey.
- The second stage was a cross-sectional survey to allow comparisons between groups. For example, on reported earnings as well as coding of qualitative free text comments.
- The third stage was a re-analysis of the focus group, supplemented by one-to-one interviews, through thematic coding in the light of the survey data, and triangulation of all data sources for reporting.





Table 5: Focus Group Participants

Focus Group number	1	2	3
Total number of participants	6	11	7
Detail on participants	1 composer/ conductor; 5 opera singers	Recorder, saxophone player, cellist, viola player, harp player, trumpet player, violinist, conductor, opera singer (x2), flute player	Opera singer, Cellist, double bass, violin, conductor, pianist, soprano
Women/ men	1 male, 5 female	2 males, 9 females	1 male, six females
Caring responsibilities	Ranged from primary carer for disabled partner to parent of four children at varying ages; includes father of one adopted child (another in process of adoption)	Ranged from one individual primary carer for elderly parent to 3 children of varied ages	Ranged from 1 to 4 children of varying ages; 2 also reported parents with dementia
Ethnicity	1 participant from an ethnically-minoritised group	White	White
Additional observations	Two single parents	One primary carer to two adults with dementia and depression respectively; five single parents	One individual widowed, two single parents

Table 6: Interview participants

Interview number	1	2	3	4	5
Number of participants	1	1	2	1	3
Detail on participants	Agent	Director	Musicians with role as administrator/director	Former musician, now director	Administration professionals
Women/ Men	Woman	Men	Women and men	Woman	3 women
Ethnicity	1 participant from an ethnically-minoritised group	White	White	White	White
Additional observations		Dual caring role	Caring for elderly parents		

Survey participants: Demographic data

AGE					ETHNICITY			
N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation		Frequency	Percentage	
410	18	87	43.83	10.44				
<b>GENDER</b>								
			<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>				
			Prefer not to say	1	0.2%	Prefer not to say	7	1.3%
			Women	396	75.7%	Indian	1	0.2%
			Men	118	22.6%	British Asian	4	0.8%
			Non-binary	6	1.1%	Any other Asian background	5	1.0%
			Other (please specify)	2	0.4%	African	3	0.6%
			Total	523	100%	Caribbean	4	0.8%
						Black British	12	2.3%
						Any other Black background	1	0.2%
						British Chinese	1	0.2%
						White British	350	66.9%
						White European	84	16.1%
						White Non-European	10	1.9%
						Any other White background	14	2.7%
						Any other mixed background	16	3.1%
						Any other background	10	1.9%
						Latin	1	0.2%
						Total	523	100%
<b>TRANS IDENTITY</b>								
			<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>				
			Prefer not to say	5	1.1%			
			Yes	3	0.7%			
			No	434	98.2%			
			Total	442	100%			

## MARITAL STATUS

	Frequency	Percentage
Prefer not to say	1	0.2%
Single, never married	58	11.1%
Married	338	64.8%
Civil partnership	5	1.0%
Living with partner	66	12.6%
Divorced	35	6.7%
Widowed	7	1.3%
Separated	10	1.9%
Other status (please specify):	2	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>100%</b>

## HIGHEST ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION

	Frequency	Percentage
None of the above	4	0.2%
GCSE	4	11.1%
A-Level	15	64.8%
Vocational qualification (e.g. NVQ, BTEC etc.)	17	1.0%
Bachelor's degree	176	12.6%
Master's degree	281	6.7%
Doctorate degree	26	1.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>1.9%</b>

## PLACE OF WORK

	Frequency	Percentage
London	207	39.7%
South East	49	9.4%
South West	23	4.4%
East of England	20	3.8%
East Midlands	9	1.7%
West Midlands	36	6.9%
Yorkshire and the Humber	29	5.6%
North East	10	1.9%
North West	41	7.9%
Scotland	38	7.3%
Wales	17	3.3%
Northern Ireland	2	0.4%
Republic of Ireland	2	0.4%
Overseas (please specify):	38	7.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>100%</b>

Regarding employment status, 56% were self-employed/ freelance, 23% employed full time, 16% part time, 1% unemployed, and 1% employed fixed term. An additional 2% were on parental leave (women only). We presume that the percentage of self-employed is lower than in music generally because Orchestras and Opera companies are large employers who provide a steady income for parents and carers.

## PRIMARY ROLE

	Frequency	Percentage
Opera Director	4	1.0%
Opera (Soloist)	48	12.3%
Opera (Chorus)	22	5.7%
Choral Member	14	3.6%
Music Tutor / Teacher / Lecturer	65	16.7%
Orchestral (Member)	40	10.3%
Orchestra (Principle)	13	3.3%
Retired	2	0.5%
Conductor	17	4.4%
Composer	10	2.6%
Other	29	7.5%
Freelance Musician	105	27.0%
Artistic management/ direction	4	1.0%
Non-music roles	16	4.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>100%</b>

## TIME IN ROLE (YEARS)

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
384	0	60.75	17.08	10.71



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