Passion and bread:
The calling and career of musicians

Barry Man-Kei Lee

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Education,
The University of Auckland, 2021.

Abstract

This thesis investigates the career realities of musicians through which their sense of passion for music—or musical calling—is manifested. Despite often making a precarious living and earning a below-average income, many musicians remain passionate and hold a strong belief in what they do. Many persevere and forge a boundaryless/protean /portfolio career that balances their artistic and material needs. Literature from social science points to a calling as a consuming and meaningful passion or purpose in life, and this is in evidence in this thesis.

Drawing on the separate fields of calling research and career development theories, this thesis offers a new conceptual framing to examine how musicians see what they do and why they continue to do it. In this research, nine classical, jazz and rock musicians in their early to mid-career were interviewed. Data was gathered through semi-structured individual interviews and examined through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Participant findings suggest that a musical calling can originate from aesthetic experience, social relationships and religious beliefs. It also forms over time through environmental and individual factors. Findings also suggest that the calling experience has characteristics such as intensity, perpetuity, multiplicity and mutability. Musicians also experience careers in ways that exhibit sustainability awareness, self-agency and career adaptability. Ideas such as professionality in music, intra- and extra-disciplinary world views, dichotomous views of career are broached. Finally, the thesis suggests ways to rethink musical calling and career so that both the 'passion and bread' over a lifetime can be sustained.

Dedicated to the One who calls.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the following people, all of whom have contributed to this study in their unique way:

Dr Kirsten Locke and Associate Professor David Lines for their insightful guidance, ever timely encouragement, and belief in this project.

Dr Trevor Thwaites for the substantial early support and enlightenment without which the study would not have taken flight.

Each of the musicians who opened up and shared their stories in such an honest and personal way. It has been such a privilege to know each of you.

Fellow academics in Hong Kong whom I worked alongside, who had inspired me with their educational and interdisciplinary acuity.

PhD colleagues in Room N314 for the jovial and often therapeutic fellowship. The mere thought of knowing someone going through the same struggle fuels me onwards.

Close friends, especially those in PCBC, who have provided such an overwhelming love for my family. As a migrant family living through constant instability, we wouldn't have made it without the open arms of a supporting community.

Mum and Dad, for raising me and letting me become a musician of my own accord. Without your love and support in every way imaginable, this project would have been impossible.

Abraham and Kardia, for your understanding and sacrifice of growing up largely with a dad who went missing in the evenings, weekends and school holidays. It's about time to make up for it!

And most of all, Jennie, for your unreserved love, support, and partnership in life. Every word in this thesis is a testimony to the sacrifice you've made.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis examines what it means for musicians to have a calling and career in music. The word 'calling' is steeped in history and religion, yet it has been widely adapted to secular contexts as well. For some, it represents a clear sense of mission, fate or destiny. For others, it may be an opaque sense of compulsion, almost nearing obliviousness—people simply do what they have to do without reflecting much—and that could be their unspoken and unrecognised calling. Musicians often experience an inexorable and inexplicable passion towards music. They pursue it to the point where they are willing to make sacrifices for it, such as a more prosperous career and better well-being. It is intriguing to understand how musicians develop a strong calling or passion that drives and sustains their music careers.

This study looks at how a sense of a musical calling unfolds in musicians' lives, and what kind of impact it has over different career stages for musicians. It also investigates how musicians make sense of their careers and what key concerns and challenges exist that can impact how calling is framed in their lives. A broader purpose of this thesis is to let the emerging insights from a group of musicians, who were invited to contribute their thoughts, benefit a wider audience of musicians. It is hoped that they may find valuable thoughts to enrich their professional development and music education at large.

An enquiry about calling in a musical context involves examining its essence, causes and effects. For example, questions of interest include

how a musical calling is shaped by individual, institutional and environmental factors; how it is manifested within a career context; and how it may affect musicians positively and negatively. For this purpose, a phenomenological approach has been put to use in this study. The phenomenological approach used in this thesis not only provides a meaningful facility that enables musicians to describe their lived experiences, but also provides various means by which they can reflect on their lives and musical careers in a way that brings in the affective, emotional and embodied dimensions to making music (Embree & Mohanty, 1997). More specifically, the hermeneutic dimension of the phenomenological approach in this research examines "experience together with its meanings" with an attitude of openness towards the multiplicity of meanings and possibilities in interpretation (Henriksson & Friesen, 2012, p. 1). In this way, how musicians experience their calling and how they *make sense* of their calling can be examined from multiple angles.

Calling is defined by Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas (2011) as "a consuming, meaningful passion people experience towards a domain" (p. 1005). The term is laden with "a rich, complex history replete with religious, moral and philosophical undertones" yet is highly relevant in today's secularised and economic context (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015, p. 160). Musicians' calling has played a key role in some influential studies in calling research (Dobrow, 2013; Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011, 2012). In recent centuries in Western universities, the culture of music school has played an important part in the development of young classical musicians. In ethnomusicology, Nettl (1995) identified a quasi-religious aura surrounding the music school and a system of thinking that almost deified prominent composers, powerfully shaping musicians' attitudes and behaviours. Such an environment would contribute immensely towards a musician's calling. The interconnected facts that the music school helps shape musicians' calling, and that their calling is researchable, underpin my approach to examining the notion of calling in this research.

Alongside this notion of calling, this thesis inquires into how musicians experience their careers and how they make sense of them. Musicians, especially those who take up music as a career and profession,

likely experience their careers differently from people who work a regular day job with a foreseeable career pathway. Full-time positions in music are often scarce compared to other professions. Career stability and sustainability become genuine issues that musicians need to grapple with. Financial hardship is a known problem within the literature for professional musicians (D. Bennett & Freer, 2012; Hughes et al., 2014). In classical music, even the most elite musicians struggle to forge a lifelong music career. Daniel Wakin (2004), a *New York Times* writer, examined the class of 1994 from the Juilliard School and found that the attrition rate was high among aspiring musicians. He discovered that ten years after graduation, at least one-third of the cohort had exited from professional music performance entirely. Those who could not find enough work in music fields turned to other careers such as primary school teacher, tax consultant, diamond grader and garden keeper. In these cases, years of arduous training and extraordinary achievements in competitions and auditions at the highest level had become irrelevant as their lives and livelihoods became situated outside the domain of music.

As a result, this thesis is entitled "Passion and Bread" because it probes both the calling as 'passion', and the career as 'bread' so the questions around what *sustains* musicians can be explored. To examine these phenomena in detail, this introductory chapter first locates me, the researcher, in the thesis, contextualising my own position as a musician and why I find the notion of calling so interesting and important. It then provides a brief discussion on the theoretical framing and methodology used in this research. Next, important contexts that situate the field of research, such as music industries, employment and the nature of musicians' portfolio careers are considered. Lastly, the structure of the thesis is presented to provide an overview of the research for the reader. It is important to now introduce myself as the writer and researcher in this thesis, who has, as will become evident, a long and varied relationship with the notion of calling and its relationship to my musical identity and career.

1.2 The researcher's background: Locating myself in the research

As a musician, I experienced a strong calling to study and work in music. I had also developed a multifarious music career to the point that I had the privilege to teach and share my experiences with students. These experiences provide me with personal insight into researching calling and careers in musicians, and underpin my phenomenological interpretation of the interviews. Here I recount how an inexorable calling in music manifested in my life, how my portfolio career as a professional musician unfolded, and how I arrived as a researcher at this research enquiry.

1.2.1 The seed of a musical calling

I was born in Hong Kong in the 1970s, which at the time was a thriving British colony. I was the only child and the only musician in my family—I had no family musical heritage, connection or musical role model that I could refer to as a child. Nevertheless, music somehow took ground in my life.

There was a sign of a predilection for music very early. My mother recalled an interesting episode. As a sickly baby I often cried, especially when being fed medicine. Back then, a TV drama came on at seven o'clock in the evening. Once the theme song started playing, I would stop crying; and once the music stopped, I would start crying again. My family found it quite interesting and amusing.

Environmental input and affordance may have contributed significantly to my calling in music at the start. My earliest musical memory was a little Casio musical calculator. In the free music mode, one can play simple music using the keypad in which the numbers 1 to 9 represent C4 to D5.[1] The 'demo' mode always played "When the Saints Go Marching In". However, I figured out how to play the song in the free music mode when I was perhaps still in kindergarten, i.e. playing by ear even before taking any music lessons. It must have been a joyous moment

[1] C4 to D5 is the range from Middle C to the D an octave higher.

to my little mind, and from there, the positivity about music snowballed.

An intense fascination with the piano was incubated long before I received formal piano lessons. After my Casio experience, I encountered real pianos, possibly at a friend's place or music shop. To me as a child, there was almost a magical aura surrounding the instrument. Every push of the key and every note that came out captivated me.

Instrument lessons later became the heartbeat of my musical calling. When I was six or seven, I asked my mother to give me piano lessons. I was the one initiating it—untypical for an Asian child, as in many other cases the parents were the initiators. A few years later, I was captivated by another instrument—the violin—as I listened to a live violin concerto. Again, I entreated my mother to give me violin lessons.

My passion for music grew exponentially through formal and informal learning in my childhood and teenage years. As a child, I enjoyed making music with others, such as participating in choirs and orchestras. However, the most memorable moments were those when I spent time alone with music. Every now and then, I would feel the intense tinkling of pleasure when listening to orchestral music. In my teen years, I spent countless Saturday afternoons listening to the great symphonies in the library, studying the orchestral score in the process. Deeply in love with music, I would spend hours on the piano improvising, composing, discovering movie theme songs and radio tunes by ear, often shirking my piano homework. Probably near the edge of developing a compulsive disorder, I would (now to my embarrassment) nag a friend who owned a set of music dictionaries to recite me the entries over the phone.

Studying music felt like my natural calling. After finishing secondary school, I had the chance to study abroad at a university in New Jersey, in the United States. There I chose music (classical piano performance) as a major with my parents' full support, again rather untypical of Asian culture. I thoroughly enjoyed the learning but also started to fret over my career prospects. I did not want to end up as a piano teacher or professor for the rest of my life. Instead, I wanted to explore other musical worlds, such as jazz and beyond.

At that juncture, the musical calling had evolved and pointed me to new areas. Somewhat against my professors' expectations, I switched to music technology for my master's degree. It was an eye-opening

experience as I gained hands-on training in electroacoustic music, tuning systems, sound design and film music. During that time, I also worked part-time in an African-American church in Brooklyn as their music director. Along with my indigenous music culture, many musical worlds joined and formed a powerful confluence. I found the experience giddy yet fulfilling. However, there was a growing sense of disquiet about my future career as I could not see any clear pathway ahead.

1.2.2 My portfolio career

After finishing my master's degree, I moved back to Hong Kong, somewhat clueless about my next career step. I was fortunate enough to land a job in an engineering company as their sound producer. Back then, they developed voice recognition products before the smartphone era, and I found my music and technology skills useful in this context. Though the full-time job was fascinating in many ways, the pay was entry level. As a result, I also taught the piano for extra income. Incidentally, teaching fulfils my desire as a performer, at least partially. Demonstration was an essential part of my teaching and thus gave me an outlet to exercise my performance skills.

The teaching and performance opportunities grew in the next few years, to the point that I could confidently fade out my sound producer role. On the teaching side, I started teaching music theory and improvisation courses at a tertiary institute, in addition to taking a growing number of private students. On the musical front, I also received commissions to write scores for films and musical productions. The demand for course preparation and the imperative for upskilling required tremendous effort during this time.

In terms of career modes, I ultimately adopted a fully-fledged portfolio career, with income split between many roles. In addition to my regular teaching, choir rehearsals and professional accompanying also brought in steady income. As a mid-20s person, I was content with the income level at that stage since it was comparable to my friends who were engaged in the early stage of more respectable professions, such as engineer, school teacher and lawyer. Oddly yet expectedly, my creative efforts which demanded the most intense effort, such as arrangement and songwriting, were mostly unpaid or underpaid.

My career began to take an entrepreneurial turn. I co-founded three companies: one for choral education, one for music publishing, and one for running a music shop and music learning centre. I actively managed and operated these companies alongside my existing teaching and performances. At that time, I experienced another round of upskilling beyond music, i.e. in business, management, and entrepreneurship.

It is interesting that all these musical roles and ventures happened organically and snowballed thanks to my professional network. I did not set a clear goal at the outset but simply rode on the opportunities that came along. All that happened seemed so natural. I was not thinking much about what actually propelled me in my career, and simply going with the flow had somehow paid off and led to a highly satisfying professional life.

1.2.3 My university career

Several years of freelancing experience as a pianist, composer, conductor, educator and entrepreneur unexpectedly led me to a full-time teaching role in a university. I only had a master's degree, but my diverse career experience and professional network perhaps had given me an edge over other well-qualified candidates who had applied for the position.

I slotted into the role of teaching and managing a new music degree programme that was heavily career-oriented. As the most junior on the teaching staff at that time, I was assigned a broad range of courses, from practical musicianship, keyboard improvisation, music theory, music technology, and popular music studies to career preparation. Teaching career preparation posed a particular challenge since there was no theory to back me up. Available to me at this time were some roughly compiled bibliographies of textbooks whose contexts were foreign and distant to the music students. I resorted to using my life experience as a portfolio musician living in Hong Kong as a key reference point to teaching music careers situated in a metropolitan context. Drawing from this personal knowledge, I taught the students how to set up a teaching studio and the basics of business administration and tax.

The humbling experience of lacking academic theory and knowledge about teaching tacitly sowed the seed for this research. I felt an urgent need for a broader and deeper knowledge about the reality of music

careers that would better prepare music students.

1.2.4 Back to square one

In 2014, after six years of full-time university teaching, I decided to close this beautiful chapter of my life. I explored ways to take my young family overseas, and at the same time, pursue my doctoral degree. New Zealand became an unlikely destination.

The move from Hong Kong to New Zealand was a huge gamble. My meagre savings could not allow me to study for my PhD without having to work. I had to find a way to support my family. Despite some promising interviews, I had no job for a few months, and the need for employment became more pressing. So somebody asked me to help him out as a house painter, and I did.

Going from an enviable academic position to an unglamorous labouring role was a giant leap and a totally unexpected career move. Nonetheless, I did not dabble in house painting too long before landing a full-time job teaching the piano. Surprisingly, these two jobs shared one thing in common: in New Zealand they both earned me less than the minimum wage! They were both 'forced self-employment' in which the pay was on a daily or weekly basis which somehow eludes the legal minimum wage. I was not in a position to say no or negotiate—it was take it or leave it. I was making less than I used to as a new graduate in Hong Kong. As a contractor, my starting weekly income could barely cover the rent plus a single meal, let alone provide for a family of four. The financial burden was simply insuperable.

I discovered from demographical statistics that my income went from the 90th percentile in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong, 2021) to the lowest second quintile in New Zealand (Stats NZ, 2021b).[2] In other words, my family earnings slid from what was the very top end of the spectrum to the mid-lower half. Typically, those living

[2] It should be noted that the year described in my experience was 2015–16 but the 2021 statistics are chosen for comparison here for two reasons. First, the 2021 statistics provide an estimate close enough to convey my drastic slide in the income spectrum, presuming no significant change in the stratification of the percentiles/quintiles over the years. Second, the historical data is not always available, as in the case of New Zealand, and has been revised over the years.

at the lower end would receive welfare or benefits from the government. However, since we were not New Zealand residents from an immigration standpoint, we were not eligible for any medical benefits, tax credits, or social welfare—but we had to still pay full taxes since we were tax residents from the Inland Revenue Department's point of view. One time, my son was very ill, bedridden for a week, but we weighed up the situation very carefully and eventually decided not to take him to the medical clinic. It was simply too costly as non-residents. That was the experience of living in financial hardship.

My academic job used to provide my family and me a safety net of a steady monthly income, paid leave, medical and insurance benefits, and a considerable gratuity at the end of the contract. Now, I was living hand-to-mouth as a contractor, deprived of any standard employee benefits and a non-resident ineligible for essential welfare when I needed it the most. The contrasting reality was staggering.

Self-doubt started to creep in. I asked myself, was studying music and living a music career a wrong move after all? I never doubted my decision to move to New Zealand. However, I was no longer sure about the benefit of keeping to my calling as a musician. I was always aware of the precariousness of living a music career, but the insecurity of such a life had truly hit home. While the hidden costs of migrating to another country were anticipated, their effect was still felt acutely. I wondered if the predicament would have been alleviated if I had chosen another profession in the first place.

Reflecting on the past, I had always recognised I had a special relationship with music. There was something elusive but gripping about it, almost like a sense of destiny. However, at that juncture in my life, the relationship with music had become poignant and even conflicting—almost antithetical to what it was supposed to be. I suspected I was not alone and I wanted to find out more about this engrossing entity that was beyond passion and 'post'-passion. As a result, I set out to investigate what it means to be driven by a sense of calling, especially in a musical context. I hoped that my sensitivity towards the positivity and negativity of living out a calling would give me the empathy, understanding and insight necessary to connect with my participants. These qualities were also what led me to incorporate an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 67) so that I could draw on my own

affective and emotional experiences and recognise these more elusive dimensions in my participants.

Moreover, I arrived at a point in life where I needed to rethink my career, after 'hitting the reset button' in a new country. Having had a relatively fortunate career in music, I found it unsettling to even contemplate doing something else. Being still fresh from a university teaching background, I wondered what academic knowledge would help musicians like me cope with a possible career transition. The situation pointed me to career development theories. I recognised the potential benefits of this knowledge for musicians' professional development and thus included the area in my investigation. Furthermore, I was hoping to illuminate the intricate relationship between the sense of calling and the practicality of career. The result was a formulation of this study.

1.3 Theoretical framing

This thesis aims to both illumine the elusive notion of calling and delve into the realistic concerns of music careers. However, the current research landscape that deals with the notion of calling in a musician's career lacks a framework that encompasses both areas of calling and career. As a result, I have drawn on the separate fields of calling research and career development theories and combined the two to provide a new and unique conceptual framing to this area. The insights gained from conjoining the two fields provides a novel lens to understand and investigate musicians' lives which is currently lacking. This research intends to address this need. As a first overview in this thesis, the areas of calling research and careers research will be briefly engaged with so that deeper analysis of these two fields and my combination of the two can be outlined in Chapters Two and Three of this thesis.

1.3.1 Calling research

Literature in calling research has attempted to articulate clearly what calling means. However, there is no uniform understanding of the term. Some see it as a central purpose in life (McGee, 2005, p. 26); some regard it as a consuming passion towards an endeavour (Dobrow & Tosti-

Kharas, 2011, p. 1005); and others view it as a transcendent summons (Dik & Duffy, 2009, p. 427) or a sense of destiny (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009, p. 37). Interestingly, the element of having an external summons or source is explicitly recognised in their methods and findings by multiple studies (Ahn et al., 2017; Domene, 2012; Hagmaier & Abele, 2012). However, it should be noted that the external summons or source need not be religious in nature. In particular, Dobrow's (2013) study on musicians' calling implies that music can be a legitimate external source. Relatedly, data from ethnomusicology seems to support this line of thought. As noted, the idolisation of traditional European musicians in the music school promotes a quasi-religious aura (Nettl, 1995, p. 16), which is likely to captivate students' minds. This suggests that a musical milieu may have a significant impact on the formation of a calling in music. Chapter Two discusses this theme and the definitions in depth.

1.3.2 Career theories

In career development research, a multitude of well-established and widely referenced theories exist which can be helpful for the study of musicians' careers. Three particular career theories inform this research.

First, Super's (1990) "life-span, life-space" theory (pp. 197–261) presents a lifelong or longitudinal perspective to study musicians' career cycles over their lifespan. To Super, a lifelong career consists of the stages of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement. This idea serves to highlight the element of time and development to understand a musician's career.

Second, Patton and McMahon's (2014) systems theory framework in career development suggests a comprehensive range of individual and contextual factors that interact with each other and thus shape a person's career. Individual factors include age, knowledge of the world of work, spiritual beliefs, career values, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and health. Contextual factors comprise family, education institutions, peers, social and mainstream media, workplace, community groups, socio-economic environments, geographical location, political decisions, employment market, migration, the financial environment, globalisation, and technological advances. This framework informs the many factors that are present in a music career.

Third, Savickas's (2013) career construction theory provides a lens to see how musicians utilise their self-agency and career adaptability to navigate their careers. They imitate their musical role models, harmonise their musical passion with the opportunities available, and personalise their career journey into a meaningful story. This theory provides the importance of agency as integral to understand the musicians' narratives.

These three theories or frameworks contribute to understanding a musician's career in lifespan, career in context and career in self. Chapter Three presents and discusses these core ideas in relation to musicians' career development.

1.3.3 The interplay between calling and career

In this thesis, calling and career can be seen as two concepts that are dynamically reciprocal to each other. In the case of some musicians, their musical calling impels them to take up a music career. However, it is also possible that when they pursue another career or interest, they start to develop a sense of calling in the new area. The interplay between calling and career is somewhat reflected in calling research, where themes of career development such as employability (D. T. Hall & Chandler, 2005; Lysova et al., 2018) and work satisfaction (Duffy, Manuel, et al., 2011; Duffy et al., 2014; Duffy & Autin, 2013; Hagmaier & Abele, 2012; Harzer & Ruch, 2012; C. Peterson et al., 2009) are studied in relation to calling. Thus, an understanding of the reciprocal relationship between calling and career also underpins this research.

1.4 Methodology overview

The type of question being asked in a thesis drives the type of methodology with which to answer this question. This is the case in this thesis, where my overarching question is:

> How do musicians experience and think about their callings and careers?

And the sub-questions are:

1. How do musicians experience and understand their musical calling and other callings? How do musicians experience their musical calling from the outset and the changing sense of it over time?

2. How do musicians understand and adapt to their professional careers in the context of a changing world?

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (J. A. Smith et al., 1996), known as IPA, is chosen as the overarching methodology for this research. It allows a "rigorous exploration of idiographic subjective experiences" (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008, p. 215) and specialises in investigating the meaning-making process. A phenomenological approach is used to understand musicians' lived experiences. An interpretative approach allows the researcher to reflect systematically on the elements of the lived experiences as articulated by my participants. Chapter Four discusses the methodology and its philosophical underpinnings in detail. Data were drawn from semi-structured interviews with nine musician participants. The cohort of nine musicians represents a wide range of professional areas, musical genres, specialities, and career stages. They were composers, conductors, guitarists, pianists, and singers working across classical, rock and jazz. Participants had established careers in music ranging from a few years to a few decades. Their biographical sketches can be found in Chapter Four.

1.5 Contexts of musicians' calling and careers

While musicians' calling and career are the foci of the research, it is essential to situate them within an understanding of broader contexts. First, musicians make their living from the music industries and related fields. Their mode of work, namely the 'portfolio career', is also vastly different from traditional careers.

1.5.1 Music industries

The term 'music industries' warrants elaboration. Toby Bennett[3] (2015) argues that the singular form, i.e. music industry, is inadequate to capture its multiplicity of "functions, roles and activities" across "an incredibly diverse range of sub-sectors, companies and institutions" (p. 13). Thus, both singular and plural forms appear in this thesis when appropriate.

The global music industry has grown, but musicians' livelihoods remain uncertain. Recent statistics have depicted a positive outlook: digital revenue from music has soared (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2021; Recorded Music NZ, 2018); live performance has also seen healthy growth (Sanchez, 2018); and artist revenue has yielded significant increase (Bazinet et al., 2018). Despite these advances, it is still yet to be determined whether musicians experience a similar buoyant mood.

In 2020, the global music industry as a whole experienced a buoyant rise of 7.4 per cent in revenue (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2021, p. 4), far outpacing the global economic growth of minus 3.2 per cent (International Monetary Fund, 2021). Despite the pandemic, the music industry gained US$21.6 billion in global revenue (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2021, p. 11), with a sharp growth of 18.5 per cent in subscription streaming (p. 10). Australasia as a whole saw a 3.3 per cent growth and a rise of 14.3 per cent in streaming revenue (p. 11). In New Zealand, both streaming and subscription revenues rose by about 4 per cent (ibid.). These data were mainly driven by digital subscription revenues, highlighting the monumental impact of technology and the growing adoption of music streaming services worldwide.

Despite the uptrend the industry experienced as a whole during this time, artists and musicians only managed to recoup a meagre 12 per cent (Bazinet et al., 2018, p. 63) from the total revenue in 2017. In other words, for every 100 dollars worth of economic value they generated through their musical effort, the artists only received 12 dollars due to the

[3] Since there are two scholars with the same last name Bennett in this chapter, Toby Bennett's first name is included here to distinguish between him and Dawn Bennett, who is a prolific researcher in the field of musicians' careers. Dawn Bennett is simply referred as Bennett in the narrative of this thesis.

unavoidable and exorbitant overheads from intermediaries such as the record labels and streaming platforms. This resulted in a grossly disproportionate share for the content creators, that is, the artists and musicians, without which the industry would not have existed in the first place. Nonetheless, the report by Bazinet et al. also revealed a more positive outlook for the future: artist revenue rose from a meagre 4 to 7 per cent in the pre-Internet era to 12 per cent in 2017 (ibid.), portraying an increasingly favourable trend for artists and musicians. However, at this paltry return—likely to be less than one in cost-benefit ratio as an investment—it remains unrealistic for most artists and musicians to perform and record music as a means for making a living, let alone a profit. Thus, passion is likely the key driver for continued music-making in most cases.

Besides music recording, live performance is a sub-sector that has grown substantially. In 2017, the live concert industry increased by 16 per cent on the previous year. It is also expected to become a $31 billion business by 2022 globally (Sanchez, 2018). Though the entertainment business is driven mainly by music, the non-music costs can be substantial. Staging a concert may include "the opening act, tour managers, transportation, set designers, site coordinators, stage managers, lighting directors, sound engineers, carpenters, pyrotechnics, catering, wardrobe crew, stylists, security and physicians", totalling one-third of the ticket cost (Bazinet et al., 2018, p. 57). Besides live performances at traditional indoor and outdoor venues, house concerts have become a growing trend. Watson and Forrest (2018) noted "a 680% growth in six months over the summer of 2016/17" in Australia (p. 43). Despite the upward trajectory of live musical activities, it is unknown from the statistics how much of the total revenue ends up as artists' and musicians' recompense. In a world still grappling with a global pandemic, even this area of growth is vulnerable.

1.5.2 Musicians' employment

Self-employment often subsumed within a portfolio career remains a predominant working mode for musicians and artists. For instance, in Australia, four out of five professional artists run their own businesses (Throsby & Zednik, 2010), and for musicians, six out of ten run their own

businesses (Cunningham & Higgs, 2010). Findings also suggest that artists in developed countries are three to five times more likely to be self-employed (Bridgstock, 2012).

In New Zealand, no specific census for musicians can be found since they are subsumed under the more generic performing arts category (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2019). However, the aggregate statistics can draw a tellingly gloomy picture for New Zealand music graduates who aspire to become performers. The number of performing artists employed, including musicians, was only 1,323 in 2013 and was projected to be 1,560 (2.7 per cent increase) in 2023. The number of people who completed bachelor degrees in the performing arts remained about 600–800 from 2012–2017. In 2019 alone, job vacancies advertised were about 170, well short of the supply of the 600 graduates produced. The statistics also reflect that, within two years of completing the study, only 59 per cent of arts graduates are in employment, earning a median salary of $39,000 (ibid.).

Nonetheless, Australian scholars have been critical about the inadequacy of government survey statistics to understand the full picture of musicians' employment and the cultural sector at large. Bartleet et al. (2012) exposed the parochiality of the existing survey and census-based research, highlighting only the 'main job' rather than the combination of concurrent jobs exemplified by a musician's portfolio career. The intricate employment relationships, as well as the "size and variety of professional identities", are also insufficiently captured (Gollmitzer & Murray, 2009, p. 6). There is perhaps a reason behind this weakness: music is understood, at least for policymakers, to be part of the cultural industries which subsume "film and video, motion pictures, television, art galleries, libraries, archives, museums, botanic gardens, music and theatre, performing arts venues, and services such as education" (Bartleet et al., 2012, p. 33). The reality is further complicated by the fact that musicians can work across many fields simultaneously, such as the music industry and education. Their transferrable skills, both specific and generic, as well as their creativity (D. Bennett & Hannan, 2008), enable them to work cross-sectorally. In Australia, it is estimated that 50 per cent of musicians work outside music, and about 60 per cent operate their own business (Cunningham & Higgs, 2010).

These statistics fail to capture and inform musician's career decisions as they often work across cultural industries and the education sector. Do musicians' lived experiences reflect a self-employment mentality and their cross-sectoriality? For example, how do musicians see themselves as performers, educators, entrepreneurs, or a mix of these things? These questions open up areas of interest in the context of my research.

1.5.3 Relationship between musicians and the music industry

From an economic perspective, the music industry is largely subsumed under the creative industries, which generate content and products that can contribute to "global experience economies" (Daniel, 2013, p. 216). The consumer experience often goes beyond music, encompassing "the design, the management, the organisation, the marketing and the usage of (how customers receive) the experience" (Darmer, 2008, p. 111) and thus necessitate multiple types of expertise. The ramification is that musicians have to rely on the record labels, distribution platforms or other entities in order to deliver their music to the consumers' door. In short, the music industry comprises many types of experts besides musicians, and they all share a symbiotic relationship.

Music industries and musicians are intricately related, and the relationship between them can be seen from an economic perspective. If music records are viewed as a mere commodity (M. Jones, 1997), musicians are the workers that produce them, controlled by an industry comprised of record companies and distribution platforms at large. From an insider's perspective, Jones (2017) exposed how record companies in the pre-digital era had exploited the vulnerability and "subordinacy" of musicians (p. 343). Moreover, the companies lured musicians, using "the glow from the enormous success of a tiny handful of their signings to blind [them]" (ibid.) to believe that they can 'make it' to the profitable top 10 per cent, then eliminated the commercially unsuccessful bottom 90 per cent "by stealth" (ibid.). Such a high attrition rate of pop musicians who never attain fame and financial prosperity was echoed by Moorhead (1999).

The strategy employed by the record labels created a detrimental and disposable position for musicians, as "the imperative remained to keep musicians 'on-side' until the final decision to withdraw company support

from them was made" (M. Jones, 2017, p. 343). Musicians, working for recording labels or distribution platforms, essentially need to realise the subtle re-positioning from business partners to mere subordinates, and yet they remain core content providers. Jones argued such a situation comes with a "considerable ontological expense" for musicians as they fulfil their concurrent roles "as (effectively powerless) business partners, as creative labour and as a commodity" (ibid.) within the industry. A bleak outlook for musicians was further portrayed: When sales falter, musicians become liable to be blamed for their lack of quality, rather than the inherent filtering process that constitutes the profit-making machinery for the companies (ibid.). This line of thought exemplifies the utilitarian view of the record companies that undermine the agency of musicians. In the context of this thesis, it is interesting to find out how the musician participants experience their possibly conflicted relationship with the music industries.

1.5.4 Musicians' portfolio career

Professional musicians who work within, across and beyond the creative, cultural and educational sectors, often adopt a portfolio career (Bartleet et al., 2012; D. Bennett, 2008, 2012). The world of work they are situated in comprises mainly of "networked clusters of small-to-medium enterprises, sole-traders and micro-businesses", differing from the monolithic companies and organisations prominent in conventional industries such as finance and manufacturing (Bridgstock, 2011, p. 4). As a result, musicians' careers characterise a somewhat unconventional, flexible and portfolio orientation. The term 'portfolio career' first appeared in the career literature (Mallon, 1988; Templer & Cawsey, 1999). For this thesis, the term denotes a mix of "concurrent and overlapping" (Bartleet et al., 2012, p. 35) part-time (even full-time) work or employment that is reflective of the broad skill base of many musicians. This requires the individual to be accountable to multiple employers and managements simultaneously. For musicians, this career mode often arises out of the necessity to carve out a sustainable living because of the scarcity of full-time positions in the market. In fact, a large-scale study involving more than two thousand musician participants from the United States showed that most musicians held concurrently two or more roles that derive

income (Thomson, 2012b).

Concepts akin to *portfolio career* exist in the shape of *boundaryless career* and *protean career*, and the three career constructs have been mentioned together (Bridgstock, 2005; Daniel, 2016). The boundaryless career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) refers to the one across and outside the traditional organisational boundaries typified by companies and firms. The protean career (D. T. Hall, 1996) stresses the adaptive nature of tailor-making one's career to the increasingly fragmented work exemplified by the 'gig economy'. Despite the contemporary coinage, Bennett (2018) regards "the 'protean' musician career as the career norm throughout history rather than as a new phenomenon" (p. 17).

The 'gig economy' is the result of the "increasing casualisation and short-term contract working … over the last twenty years", especially within the cultural and creative industries (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, p. 34). For artists and musicians alike, the gig economy entails irregular work, short-term contracts with little job protection, uncertain prospects and unequal earnings (ibid.). The vulnerability of artistic labour yields increased exploitation, leading to their "sense of victimisation and anger", which is widely documented in the critical literature (Wyszomirski & Chang, 2017, p. 6). This phenomenon may further lead to the lack of upward mobility and decreasing quality of life of the workers involved.

Regardless of the term used (boundaryless/portfolio/protean), the idea of such a flexible career is often realised in self-employment, freelance work and "moonlighting" (Wyszomirski & Chang, 2017, p. 6). In self-employment, individuals customise work to fit their schedule and life roles. Bennett's (2007) study found that most musicians are "wholly or partially self-employed, and … work in a variety of often interdependent roles throughout their careers" (p. 6). Professional musicians whose portfolio work remains within music performance may engage themselves in "session" work or "pickup" ensembles, which correspond to freelance work. For artists in general, freelancing is when they contribute their skills to concurrent projects held by different entities. In "moonlighting", as Wyszomirski and Chang (2017) define for the artists' case, they work primarily in their artistic role while holding a second job which can be a 'day job'. In fact, many artists hold multiple

jobs, including non-creative ones, due to the scarcity of creative postings (Throsby, 2007). The situation was reflected in Bennett's (2007) study, in which one-third of the participants worked outside music. Similarity is reflected in the participants in this thesis also.

1.5.5 The Aotearoa New Zealand context

Aotearoa New Zealand's own national and musical identity is continually being shaped by multiple latent forces negotiating with each other, thus impacting how musicians of different cultures engage in music and lead their careers in this land. Scholarship from an ethnomusicological or sociological standpoint has revealed ways to make sense of this context.

Amidst the many forces, the notion of biculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand represents a cardinal framework for understanding this context for musicians. It is based upon the Treaty of Waitangi—the country's founding document, which testifies, perpetuates and celebrates biculturalism permeated many aspects of people's everyday life, including music. Under this framework, there is a distinction between Māori, i.e. the indigenous people of the land, and Pākehā, which generally refers to New Zealanders of European descent (Scanlen, 2019, p. 1). However, the predominance of the narrative seems to lean towards Pākehā: "it is Māori songs that can be considered 'cultural', or different, or non-mainstream, and 'normality' is centred in a place of Pākehā comfort" (ibid., p. 7), implying a balance to be redressed.

The politics of ethnicity also inevitably affect the language policy in schools, which has ramifications for music since music is deeply connected with language. In a case of a prominent Māori musician, te reo Māori was seen to be inadequately integrated into the school for her child (ibid., p. 18). Though the account and subsequent discussion were not explicit in articulating the impact of bicultural language policy on music, it would not be unreasonable to imagine the negative implications that a suppressed presence of te reo Māori would have for Māori musicians.

Beyond education, the relatively scant preservation of Māori music also presents a problem for Māori musicians and their legacy. While Sir Apirana Ngata compiled the multi-volume *Ngā Mōteatea* (The Songs) to preserve Māori music, the vast amount of Pākehā music in existence still

far outweigh that of Māori. Scanlen remarks:

> [T]here is an enduring truth here: in comparison to Māori musicians and Māori music, Pākehā musicians are more likely to read music, and it is Pākehā music that is more likely to be represented in notation, a fact that has an enduring legacy in New Zealand music classrooms. (ibid., p. 84)

A natural corollary is that the underrepresentation of Māori music in education would impact the development of musicians and their careers, perhaps tacitly. They may presume that the Pākehā way of making music is mainstream, further entrenching this narrative.

Related to the Pākehā and Māori distinction, music and musicians in Aotearoa New Zealand can be seen as 'elite' or 'non-elite'. The elite group is represented by "the symphony orchestras and opera companies and schools of music that prepare their students for careers as 'classical' musicians", and the non-elite group by "the bands and DJs and radio stations that cater to the masses, and tertiary institutions offering courses that provide instruction in such 'contemporary' or 'popular' music" (ibid., p. 186). The elite vs non-elite distinction is fortified by the fact that the external examinations in music are heavily geared towards the "classical musical conventions", thus dictating what would be taught in the New Zealand music classrooms (ibid., p. 10). It is also understood that the former group usually undertakes formal training and the latter informal learning in music.

The distinction between elite/non-elite and formal/non-formal is particularly related to this thesis and its limitations. While I am not Pākehā, my musical background is rooted in formal training, and thus admittedly the conceptualisation of this thesis is strongly influenced by this lens. However, it should also be noted that I also underwent the informal career pathway as a pop and jazz pianist for many bands, somehow attenuating the influence of the elitist thinking in music and strengthening the appreciation for the musicians that I interviewed whose learning would be considered non-formal and non-elite.

Beyond a bicultural lens, Aotearoa New Zealand's music can also be understood from the colonial/postcolonial perspective. Johnson (2010) notes that the nation has been trying to establish its own national identity

while retaining its British colonial attachment (p. 2). He further maintains that:

> New Zealand's colonial past and postcolonial present has created a nation rich in cultural diversity... Such is this cultural mix [i.e. Māori, Australia, Polynesia, and Asia] that musical styles reflect both real and perceived heritages, and [their] hybridized forms create a sense of unique Aotearoa/New Zealand soundscape. (p. 7)

While the mix of musicians themselves drives this unique soundscape, the music scene here, education included, in return would shape the next generation of musicians and their careers.

Strongly associated with this colonial/postcolonial lens is the migrant and multi-cultural perspective. New Zealand migrants perform music to commemorate their distinctive ethnic or cultural past. For example, the Latvian musicians in Christchurch reflected on their lives in a post-World War II New Zealand through music characteristic of their homeland (Bendrups, 2010, p. 35). In this case, the music performance was meant to be consumed by their own community. On the other hand, some New Zealand migrants perform to arouse interest amongst a wider audience, especially those culturally different from them, for example, the Taiko Festival in the Waikato (ibid., p. 36). Incidentally, it is not known whether these migrant musicians led a career in music in their adopted home.

Thus far, the contextual backdrop within which this thesis is nested has been provided so that further points can be made and themes can be elaborated. A thriving global music industry does not necessarily guarantee musicians a fair share of their effort. Exploitation has been systemic and deeply rooted in the practice. The elusiveness of understanding musicians' careers also lies in their cross-sectorality. The common survey and government censuses fail to depict the whole story of musicians making a living across the music industry and education. Also, the portfolio, protean and boundaryless nature of musicians' careers seems to be the predominant career modality. Moreover, the unique context of Aotearoa New Zealand has been briefly sketched through the lenses of biculturalism and postcolonialism. Such a contextual knowledge has helped me understand the research

participants' challenges and ways of living.

1.6 Potential significance and research parameters

The way this research is conceptualised may represent an innovation in itself and thus can serve as an interesting example for future research on careers and professions. The study on musicians' complex careers and calling would warrant a framework that encompasses both areas. However, the existing research landscape has yet to provide a comprehensive way to achieve this aim. Therefore, this study attempts to conjoin the area of calling research and career development theories in the hope of shedding light on the topic in a more complete way.

In addition, the research findings may have practical implications for musicians and their professions, such as how they can understand their callings and how they can strategise their careers. The research process offers a unique way to generate new knowledge and insights. The literature from calling and career inform me as a researcher and may subtly influence how I interpret and organise the data in the background. Also, the multilayered gleaning of data through IPA may discover interesting findings not previously anticipated. The new light may help musicians rethink how they approach their professions and empower their lifelong musical journey.

Besides direct implications for musicians, the findings may also have a ripple effect on career education for musicians. Higher music education has a vital role in preparing musicians' professional lives and nurturing their musical calling. In a study on musicians' working lives, Coulson (2010) naturally connected her findings to music education and policy at large: "Education and learning were not the primary focus of my research and further research is merited, but the findings have relevance for music education and policy" (p. 267). In the same vein, it would be interesting to see how this research may contribute to that end.

Furthermore, this research follows on from previous research in calling and higher music education. This research ensued from Dobrow's (2013) research and examines the "dynamics and impact of calling over time horizons beyond seven years" (p. 448), as most of my musician

participants are mid-career musicians who have worked for more than seven years in music. Daniel (2013) argued that in Australasia, higher music education needs to emphasise more on a "broader context" for students in order to justify their government-funded education (p. 227). This broader context, such as career concerns and sustainability issues, may be reflected in the findings. Daniel also called for further research to "develop a greater depth of understanding of the views of the various stakeholders involved (academics, students, industry representatives)" (ibid.). Since my participants are career musicians or professional musicians from various fields and genres, their concerns would reflect those working in the industries and thus lead to a more in-depth research understanding.

Another significance of this research is that only a scant amount of research in career and calling (e.g. Ahn et al., 2017) has adopted IPA as the method, much less in musicians' careers. This study can add to the growing repository of IPA research and research on musicians.

Moreover, New Zealand provides a unique context for this research. However, no peer-reviewed articles or doctoral research on musicians' careers here have been identified to date. New Zealand's geographical location and culture may affect musicians' decision to undertake a music career or otherwise.

1.7 Thesis structure: an overview of chapters

This research aims to understand the lived experiences of musicians as they negotiate their changing calling and career. Through a phenomenological approach, this research reveals their circumstances, concerns and considerations, in relation to their music life pathways. This chapter has provided an introduction to the research's theoretical framing and contextual background. This thesis considers calling research and career theories as the conceptual and theoretical backbone. It also outlines the modality of musicians' careers, the current market forces and the relationship between musicians and music industries as important contexts to understand working musicians. Leading on from this introduction, the thesis traverses the following:

Chapter Two, *Musicians and callings*, surveys the fast-growing

research on calling—a relatively nascent discipline with a body of literature mostly younger than two decades. The chapter presents the notion of single and multiple callings and their dynamic nature; and how calling (cor)relates to employability, work and life satisfaction, and adverse consequences such as burnout, workaholism and exploitation. The notion of a musical calling and how it can be intermingled with other callings such as teaching, community service and worship are also explored.

Chapter Three, *Musicians and careers*, focuses on the lifespan, individual, contextual and agentic elements drawn from three major career theories. The chapter also broaches ideas such as career adaptability, career transitions, meta-skills, meta-narrative and meta-identity. In addition, a survey of career research on musicians is presented.

Chapter Four, *Methodology*, elaborates on the chosen methodology—Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: its background, design, analysis and relevant concerns to help provide meaning to the participants' voices. Noteworthy is that IPA includes how the lived experience is illuminated, how to move from specifics to general claims and how to bracket preconceptions and presumptions. Moreover, the hermeneutic circle between the data and researcher, and the double hermeneutic of empathy and questioning, are discussed. The chapter also introduces the biographical sketches of the nine musician participants. The steps of semi-structured interviews, the multilayered commenting, coding and analysis are also detailed.

Chapter Five, *Experiencing a musical calling,* presents the findings on the calling of musicians. It discusses how a musical calling comes into being in their lives, i.e. the origin and formation. The chapter also depicts the calling's characteristics and features, and the musicians' experience of it throughout their lives. The interpretation of their life narratives also features as an important element to unravel their musical calling.

Chapter Six, *Negotiating a music career,* details how musicians lead their multifarious careers by developing awareness, agency and adaptability. The chapter delves into how they think about what it means to be professional in music, how they sustain their music career and how they experience artistic and financial freedom. Moreover, how they see

the world with different lenses and how they adapt to career challenges are also revealed.

Chapter Seven, *Reading between the lines,* presents a 'lateral' and alternative reading of the data. The chapter examines linguistic devices and subtle overtones of how the participants articulate their calling and career. Dilemmas concerning career and professionality, i.e. what it means to be professional in music, are brought to light. How the participants frame their calling and make use of the term 'calling' are also interesting to note.

Chapter Eight, *Adding countermelodies,* summarises the findings and relates them to the literature. Here the research question and sub-questions are answered directly through condensing and recapping the data. The literature is challenged, and potential ways to augment existing knowledge are discussed. Moreover, the notion of professionality is delved into more deeply, paving the way for implications.

Chapter Nine, *Fuelling callings and empowering careers,* draws implications from the findings and discussion. The chapter provides a succinct summary of the thesis. Implications are directed to musicians: how to see 'calling' in perspective and how to pre-empt and persevere through career challenges. Further implications are drawn to benefit research on calling, research on music professions and their education.

Chapter 2

Musicians and calling

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the research on calling, setting out a conceptual foundation for investigating calling in musicians' lives. First, it surveys the existing literature and the ways scholars organise diverse understandings of calling. Several leading concepts from the literature are also discussed. Next, key themes from calling research are explored, such as how a calling can change over time, how it relates to employability and work/life satisfaction, and how it can adversely affect one's life. The final third of the chapter builds upon the knowledge examined and suggests how music can be considered as a source of calling and two possible ways of understanding a musical calling. This chapter serves as an important conceptual springboard to considering the notion of calling as it pertains to the way calling is defined and engaged with throughout this thesis.

2.2 An overview on calling research

What is a calling? In everyday parlance, a calling can be defined as the process of finding one's dream, mission, vocation or path (Levinson, 1978; McGee, 2005). Perhaps the term most synonymous with 'calling' is 'vocation', which is "linguistically and socially tangled" (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015, p. 159) with 'calling' in terms of their history and etymology. The Latin root of vocation is *vocare*, which means 'to call' ("Vocation", 2016). Its original meaning specifically referred to the work

of votaries, such as monks, nuns and priests, who were 'called' by a higher power and served in a religious order. Thus, a religious calling exemplifies some level of withdrawal from the worldly way of life (Beder, 2000). However, in today's contemporary economic and social context, the term 'vocation' has become synonymous with 'career' and 'occupation', especially in paid employment (Dawson, 2005). Like vocation, which was once rooted in religious thinking, calling has evolved through contemporary secularisation, drawing on new interpretations and meanings in the process. Berkelaar and Buzzanell (2015) put it succinctly: "Calling has a rich, complex history replete with religious, moral and philosophical undertones revamped and secularised for today's economy" (p. 160).

In research, there is little consensus among scholars about the conceptual meaning of calling, and its definition is the subject of ongoing debate (Wrzesniewski, 2012). The concept of "work" is closely related to calling and can be seen "as a calling" (Duffy & Dik, 2013, p. 428). Scholars also see calling as career (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015), as an orientation (Bellah et al., 2007), and as a mindset or perspective (Dik & Duffy, 2015). Calling is often seen as a psychological construct among similar concepts in career theories and interventions, such as work centrality, work commitment, work engagement, meaningful work, and prosocial work behaviours (Dik & Duffy, 2009). To differentiate calling from other constructs, Duffy and Dik (2013) believe that the uniqueness of calling lies in three components: having an external summons; having inherent meaning or purpose; and consisting of a prosocial orientation (p. 429). Having an external summons implies a "caller", i.e. an exogenous entity or ideal that calls the individual into action. The summons may exist "in the form of a higher power, the needs of a society, a family legacy, the needs of one's country, or any other force external to the individual" (ibid., p. 429). Having a meaning or purpose in work refers to whether individuals find their approach to work aligns with their broader sense of purpose. Prosocial orientation is concerned with whether the nature of the work contributes to other people's lives and the greater good.

Among the diverse understandings of calling, Duffy and Dik (2013) suggest that they can be grouped into two categories: neoclassical and modern. Neoclassical approaches recognise calling's religious and cultural contexts and connotations in the past, as well as the sense of

destiny and prosocial duty (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009). On the other hand, modern approaches emphasise the inner sense of self-fulfilment and happiness (Duffy & Dik, 2013). Some scholars prefer the latter since the modern approaches are more fitting to contemporary culture: many individuals do not ascribe their calling to an external source; instead, they identify their deep passion that aligns with their work as an internal source (Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011; Elangovan et al., 2010; Hagmaier & Abele, 2012; D. T. Hall & Chandler, 2005).

Research into calling has grown in the past fifteen years. The number of research articles has tripled from the five years between 2007 and 2012 alone (Duffy & Dik, 2012). Many studies on calling have been published in international peer-reviewed journals in the fields of:

- psychology (Dik et al., 2009; Dobrow Riza & Heller, 2015; Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011; Duffy, Bott, et al., 2012; Duffy et al., 2016; Duffy & Autin, 2013; Harzer & Ruch, 2012; Rawat & Nadavulakere, 2014),
- career development (Dik et al., 2008; Hernandez et al., 2010),
- career assessment (Cardador & Caza, 2012; Dik et al., 2012; Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2012; Domene, 2012; Duffy et al., 2014; Duffy & Dik, 2012; Hirschi & Herrmann, 2012; Kaminsky & Behrend, 2015; Steger et al., 2010),
- organisational behaviour (Dobrow, 2013; D. T. Hall & Chandler, 2005; C. Peterson et al., 2009) and
- vocational behaviour (Ahn et al., 2017; Duffy, Allan, et al., 2011; Duffy & Dik, 2013; Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Gazica & Spector, 2015; Guo et al., 2014; Hagmaier & Abele, 2012; Lysova et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2018).

Musicians play a key role in influential research that focuses on calling (Dobrow, 2013; Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011, 2012). One of the first developed psychometric scales to measure the calling construct was used in a study with over 400 musician participants (Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011). Later, Dobrow (2013) discovered that calling, as a measurable construct, can increase or decrease over time in musicians' lives, pointing to a dynamic nature of calling. This implies that individuals' perceptions of calling can change, and calling is not something fixed and perpetual. In another study, Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas (2012) notice musicians'

strong sense of calling causes them to ignore or override their mentors' career advice more than business students. With much existing research geared towards statistical methods, it is hoped that this research on musicians' calling using a phenomenological approach can generate qualitative data meaningful to the field.

2.3 Different concepts of calling from the literature

Several concepts of calling are highlighted here for further discussion. In short, a calling is "having a central purpose in life" (McGee, 2005, p. 26), a "duty to the self" or "one's passion in life" (Baumeister, 1991, p. 142). However, these short definitions are vague and thus unsatisfactory from a research standpoint, especially for the purpose of developing valid instruments for measurement (Dik & Duffy, 2009).

Beyond simple concepts, there are two contrasting definitions offered by scholars. Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas (2011) describe calling as "a consuming, meaningful passion people experience towards a domain" (p. 1005). On the other hand, Dik and Duffy (2009) suggest a different orientation—beyond the self:

> A calling is a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation. (p. 427)

Dik and Duffy's definition suggests a source of calling which is a "transcendent summons" (p. 427), implying a higher power or external force. The definition sees the self as the receiving end of a calling. On the other hand, Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas's definition does not elaborate on any possible sources of calling.

Despite their differences, the word "toward" is common in both theorists' views of calling. The word "toward" indicates that a calling is directional and intentional. In Dik and Duffy's definition, a calling is an interpretive act ("toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose"

(p. 427)) for the self *toward* a meaning, showing an intention. In Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas's definition, calling points to a domain or an area of interest. Both cases depict a purposeful dispensation of one's mind.

In addition to the above definitions, Lysova et al. (2018) bring the notion of employment into calling: "calling constitutes meaningful and/or purposeful engagement in a (work) domain, job, or profession that originates from an external summons, a sense of duty or destiny, or identity" (p. 262). It is notable that this definition integrates previous definitions and research in concepts such as "domain" (Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011); "meaning", "purpose", "summons" (Dik & Duffy, 2009); and "destiny" and "duty" (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009).

In light of different existing definitions, Berkelaar and Buzzanell (2015) notice a general agreement among scholars that "calling provides a unifying narrative to work or life for some substantial time period" (p. 163). They further argue that articulating the features of calling in different definitions is not only important for research purposes but also for people in general to understand what to expect when pursuing a calling (ibid.).

2.4 Multiplicity and dynamics in calling

Research has revealed that multiple callings exist in people's lives (J. M. Berg et al., 2010; Oates et al., 2005) and that their callings change over time (Dobrow, 2013). This view is contrary to the mainstream narrative portraying calling as a single and static concept, that is, a person has one "true calling" (Newport, 2012, p. xvi).

In a study of 31 employees across various occupations (J. M. Berg et al., 2010), some participants reported having experienced multiple callings. While acknowledging their current job scope as an outlet to fulfil a calling, they actively pursued other callings by job crafting—a technique to "shape their lives at work to incorporate or emphasise aspects of their unanswered calling" (p. 979). It is worth noting that the educators, among other types of participants such as non-profit and for-profit employees, were more likely to experience additional callings. Mostly inspired by enjoyable and meaningful experiences outside work, the participants developed additional callings, sought to venture into those areas and then tried to balance their multiple callings (p. 985).

In the case of participants who experience an additional calling in music, they recalled experiences of short-lived regret when being exposed to high-level performances. The exposure caused them to wonder what it would have been like if they had pursued music. Their additional calling in music, according to the study, was fulfilled by applying vicarious experience techniques, as well as hobby participation (playing an instrument). Examples of vicarious experience techniques include concert-going, being in touch with friends who are professional musicians, and observing their children learning music. This study by Berg et al. hints at the fact that a musical calling can be fulfilled at least partially outside a career. Moreover, a musical calling can be one of the many callings that can perpetuate throughout adulthood.

Berkelaar and Buzzanell (2015) offer a broad and inclusive stance for calling that embraces all forms and modes of calling. They recommend "discursively repositioning calling" to take into account "episodic, multilayered and even contradictory callings" (p. 170). Such a view fits particularly well for describing musicians' multiple and dynamic callings. Musicians' callings can be episodic. For example, a working musician may need to put aside his or her music career to take care of family needs, and resume later. Musicians' callings can be multilayered, that is, they may have multiple concurrent callings. For instance, one of my participants, Joshua, had a double career in music and real estate. Musicians' callings can also be contradictory. For example, a performer-educator may want to further fulfil his or her calling by pursuing more performance opportunities. However, an inner urge or practical need to teach may impede advancement in performance, since the calling in teaching takes up time and resources needed to advance in performance.

A sense of calling, especially a musical one, can waver in the course of life. Dobrow (2013) investigated how musicians experienced a change in calling during their late-adolescent to early-career period. The longitudinal survey study was conducted over seven years, with 450 participants who were amateur musicians. The most significant result demonstrated that the calling of the musicians decreased over a seven-year period. [4] Among the factors affecting the calling, behavioural

[4] More specifically, it went from 5.86 (*SD*= 0.81) on a seven-point scale to 5.32 (*SD*= 1.07; $p < .001$) at the end of the seven-year period (Dobrow, 2013, p. 440).

involvement and social comfort contribute to its decline, contrary to expectation. In the case of behavioural involvement, i.e. the act of playing music, it was expected that playing music would fuel one's passion further. For musicians, social comfort refers to the enjoyment of being around other musicians. It was also expected that this kind of social comfort would intensify musicians' sense of calling. However, musicians who initially experienced more behavioural involvement and social comfort ended up with a decreased sense of calling. The reason for this is unclear. Elsewhere, scholars acknowledged that a "honeymoon–hangover effect" for job satisfaction (Boswell et al., 2009) could lead to a decline in calling, since job satisfaction is positively related to calling (Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011; C. Peterson et al., 2009; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). The hangover effect may explain what happened in Dobrow's (2013) study.

It may be appropriate at this point to offer further conjecture as to why behavioural involvement (music-making) and social comfort (fitting socially in a musical environment) surprisingly contribute to the calling's decline in Dobrow's (2013) study. This can be particularly applicable to the majority of classical musicians who are performers. When one takes part in prolonged drills and practice in an orchestra, they are likely to encounter repeating repertoire and styles, thus leading to perceptual saturation and indifference. A declining sense of calling may also be linked with an overall drop of career satisfaction. For instance, a study found that the general satisfaction of orchestral musicians is ranked 7 out of 13, right below prison guards (Allmendinger et al., 1996, p. 201).

To conclude this section, the understanding of multiple callings is not a nascent idea but a long-established one. Research also demonstrates that people experience multiple callings, including in music. However, the sense of calling, especially in music, is bound to fluctuate.

2.5 Calling and employability

Research suggests that calling and employability are intricately linked (D. T. Hall & Chandler, 2005; Lysova et al., 2018). While some studies suggest their positive correlation (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008; D. T. Hall & Chandler, 2005; Hirschi, 2012; Hirschi & Herrmann, 2012), this remains inconclusive. Calling is associated with a stronger vocational identity

(Hirschi, 2012; Hirschi & Herrmann, 2012), which in turn provides "a strong cognitive and affective foundation" for employability (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008, p. 508). Furthermore, Hall and Chandler (2005) support a positive relationship between calling and employability by arguing that calling enhances "meta-competencies" such as self-awareness and adaptability (p. 163), as a result of calling-driven individuals pursuing desired goals more persistently.

In another study, calling is known to have a 'double-edged' effect on employability. In a survey study of over 1,200 participants, Lysova et al. (2018) identify that the relationship between calling and employability is mediated by proactive professional development (PPD) and career inflexibility. A person who engages in proactive professional development is someone who is "self-driven … in work and profession-related learning and developmental activities" (p. 263). Career inflexibility, on the other hand, reflects the "lack of openness to alternative career considerations and job changes" (p. 262). The study found that calling is positively related to PPD[5], which in turn is *positively* related to employability[6], validating the positive effect of calling on employability mentioned above. Nonetheless, calling is also found to be positively related to career inflexibility[7], which in turn is *negatively* related to employability[8], indicating calling's hindrance of employability (p. 270). Thus, the two opposing forces in effect nullify each other, denying the net positive effect of calling on employability, as suggested by the previously discussed literature (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008; D. T. Hall & Chandler, 2005; Hirschi, 2012; Hirschi & Herrmann, 2012).

However, whether the findings of these studies can apply to musicians is questionable. It is common for musicians to follow a portfolio career (Bartleet et al., 2012; Creech et al., 2008). If an existing instrument, e.g. Van Der Heijde & Van Der Heijden [*sic*], 2006, to measure employability is based on the assumption of traditional careers, it would be ill-suited to musicians. There is also a lack of employability data for musicians since they are subsumed under visual and performance arts (cf. Bennett, 2016). It would be difficult to establish how musicians'

[5] Calling to PPD: $\gamma = 0.32$, $p < 0.001$

[6] PPD to employability: $\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.001$

[7] Calling to career inflexibility: $\gamma = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$

[8] Career inflexibility to employability: $\beta = -0.36$, $p < 0.001$

calling affects their career inflexibility and thus employability from available data. Nonetheless, musicians' employability has been a trending topic in research (D. Bennett, 2016a; D. Bennett et al., 2015; D. Bennett & Bridgstock, 2015; Ghazali & Bennett, 2017; Munnelly, 2020) and will likely remain so. Further research can be tailor-made to study the relationship between musicians' calling and their employability.

The research linking of calling and employability provides a potential touchpoint for further discussion on my participants' employment status and other relevant career topics.

2.6 The bright and dark sides of calling

The literature has discussed both the beneficial and detrimental effects of calling, metaphorically known as the 'bright' and 'dark' sides of calling. In fact, the 'dark side' of calling is not a term I have coined but one that has gained traction in the literature (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015; Duffy et al., 2016; Duffy & Dik, 2013; Gazica & Spector, 2015). It has been widely believed that calling in work contributes to overall life and work satisfaction, but its downside has only been broached relatively recently in research literature (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009).

2.6.1 Effects on work and life

Studies found that seeing work as a calling was more likely to lead to job satisfaction (Davidson & Caddell, 1994; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). Further quantitative studies that use different calling instruments have underpinned the positive correlation between perceiving a calling and job satisfaction, notably at a moderate or strong level (Duffy, Manuel, et al., 2011; Duffy et al., 2014; Duffy & Autin, 2013; Hagmaier & Abele, 2012; Harzer & Ruch, 2012; C. Peterson et al., 2009). A calling causes people to stay committed in work for a substantial period, and such commitment, in turn, brings job satisfaction. Two studies (Duffy et al., 2014; Duffy, Manuel, et al., 2011) have found that the sense of commitment is a mediating factor between calling and job satisfaction. Moreover, work meaningfulness is identified to be another mediating factor between calling and job satisfaction (Duffy et al., 2014; Hirschi, 2012). Musicians often find music-making to be deeply meaningful. It can be speculated

that musicians' calling contributes to their sense of job satisfaction.

The literature suggests that life meaningfulness acts as a mediating factor between calling and life satisfaction. Life meaningfulness correlates moderately with calling (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2010), and participants who experience a calling are more likely to experience life meaningfulness (Steger & Dik, 2009). Life meaningfulness can further impact on life satisfaction. Studies have found that perceiving a calling weakly correlates with life satisfaction in undergraduate students (Duffy, Allan, et al., 2012; Duffy & Sedlacek, 2010; Steger et al., 2010) and medical students (Duffy, Manuel, et al., 2011). In employed adults, perceiving a calling also leads to a more satisfying life (Davidson & Caddell, 1994; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), a result later substantiated by a large-scale survey (over 9,000 participants) in which calling moderately correlates to life satisfaction (C. Peterson et al., 2009). For musicians, the implication is that as they transit from undergraduate to career life, the effect of calling on life satisfaction becomes more noticeable. The link between perceiving a calling and life satisfaction is found to be fully mediated by life meaning and academic satisfaction (Duffy, Bott, et al., 2012). This suggests the importance of the role higher education plays in musicians' lives.

Moreover, 'living a calling' mediates 'perceiving a calling' and 'life satisfaction' (Duffy & Autin, 2013). Duffy and Autin's study measures constructs related to calling in 542 working adults in the United States across various occupations. 'Perceiving a calling' is a construct to measure how much individuals believe they are called to a particular career. On the other hand, 'living a calling' is a construct to measure how much individuals feel they are currently living out the calling. For example, individuals may strongly perceive a calling but feel that they cannot live out the calling due to life circumstances. In the case of musicians, they may be forced to work outside music to sustain a living and cannot pursue their 'perceived' dream career. This makes 'perceiving a calling' and 'living a calling' two distinctive constructs. Duffy and Autin's (2013) study finds that living out a calling, not merely perceiving it and not being able to live it out, plays a significant role in raising overall life satisfaction. In other words, if one wants to live a more satisfying life, one's calling must be lived out.

A review of two independent studies also hints at vocational identity being a potential mediator between calling and life satisfaction. Calling is

found to be strongly correlated with vocational identity (Hirschi & Herrmann, 2012). Vocational identity is central to an individual's well-being (Billett, 2011) and is positively related to life satisfaction (Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007). All the above studies add credence that living out a calling affects multiple interlinked aspects of life in a positive way. At a career level, calling contributes to job satisfaction. At a life level, calling contributes to life satisfaction through helping to interpret and give meaning to everyday life.

2.6.2 Costs and adverse effects

As seen from Duffy and Autin's (2013) study, not living out a calling carries opportunity costs, such as not able to achieve better life satisfaction. It may even cause adverse effects such as depression and frustration (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015). Gazica and Spector (2015) confirmed this and found that perceiving but without living out a calling appears to undermine life-, job- and health-related outcomes when compared to those without calling at all. Related to music, Berg et al. (2010) also reported that those who perceived an unanswered calling in music experienced the intermittent pangs of regret of not being able to fulfil their musical calling.

On the other hand, living out a calling takes a toll on one's overall well-being. Musicians, as in other calling-driven occupations such as social entrepreneurs (Dempsey & Sanders, 2010) and zookeepers (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009), may easily sacrifice health, family and financial well-being for the sake of art and its audience. Moreover, musicians can become blindsided by the "secularised prosperity gospel" (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015, p. 171) of calling prevalent in self-help discourse: if you follow your heart and pursue your passion, material success will follow. However, studies have shown that it is far from the truth, and pursuing a calling can result in significant physical, psychological and personal costs (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Dempsey & Sanders, 2010).

Similarly, living out a calling can lead to burnout, workaholism and exploitation (Duffy et al., 2016), threatening a person's well-being. However, there is a twist to the finding in this research. The authors hypothesised that when people living out a calling experienced adverse

effects, their overall job satisfaction would be lower. Surprisingly, the result confounded the expectation that the adverse effects would drag down job satisfaction. While burnout and exploitation expectedly undermined job satisfaction, the study found that those adverse effects were instead mitigated by living out a calling. In other words, individuals who live out a calling but experience high burnout and exploitation are generally as satisfied as those scoring low in calling and experiencing low burnout. The adverse effects did not hamper job satisfaction at large. The implication is that, when faced with burnout and exploitation, individuals who live out their calling are better off than those who do not live out a calling.

Economically, living out a calling can lead to self-exploitation. When pursuing a calling, one may prioritise the "symbolic and ethical" (Hamilton & Taylor, 2012, p. 43) value creation of the work, and thus underplay potential economic value creation. They may be willing to sacrifice a fair recompense for their work to facilitate the realisation of the work. In the case of musicians, they may be willing to undertake unpaid or volunteer performance opportunity to publicise their art.

Considering the above, we can say that living out a calling can give rise to a dilemma, or a double bind: When it is pursued, one may sacrifice financial, social and familial well-being; when it is not pursued, one may experience lower life and work satisfaction (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015). One of the peculiar features of following a music career is that performances are usually scheduled outside working hours and weekends. Likewise, instrumental teaching is often scheduled in after-school hours. If a musician regularly performs or teaches during those hours, their social and family life inevitably suffers. Nevertheless, according to this research, a musician's life and work satisfaction may be perceived to be degraded if they have not lived out their calling.

2.6.3 Compromise of career agency

The dark side of calling can also adversely influence musicians' career agency. Musicians are less receptive to negative career advice due to their strong sense of calling (Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2012). They may miss out on crucial career information and advice beneficial to their lifelong well-being. This single-mindedness for the sake of music is reflected in

Wakin's (2004) account of musicians who pursue a professional calling in music. He wrote, "maybe going to a conservatory is like being a compulsive gambler: It is one big bet, but the drive to study music is so blinding, and doing anything else so inconceivable, that young players are oblivious to the risk" (para. 51).

Living out a musical calling can also undermine musicians' career agency and adaptability. First, if a musical calling becomes one's sole pursuit in life, one risks bearing a significant opportunity cost. They pass up other careers for musical training and will not be ready for other professions. This is reflected in a vignette of a Juilliard-trained musician: "His career fizzled with a succession of fruitless auditions, dwindling freelance gigs and mounting debt. He needed a day job. But a Juilliard degree had not prepared him for much besides playing" (Wakin, 2004, para. 2–3). When a musician's identity takes shape as they live out a calling, career alternatives become increasingly unthinkable. They may even consider it below them to explore employment outside their field. The situation can be worsened by social and family support. If one has previously expressed and lived out a calling to the knowledge of others, the person is discouraged from deviating from their calling narrative. Reinforcement of the calling narrative by others, in turn, encourages and reinforces their calling and identity due to confirmation bias. The spiral effect thus restrains career agency. Moreover, the force of calling, especially those intermingled with religious or 'greater good' purposes, can imbue a sense of moral obligation or indebtedness, further undermining career agency (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015).

To conclude this section, the literature has examined and weighed both the bright and dark sides of calling. First, it is positively linked to life/work satisfaction, as well as life meaningfulness. Research also demonstrates that both living out a calling, or otherwise, carries costs to well-being, creating a double bind (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015). People experience physical, psychological and personal costs, in the form of burnout, workaholism and exploitation. For musicians, a musical calling, especially a strong one, can also undermine their career agency.

Thus far, the chapter has reviewed the main concepts and themes from calling research. The next section explores the notion of music as a source of calling and the possible ways to understand it in the context of musicians' lives and careers.

2.7 Music as a calling: the worshipful and meaning-ful nature of music

Nettl (1995) describes how classical music establishes a worshipful culture and quasi-religious aura. He suggests that in the classical tradition, the great composers are often worshipped as demigods. Taking an ethnomusicological perspective, Nettl describes how classical composers, such as Mozart, Beethoven and Bach, are deified through their name inscription on the prestigious concert halls and music school buildings—which he metaphorically calls the "pantheon" (p. 16). Nettl critiques the pedagogical discourse of the classical music school which reifies these composers: "teachers occasionally refer to the presumed desires of a composer by saying such things as 'Here is how Bach wants this,' and, 'This really sounds like Chopin playing'" (pp. 23–24). Nettl further details the "mythology" of Mozart and Beethoven, depicting their supernatural genius and tragic life (pp. 25–28) as the somewhat 'required' attributes for mythology.

Outside classical music, a similar reification exists in genres such as rock and jazz. Their superstars and legends also undergo some sort of apotheosis. Musicians such as Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Madonna, Bob Dylan, are often elevated to a status beyond a role model in their respective genres. Celebrity worship (McCutcheon et al., 2002) in music is in fact a widespread phenomenon.

This process of reification may be connected to calling in music. It is not uncommon for musicians to speak effusively of the 'legends' who influence their work, reflecting a level of affection akin to idol worship. All these 'legends', 'greats', 'demigods', 'mythology' and 'pantheons' in music combine to form a totality of the "irresistible force" (Boyatzis et al., 2002) that 'calls' musicians to do what they do.

The "worshipful" milieu common in classical music study encourages musicians to admire, emulate, even idolise other superior musicians. It thus endows musicians with a meaning-ful purpose that goes *beyond* music itself, forming the basis of a calling.

Besides its worshipful nature, music's meaning-ful nature also adds

weight to it being a source of calling. Music is steeped with multilayered meanings (Barrett, 2007), resulting in an endeavour that is aesthetically enticing, physically engrossing and intellectually engaging. Meanings can be derived from the way musicians work. Musicians continuously receive real-time kinaesthetic and aural feedback (Jones III, 1990) from their instruments. They process, judge and refine the sound aesthetically. Amid the continuous stream of sound and action, they pursue musical and extra-musical meanings (Cross, 2011). Musical meanings can be found within the mechanics of music, such as the relationship between melody and harmony, the prevalent groove against the meter. Extra-musical meanings can often be found in multilayered cultural contexts.

Take performing Verdi's opera *Aida* as an example. First, the performers would need to be aware of the musical style of Verdi as an Italian composer of the 19th century. Next, they would be aware of the ancient Egyptian background portrayed in the opera. Also, the performers would be aware of the local culture of the opera house and that of the audience, i.e. the contemporary zeitgeist at that particular performance. All these multiple yet concurrent meanings would demand the musician's attention. Moreover, cultural factors such as attire, language and the overall milieu beyond music add to the list of meanings.

Earlier, this chapter examined several concepts of calling. Some of them include the notion of external summons, explicitly (Dik & Duffy, 2009; Lysova et al., 2018). Music, through its worshipful and meaning-ful appeal, can serve as an external summons. The worshipful and meaning-ful nature of music provide possible lenses to understand how the participants might see their musical calling.

2.8 Perceptions of a musical calling

How do musicians perceive a musical calling? Given the themes explored in the previous sections, there can be at least two ways musicians can understand a calling. A narrower yet more common approach would be to take a music career as *the* ideal vocation, the "true calling" (Newport, 2012, p. xvi), or the ultimate destination to realise one's musical passion. On the contrary, a broader approach would be to allow one's musical calling to be dynamic (Dobrow, 2013), episodic and multilayered (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015). This approach allows one to drift in and

out of a music career and develop other concurrent callings without denying their musical calling. The following outline the potential drawbacks of the narrow approach.

The narrow approach towards understanding calling has been the predominant way of thinking, even within the calling discourse (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015). Moreover, such an approach still dominates everyday thinking and is perpetuated by institutions and icons influential to individuals. Berkelaar and Buzzanell (2015) explain:

> As career actors embody and construct their callings through appropriate and appropriated linguistic choices, artefacts and practices, they draw others into their story of good work and their identities, encouraging others' expressions of commitment to necessary, singular visions of career. (p. 170)

In other words, successful musicians serve as role models for those who pursue a music career, i.e. the "career actors", and may forge "singular visions" of what a fulfilling career entails. Since the successful musicians themselves are likely full-time musicians, their example may inspire others to take an all-out approach. However, it is known that musicians may need to survive on multiple jobs, including those outside music (Throsby & Zednik, 2010). The situation would undesirably create a conflict between one's expectation and reality.

Second, teachers and lecturers in higher music education are often successful musicians in their own right, and may then reinforce an individual concept of musical calling (consciously or unconsciously) in their programmes. If they too hold a narrow view of a musical calling, they could unconsciously percolate the view through their teaching. Despite the well-meaning intention, the limiting view could undermine the career agency of musicians. In short, student musicians might be prone to be fixated to the idea of following a full-time music career. Their strong adherence to the musical calling could underplay other career alternatives, and possibly contribute to a narrow "tunnel vision" (Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2012, p. 12) perspective of their career. The stardom image of musicians, the prestige and promises of the music school can all contribute to the strong adherence of the culture, entrenching tunnel vision. Limited by this tunnel vision, the self-

perception inspired by a musical calling may cloud one's judgment and make one ignore valuable external information, even that offered by trusted mentors (Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2012). This may lead to an "unhealthy pursuit of calling" (Cardador & Caza, 2012, p. 340) in which musicians become too fixated on their professional identity. They might fail to consider beneficial career alternatives and ignore the development of necessary competencies for those opportunities. Sadly, the contemporary discourses of calling are unhelpfully saturated with the prosperity gospel: follow the dream, and it will guarantee material success (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015, p. 171), which further exacerbates the situation.

A narrow view of calling is further reinforced by the musicians' unwillingness to accept career advice that may threaten their self-concept as musicians (Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2012). People are naturally reluctant to follow negative career advice (London & Smither, 2002). Instead, they are anticipatory in seeking positive feedback that is congruent with their existing self-concept, as informed by the self-verification theory (Swann Jr et al., 1989). Tunnel vision is thus further exacerbated by this personal factor, in addition to the milieu factor.

This view of a musical calling is unnecessarily limiting, as it could favour paid work as legitimate, and trivialise non-paid work and hobby-making as less legitimate ways to fulfil a calling. Both historical and contemporary discourses of calling have given paid work a place of ascendency, and consequently marginalised and devalued those who work in non-paid positions (J. M. Berg et al., 2010; Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015; Cheney et al., 2008; Ciulla, 2000). This view underplays the calling in community-based musicians who often work on a voluntary or part-time basis for non-profit organisations, such as a church. It has been known that in many industrialised societies, work in the non-profit sector, whether paid or non-paid, provides an alternative outlet to fulfil a higher calling (Dempsey & Sanders, 2010, p. 439) since it aims to advance the public good (Anheier & Salamon, 2006). However, the value of their work may not be fully recognised.

The above discussion points to a necessity for the meaning and perceptions of musical calling to go beyond a narrow understanding, i.e. the single calling that ensues a remunerative career. People who engage in music as a hobby demonstrate one of the ways people can realise their

calling (Berg et al., 2010). A musical calling should not be pegged to paid roles alone. Instead, it is beneficial to see that a musician's calling can be "expressed across or outside of a particular job, organisation, occupation, role or life sphere" (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015, p. 174). Perhaps when musicians feel called to make music, they would do it whether they are paid or not. In a news story that went viral globally, Joshua Bell, a world-renowned violinist, went busking in the Washington Metro (Weingarten, 2007). People passing by largely ignored him. Despite only a one-off social experiment, the episode demonstrates the possibility that musicians need not be tied exclusively to their professional roles to do what they feel called to do.

This broader approach to a musical calling is congruent with how music education researchers see professional musicians. The Commission for the Education of the Professional Musician (CEPROM) (n.d.) under International Society for Music Education understands a professional musician as "one who accepts responsibility for advancing and disseminating music as an integral part of life, and whose creation and performance of music reflects perception, understanding, appreciation, and mastery in a manner that conveys meaning to people" (under "Mission" section). Such an interpretation tacitly undermines the expectation of a paid role, to be considered "professional". In other words, a professional musician is someone who has a strong calling and mastery in music, not necessarily someone who must earn a living by music. As a result, a professional musician can have a non-music day job and can still fulfil their music calling through activities that are meaningful but do not guarantee a sustainable income. These may include playing in a community orchestra occasionally, teaching private lessons as a side job, or recording with a band and distributing the music through social media.

The broad or more holistic approach towards a musical calling also carries potential benefits for musicians. First, this notion of calling is not bound to paid work only. It allows for "discursive flexibility" for musicians "to reframe calling agentically by potentially disregarding the necessity of fulfilling calling at work" (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015, p. 168), thus freeing them from the hidden imperative of 'making it' in the music business. Also, this view allows musicians to develop parallel interests and callings in life, potentially empowering them and enriching

their lives.

On the other hand, a narrow or more limiting approach towards a musical calling may represent a dilemma for musicians. First, financial reward would be of paramount importance. To see themselves being able to truly live out a calling, they might find it necessary to acquire paid work in music. Also, they might feel obliged to focus primarily on the music itself, as a source of musical passion, and seek to deny other contextual factors that might impact on their career. Hypothetically, such musicians would feel defeated if their career fails to live up to their expectation of a musical calling. Failure to pursue a calling may create a sense of elusiveness and incapability (Berg et al., 2010). It leads to "frustration, disappointment, regret, [loss of job performance]", as well as "discomfort, indecision, and identity confusion" (ibid. p. 973), undermining one's well-being. In this case, a narrow concept of calling can be detrimental to musicians' well-being.

To conclude this section, a broader approach seems to have clear advantages over a narrower one. It puts a musical calling into perspective and recognises the value of different kinds of musical endeavour, regardless of remuneration and professional status. It can also accommodate multiple callings, and even the fusing of those callings, which is discussed in the next section.

2.9 Interweaving callings in music

At times, a musical calling can interweave with other purposes, such as religion, community and teaching. Take worship pastors, for example, who work as musicians in a church setting. They may experience a calling that originates from *music-in-worship*, as well as *worship-in-music*. First, music-in-worship refers to the exposure of music in a worship setting, leading to the formation of a musical calling. Conversely, worship-in-music can happen concurrently, as individuals encounter profound spiritual experience through the means of music, invoking a spiritual calling. When the intense love for singing and playing music meets the consuming passion for serving God, the calling attains double significance and becomes more potent than a purely musical calling. Such a case will be exemplified by my participants Robert and Amy, who are music pastors.

Besides a religious context, solidarity in a community can serve as a cause for a calling in a music setting. Similarly, one may experience *music-in-community* and *community-in-music*. First, music can take place in the form of a community choir, orchestra, or community-based art projects that involve music, i.e. music-in-community. There, people experience the power of music in a community setting. Conversely, one can develop a calling to promote the sense of fraternity and solidarity through music, empowered by the experience in community-in-music. For example, the Complaints Choirs Worldwide (2016) movement, c. 2006–2016, offers an example of such community-based music.[9]

A calling in music and teaching can also be inextricable. For example, *teaching-in-music* can be a passion for music educators who promulgate knowledge and love for music. On the other hand, *music-in-teaching* can be an endeavour for one to passionately utilise music in teaching situations, such as singing the "greeting song".

So far, three possibilities of how a musical calling can be interfused with other meaningful purposes have been explored. It is not uncommon for musicians to experience a calling that contains double significance where a musical mission interpenetrates an extra-musical one.

The broader approach of a musical calling—one that is dynamic, episodic and multilayered—seems to reflect musicians' lives more realistically. On the other hand, the narrower approach of understanding a calling as one that is single and static seems too idealistic and often impractical. Literature also mooted the predominance of paid work in calling research, but I have argued against it. In fact, musicians' call to make music can transcend the boundary of paid work, non-paid work and hobby. Moreover, broad understanding paves the way for the possibility of a musical calling integrating with other callings in religion, community, and education. It also informs me, as the researcher, that my participants can have multiple callings that are constantly changing.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has given an overview of calling research and examined

[9] I was a conductor for the Complaints Choir when the Hong Kong chapter started in 2009.

some existing definitions. In summary, a calling can be seen as a passionate and lively commitment towards a meaningful purpose that originates exogenously. Key themes and findings in calling research have been discussed. Individuals can have multiple callings and the sense of a calling can fluctuate. Calling has both positive and negative influences on one's employability. Living out a calling contributes significantly to overall life satisfaction but merely perceiving a calling does not. The literature has also discussed the potential drawbacks of unfulfilled callings, such as depression and frustration. However, living out a calling can lead to negative consequences such as burnout, workaholism and exploitation. Following a calling or not seems likely to end up in a catch-22 situation.

Music as a source of calling was broached. Elements such as multilayered meanings, engrossing physicality and aesthetic attraction can powerfully draw musicians and induce a sense of calling. Such an understanding helps me unravel how my participants are drawn to music in their unique ways.

Informed by calling research, two possible ways of perceiving a musical calling were explored. A narrower understanding of a musical calling tends to see a music career as one's true and only calling. Failure to forge a career may lead to a sense of incapability, disappointment and identity confusion, undermining one's well-being. On the other hand, a broader understanding of a musical calling can empower individuals to recognise and reconcile their episodic, multilayered and dynamic callings in relation to music. Incidentally, the broader view also dovetails with how music education experts, i.e. CEPROM, see what a professional musician is. Moreover, in this light, a musical calling can be seen as interwoven with other callings, such as worship, community service and teaching.

Following a career is an important outlet for realising a calling. The next chapter discusses key career theories and frameworks, and research relevant to musicians' careers.

Chapter 3

Musicians and careers

3.1 Introduction

Careers can be important vehicles for expressing a person's calling. Often musicians engage in music careers such as performance and teaching to realise their musical calling. Through an examination of the literature from career theories and music education research, this chapter lays the conceptual foundation to unravel the research questions concerning career:

- How do musicians experience and think about their calling and career?
- How do musicians understand and adapt to their professional careers in the context of a changing world?

The chapter begins by reviewing a lifespan perspective towards career as suggested by Super (1990). Super is a prominent career theorist and his work is considered among the most influential in career research (Leung, 2008). He outlines career stages such as exploration, establishment and disengagement, serving as important references to understand an individual's career development. Next, the chapter reviews multiple personal and contextual factors (Patton & McMahon, 2014a) that potentially shape musicians' careers. Then, musicians' careers are understood in the context of agency and adaptability, as individuals can be regarded as the actor, agent and author of their dynamic career (Savickas, 2013). Overall, the concepts of a lifespan perspective, personal

and contextual factors, agency and adaptability form an initial lens for me to understand the participants' multifaceted music careers.

The chapter goes on to review research studies and key ideas that shed light on how musicians experience their careers amidst voluntary or involuntary changes. Young musicians enrol in higher music education to acquire pre-career training and explore the possibility of following a professional career. Identity shifts, e.g. from student to professional, occur during this critical period (Creech et al., 2008; Huhtanen, 2008; Juuti & Littleton, 2012), facilitated by music school programmes (Carey & Lebler, 2012). Later, as musicians move from performance to teaching, their core identity may also migrate to one of teacher, creating dual identities (Conway et al., 2010; Isbell, 2006, 2008). However, this situation sometimes leads to identity conflict (Bouij, 2007; B. Roberts, 2007). In general, older performing musicians experience a decline in physical and mental well-being (D. Bennett, 2018; Gembris & Heye, 2014; Raymond III et al., 2012). And sometimes, musicians can be incapacitated by career-ending injuries (A. Mitchell, 2018; Mor, 2013). These existing research examples provide useful touchpoints to understand the lived experience of a music career and serve to frame my engagement with the participants' articulations of their musical careers in this thesis.

3.2 A lifelong perspective: Life roles and career cycles

Super's (1990) "life-span, life-space" theory helps us understand musicians' careers from a macro perspective. He sees a person's life in terms of life roles they play: child, student, worker, homemaker, citizen and, in Super's term, "leisurite", e.g. a retired person who has the financial freedom to focus on leisure activities. These life roles intertwine with one's career cycle that moves through the stages of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and disengagement (p. 254). The theory is effectively visualised through the Life-Career Rainbow:

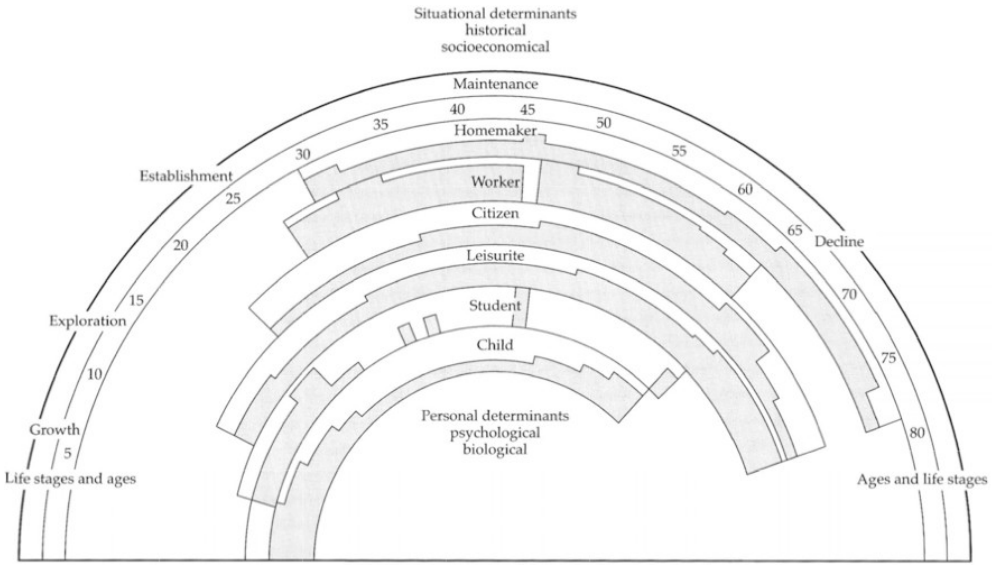

Figure 3.1: The Life-Career Rainbow: Six life roles in schematic life space (Super, 1990, p. 212)

Take the development of an individual, from a child to a professional musician as an example. The child/student starts to learn music and grows in terms of proficiency. Later, they explore musical pathways by gaining knowledge from media and role models and receiving formal/informal education at secondary and tertiary levels. Afterwards, they slowly establish their musical career as a part- or full-time pursuit. Then they maintain their musical endeavour within and outside of a career. At last, they disengage themselves from active musical roles due to age, health or other life circumstances. In terms of life roles, some may stop being a professional musician (as a worker role) early to look after the family (as a homemaker role). Conversely, some may transform their musical hobby (leisurite role) into remunerative opportunities by taking up teaching or performance (as a worker role) (Taylor & Hallam, 2011).

Lifelong development is portrayed by Super as a "maxi-cycle" (Super, 1990, p. 206), i.e. an overarching career trajectory. However, it can consist of multiple "mini-cycles" (ibid.), accommodating career changes and disruptions. Individuals would undergo a full or partial "mini-cycle" cycle of growth, (re)exploration, (re)establishment, maintenance and disengagement. The career mini-cycles can overlap and merge into the next, forming a continuum and coalescing into the overarching life

journey.

For musicians, music-making can be a professional or hobbyist pursuit. Super's work accommodates this fact fittingly: "Work and occupation provide a focus for personality organisation for most men and women, although for some persons this focus is peripheral, incidental, or even non-existent. Then other foci, such as leisure activities and homemaking, may be central" (p. 208). In other words, a music career need not be the sole outlet for one to actualise their musical calling. This perspective is beneficial in understanding my participants who switch to a non-music career.

Super's life-span, life-space theory seems to favour the 20th-century predominance of a lifelong career within an organisational setting. However, its career cycles concept also accommodates the increasingly fragmented work pattern stemming from the 21st-century gig economy. This is particularly relevant for musicians and artists as they tend to follow a protean career (Bridgstock, 2005) rather than adhere to a traditional career trajectory (Hirschi, 2018). Regardless of career modes, this theory encourages people to understand the different life stages and foster career "planfulness" (Super, 1990, p. 233). Its career cycles establish a framework adequate to explain career changes.

Outside career theories and research, more recently there has been a shift of interest from a particular career period of musicians towards a lifespan perspective that more accurately reflects Super's model. Research about musicians in the past has been primarily concerned with the early-career transition from student to professional (Creech et al., 2008; Weller, 2010) and mid-career transition to non-performance roles (Mor, 2013). However, the Commission for Education of the Professional Musician (CEPROM) of the International Society of Music Education published a conference proceeding under the banner of 'lifespan perspective' (D. Bennett, 2018; Carruthers, 2018; Varney, 2018; A. Watson & Forrest, 2018; Weller, 2018). Particularly noteworthy is the expansion of scope to include late-career musicians in research (D. Bennett, 2018; Weller, 2018). Further details of Bennett's (2018) lifespan perspective will be discussed later in this chapter.

3.3 Individual factors

A person's career is shaped by many individual factors, such as personality, interests, beliefs and values (Brown, 1996, 2002; Holland, 1997; Holland, 1966, 1992; Lent, 2013; Lent et al., 1996, 2002; Lent & Savickas, 1994; Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990, 1996). People can be driven "by the desire for psychological success rather than by externally determined measures of success" (Hall, 1996, p. xvi). Therefore, intrinsic motivation can lead musicians to undertake a precarious career, rather than a safer one.

A myriad of factors affect a person's career formation, such as age, knowledge of the world of work, spiritual beliefs and career values, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and health (Patton & McMahon, 2014a). Individuals can be seen as complex and holistic systems that continually adapt and reconstruct their belief systems (Miller-Tiedeman, 1999; Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990).

Age is often viewed as dictating a person's career development. Bronfenbrenner (1995) acknowledges that the timing of biological age and fulfilment of social role expectations intertwine to influence one's life course. Age links to a natural life trajectory of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline (Super, 1990). However, Patton and McMahon (2014a) propose an alternative view to linear and normalised depictions of life stages: they suggest that age may not actually reflect a career stage. This alternative view may be particularly useful in understanding the diversity of musicians' careers which may serve as classic counterexamples to a normalised career trajectory. A young prodigy such as the world-renowned pianist Lang Lang may be seen as someone well established who has maintained his career through his teenage years and early twenties. On the other hand, a musician may start very late in their career, as in Holt's (1991) case, where he started learning the cello at the age of forty and can still perform at a semi-professional level later in life. As a middle-aged person, Holt entered the exploration stage in music performance, when other musicians about the same age would have reached the maintenance and decline stages.

For an individual, the knowledge of the world of work prescribes the range of career possibilities and is a key constituent of early as well as recent career theories (Parsons, 1909; G. W. Peterson et al., 1991, 1996, 2002; Reardon et al., 2011). For musicians, the knowledge of the world of work is twofold: knowledge about what musical career options exist, and

knowledge about career options beyond music. It enables musicians to evaluate the practicality of pursuing a career within the many possible music fields, such as performance and education, and to compare that with the world of careers at large.

Spiritual beliefs and career values are important factors in determining a career that favours psychological satisfaction and alignment with self-concept over financial recompense (Bloch, 2000, 2004; Bloch & Richmond, 1997; Brown, 1996, 2002a, 2002b; Hansen, 2001; Oliveira, 2000; Savickas, 1997). Some musicians may accept jobs that align with their musical aspiration, rather than financial recompense (Creech et al., 2008). Chappell (2005) illustrated how a musician successfully and meaningfully combined her musicality and spirituality in her musical career.

Gender may profoundly influence career development, especially in the case of women (Astin, 1984; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Fassinger, 1985, 1990; Gottfredson, 1981, 1996; Hackett & Betz, 1981; Patton, 2013; Patton & McMahon, 2005; Richardson & Schaeffer, 2013; Schultheiss, 2003, 2009, 2013). In a research study on performing artists including musicians, Coulangeon et al. (2005) noticed a clear "career differentiation" between genders and found that women work in less favourable conditions and earn less overall than men. Hennekam et al. (2019) examined how women composers used online communities of practice to facilitate career development and sustainability. They suggested that having online communities for women composers can create a positive impact since they can "build and maintain their own professional networks rather than relying on male-dominated networks" (p. 22).

The difference in ethnicity and race within a society poses the question about career development pertinent to specific concerns (Arbona, 1990; D. Brown, 2002a; Byars, 2001; Cheatham, 1990; Fouad & Kantamneni, 2013; Gottfredson, 1986; Osipow & Littlejohn, 1995; E. J. Smith, 1983). In one more culturally generic study, being a musician, interestingly, was found to be one of the most desired occupations (Howard et al., 2011). It topped artist, lawyer, FBI agent and actor/actress in desirability for eighth to tenth graders, regardless of race and ethnicity, in the US-based study. However differences may be apparent across ethnic boundaries. In other studies, certain ethnic groups were perceived to be keener to let children

study musical instruments, especially a 'classical' one like the piano or violin (Faliks, 2019; Mellor, 2019). Since New Zealand is a multi-ethnic society, ethnicity and race can be considered hidden factors that influence individuals' decisions to take up a music career or otherwise—a topic yet to be researched in depth.

Disability limits the range of career choices and is understood in conjunction with health in some career theories such as the Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1996). Patton and McMahon (2014b) noted the paucity of literature concerning disability and career (Lent et al., 1996, 2002; Lent & Brown, 2013; Lent & Savickas, 1994; L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990, 1996; Szymanski & Hershenson, 2005). In Patton and McMahon's work, disability receives stand-alone treatment, distinctive from the concepts of ability and health. In some unfortunate cases, musicians may become disabled due to career-ending injuries. However, Mor (2013) found that some have "[come] to terms with their disabilities … [and] proceed with a fulfilling second career" (p. 241).

The level of health directly enables or inhibits a person's capacity to work. Both physical and mental health is crucial to a well-functioning career. Work adjustment theory (Dawis, 2005; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Hesketh & Griffin, 2006) identified the potential relationship between job satisfaction and physical and mental health and well-being. Health also relates to unemployment which can be detrimental in both physical and psychological ways (Artazcoz et al., 2004; Feather, 1990; Fryer & Ullah, 1987; Herr, 1992; Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1993; Paul & Moser, 2009). Such relationship exemplifies the interaction between the individual system such as health, and contextual system such as the employment market. In the case of musicians, some may notice signs of health problems and move away from a performance career (Mor, 2013). How musicians experience health problems that affect employment, or conversely unemployment that affects health problems, has yet to be explored in full.

3.4 Contextual factors

Generally speaking, people are relational and continually make sense of their identity vis-à-vis others—the community and society around them. Blustein and Fouad (2008) posited this interconnectedness between the self and the world as *self-in-relation*.

Patton and McMahon (2014a) differentiate two tiers of contextual factors: social factors and environmental-societal factors. Social factors include family, education institutions, peers, social and mainstream media, workplace, and community groups. Environmental-societal factors comprise sociopolitical and socio-economic environments, geographical location, political decisions, employment market, migration, the financial environment, globalisation, and technological advances. The social and environmental-societal factors interact dynamically with each other: the network of shared relationships and the interdependency of individuals, i.e. social, act as the ground for societal and historical influences and are fundamental elements that frame the context (Vondracek & Porfeli, 2002, p. 388).

Family can be powerfully influential in a person's career development. In most Western societies, individualism may supersede the family influence in career decision-making, whereas in some cultures, family considerations can have an overwhelming impact. It is especially pertinent in countries where the welfare system cannot provide adequately for the elderly so they need to rely on filial support. Such an issue can bear on the next generation's career decision-making. Musicians may be persuaded to undertake a music career by family members who are also musicians.

Workplace and education institutions contain social circles that inevitably influence the individual's career development. Research acknowledges the importance of the interaction between career development and employing organisations (Amundson et al., 2002; Collin & Patton, 2009; D. T. Hall, 1996; Herriott, 1992; Law, 1996; Oliveira, 2000). The music school, as suggested in the previous chapter, plays a pivotal role in immersing young musicians in a musical environment. Likewise, real-world experience in the music industry, i.e. the musician's workplace, can also be hugely influential in musicians' career development.

Peers and companionship in social groups can also impact an individual's career decision (Patton & McMahon, 2014a). They include religious groups, interest groups, service and volunteering clubs, self-help groups, as well as virtual ones such as online groups, chats and forums. Furthermore, an individual's interaction with the social system

is dynamic in nature (ibid., p. 264). It changes throughout an individual's life as they move in and out of social groups.

The media, especially social media, is a potent socialising force yet has received only scarce mention in the domain of career research (Patton & McMahon, 2014a, p. 249). Media, as a filtering device, is the channel for the environmental-societal system to convey information and shape individuals (ibid.). Social media can serve as a means to connect family, education and workplace circles, as well as like-minded individuals beyond tangible circles. People consume and participate in social media by joining social networking sites, chat groups, online forums, newsfeeds, topic groups and the like. A study estimates that an average individual spends five years and four months in a lifetime on social media (Mediakix Team, 2016), reflecting its immense influence on one's life and potential impact on one's career. Musicians are indubitably influenced by the media as they find their affiliated genres and network there.

The sociopolitical environment can restrict the range of an individual's career choice and development (Osipow, 1975; Smith, 1983; Vondracek & Fouad, 1994). On the other hand, the socio-economic environment can influence one's values, accessibility to education and information, as well as the availability of role models (K. Roberts, 1977, 2005, 2012). In Western societies like New Zealand, the sociopolitical environment is generally stable enough to empower musicians with the freedom to choose music-related career paths.

Geographical location affects people's career decision-making. Political, socio-economic, historical influences are subsumed in the geographical location but play out differently in cities and rural areas. Collett (1997) noted that, for instance, people situated in a rural area might receive limited schooling and employment opportunities, as well as limited availability of role models and accessibility to information. Within cities, the reputation of suburbs may affect employment opportunities, such as limitation of transport or amenities such as schools and malls. New Zealand, as a remote country in the world, may not be considered a prime cultural hub to attract overseas musicians. Rather, it is not uncommon for New Zealand-born musicians to become permanent expatriates in other countries such as Australia, Britain and United States (Swarbrick, 2014). In fact, one of my participants Sarah was an expatriate living in another country yet has very strong family and career

connections at home.

Political decisions, directly or indirectly, play an essential part in people's life. They affect the distribution of funding towards social security benefits and education. They also initiate industrial agreements and restructure workplaces, as well as form the government's political ideology. For musicians, political decisions guide cultural policies from a macro perspective.

Political decisions also reflect their historical influence on different age cohorts. For example, those who enter the job market in the growth phase of an economic cycle would differ vastly on their level of optimism towards the job market compared to those starting during a recession. The same applies to those who live in peacetime compared to those in wartime. How these factors ensue from political decisions and play out in musicians' lives remains to be researched.

The employment market drives the supply and demand for jobs, affecting its related secondary and tertiary training programmes. As some societies increasingly favour STEM subjects, art subjects like music can become undervalued. For example, in the UK, music subjects at A-level decline sharply, and the pool of students who take GCSEs is dwindling (Weale, 2018). With a smaller number of students working towards advanced level music, music schools may also experience a decline. The decreasing demand for secondary and tertiary music education is bound to have an effect on musicians' careers, since fewer teaching opportunities means fewer income sources.

With immigration a global issue nowadays, the employment market is found to cater differently for existing residents and new immigrants. The pre-existing conditions of an employment market in a country can be unfavourable towards new immigrants. New immigrants face barriers such as limited language skills and recognition of transferable qualifications. The result is that some immigrants cannot work in the same profession as before, rendering the skill sets gained overseas inapplicable or under-utilised. Some immigrants, though qualified for the skilled work, may become underemployed or unemployed, resulting in a "transition penalty" (Canadian Labour and Business Centre, 2004, p. 18) for them. Research on how musician migrants develop their music careers is yet to be seen.

As part of the environmental-societal system, the 21st-century knowledge-based economy has some concomitant issues. First, people are likely to have multiple jobs across a range of industries (Jarvis, 2003) due to the transferability of knowledge and meta-skills of the highly educated workforce. New jobs that drive future technological development such as artificial intelligence and augmented reality are likely to require a high level of training as well as a constant upskilling from the knowledge workers. Living in the 21st-century economy, some musicians have been found to upgrade themselves and broaden their search for cross-genres music-making continually (Creech et al., 2008). Some musicians also believe the skills developed through musical training can be transferable to other jobs (ibid.). Rowley et al. (2016) argue that experiential learning for professional musicians is valuable to develop highly desirable skills such as "leadership, communication, teamwork, workplace negotiation and problem solving" (p. 43).

Furthermore, the overall economic and financial environment affects the culture sector in which many musicians work. When the overall economy constricts, the sector suffers. As revenue dwindles, organisations become reluctant to increase expenses on hiring creative workers and rely on discounted wages (Wyszomirski & Chang, 2017, p. 8), thereby undermining musicians' financial well-being.

The effect of globalisation on career development (Andersen & Vandehey, 2012; Coutinho et al., 2008; Dickmann & Baruch, 2011; D. T. Hall, 1996; Herr, 1996; Sweet, 2004; M. Watson & McMahon, 2012; Watts & Sultana, 2004) and technological advances inevitably impact musicians' livelihoods. Friedman (1999, 2005) argued that globalisation and technological advances join forces to displace the work of a significant world population at all levels.

Globalisation and technology have transformed the landscape of music industries and music education in the past few decades. Regarding how music graduates find work in music industries, Bennett (2012) argued that globalisation has impacts on graduates' employability. In general, automation eliminates the needs for mid- and low-level jobs which were previously carried out by people. The loss of jobs is evident, not only in the manufacturing sectors, but across service sectors (Rifkin, 1995). In music, the impact of automation is particularly felt. Even though live music can never be replaced, it is indubitable that machine music

playback has satisfied many human listening needs.

Globalisation and technological advances also enable the gig economy, in which work for musicians is supplied. It refers to the increasing amount of virtual and contingent work that disrupts traditional careers and instigates career transitions, perhaps inconveniently, for individuals (Barley et al., 2017).

For musicians, the act of anticipating the future market trend and job situations have profound consequences on career decision-making. Ellyard (1993) noted that existing jobs and careers will become obsolete in an accelerated fashion, and new ones will sprout up in the foreseeable future. To think about career development, without considering the potential impacts of disruptive technological and social changes, can be dangerously short-sighted. In a recent study called "The Future of Employment" by the Oxford Martin School, researchers estimated that 47 per cent of total jobs in the United States are at stake due to computerisation (Frey & Osborne, 2017). This undoubtedly has implications for the creative industries such as music, as software increasingly replaces human performance. For instance, music tracks made from sampled or synthesised instruments can often suffice to produce satisfying results for market consumption and thus eliminate the need for hiring professional performers in some cases. Music technology has advanced to the point that not only the performers can be replaced by automated technologies, but also composers or songwriters, the minds behind the creative process. Automated music compositions have existed now for decades (Englert et al., 1981; Ip et al., 2005; Kellett et al., 2014; Roads, 1992). Technology has also revolutionised music teaching and learning through computer (Webster, 2007) and mobile applications (Chen, 2015), alleviating the need for music and instrumental teachers. Knowledge about the market trend for musicians in the professional realms may persuade/dissuade individuals from considering such a career.

3.5 Career actors, agents and authors

Musicians make career decisions, take control of their course of actions, and make sense of why they do such things. Situated in a fast-changing

world that no longer guarantees job security, musicians exercise their career agency—that is, the capacity to develop and direct their career consciously. Musicians face unclear career pathways and an inconsistent amount of professional work and can be seen as "insecure workers" (Kalleberg, 2009) in society. Thus, they need to take charge of their destiny in order to survive and create a meaningful life in music.

Savickas (2013) sees individuals as career actors, agents and authors. Underpinned by social constructionism, Savickas maintains that the notion of self is "an emergent awareness that is culturally shaped, socially constituted, and linguistically narrated" (p. 148). Self, first situated in familial and social settings, begins to imitate others around them, like an *actor*. Also, in a work situation, they observe and mimic how to do a job. Later, they establish their unique place in the social realm by exerting their *agency* to bring about necessary changes, especially when faced with work-related "tasks, transitions and traumas" (p. 155). Finally, they reflect upon their career story by supplying a theme and depicting a macronarrative that overarches their work and life episodes, undertaking an *author* role. The following sections discuss how these three roles manifest in musicians' careers.

The notion of self as a career actor works in two ways: "introjection of guides and incorporation of models" (p. 152). At the beginning of an individual's life, introjection happens within the immediate familial and social setting, where one adopts the ideas and attitudes of others unconsciously, especially from the more senior members. Music teachers, or family members who are musicians, become influential guiders and role models. The incorporation of models further strengthens and diversifies as they study in the music school. During the repetitive music-making process, musicians adopt and internalise the characters of their model teachers, performers and composers, through "acting" and embodying their artistic sensitivity, techniques, manner and knowledge. A self-identity thus emerges through music, which instrumentally affords the action of "taking in" the attitude and "taking on" (ibid.) the quality of other musicians.

The self's agency becomes apparent when the inevitable challenges and vicissitudes arise in life, and the self has to react responsibly and responsively. Career transitions, such as from school to industry, or from one job to the next, may be "wanted or unwanted, planned or unexpected,

and promotions or demotions" (p. 156). For student musicians, the transition can come in two waves: first, they dive into the post-graduation world of work where full-time music jobs are scarce; second, they need to grapple with the boundaryless (Arthur, 1994), protean (D. T. Hall, 1996) and portfolio career (Mallon, 1988) in music which they may not have prepared for. Many music performance students may find that teaching is a more realistic career option than performance, since full-time positions are rare. In such cases, "the occupational plot is lost, ruptured, halted, stalled, or silenced" (Savickas, 2013, p. 155), and self's agency needs to be aroused to navigate through the career uncertainties. Rather than merely traversing a predictable career trajectory that attends a fixed work identity, one needs to embrace the possibility of "destandardised trajectories" (Savickas, 2013, p. 157) that may appear nonlinear and thus imply a flexible professional identity.

Savickas views self as an author who can string life episodes into a coherent whole and bring about meaningful interpretation over their life course. An overarching theme, representing what matters most to the person, connects and sustains the life episodes. The theme also subsumes one's identity development, which can be represented by a self-constructed "character arc" (p. 165). Through a self meta-narrative, an individual can borrow the common tragedy-to-triumph themes from the "cultural scripts" in which the protagonist grows "from weakness to strength, timidity to confidence, inhibition to expressiveness, poverty to affluence, and fear to fortitude" (p. 166). Likewise, a musician may move from obscurity to stardom, from ineptitude to 'virtuososhiр'. Understandably, the career journey may not always unfold in such a simplistically positive way. However, Savickas's contribution here is to create a framework for career counselling and arouse the person's awareness that they can control and direct their future, i.e. to become an actor, agent and author.

Elsewhere in the literature on musicians' careers, Weller (2012) incorporated Baxter Magolda's (2004) self-authorship as a lens to illustrate how a young professional bassist made sense of his artistic growth and career development. Baxter Magolda defines self-authorship as "the capacity to internally define a coherent belief system and identity that coordinates engagement in mutual relations with the larger world"

(p. xxii). The notion of self-authorship here is in fact similar to Savickas's concept of career adaptation in which one harmonises the "inner needs and outer opportunities" (p. 157).

3.6 Career adaptability: where calling and career meet

Savickas's (2013) concept of career adaptability carries useful implications for musicians as they navigate a protean career. He sees that career agency manifests through the adaptation within vocational development tasks, occupational transitions and work traumas (p. 155). The 21st-century musicians, similar to other workers in post-industrial economies, are likely to change jobs about every five years (Mullins, 2009), rather than being in a single job for decades, as in the industrial era (Savickas, 2013). A musician would inevitably experience unexpected tasks such as business and finance; transitions between jobs, some even between careers; and traumas such as career-threatening injuries (Mor, 2013). The act of adapting is thus crucial to coping with tasks, transitions and traumas, and constitutes the framework of "adaptiveness, adaptability, adapting, and adaptation" as explained below.

Savickas explains adapting as the act to harmonise the "inner needs and outer opportunities" and bring about "success, satisfaction and well-being" (p. 157). This is where calling and career meet. A person's calling is their "consuming, meaning passion towards a domain" (Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011, p. 1005), exemplifying an inner need. The knowledge of the world of work (Patton & McMahon, 2014b, p. 245) denotes the awareness for outer opportunities. To effectively adapt to a career situation is to equipoise one's passion with practicality, read a wide range of career options, and act prudently without being blindsided by one's passion. This is particularly relevant to musicians. More broadly speaking, adapting behaviours allow individuals to "master development tasks, negotiate occupational transitions, and resolve work traumas" (p. 158). For musicians, development tasks in music can include expanding their repertoire and genres. More likely, the protean nature of their artistic career would also require them to gain expertise related to music business such as graphic design and art administration. However,

when they cannot find enough work in music, they may need to learn new skills for another career. They may take up careers outside music while engaging in part-time music work, realising their calling but negotiating occupational transitions in the process.

In a conceptual development from Super's life-long theory, Savickas proposes five steps of adapting to cope with wanted or unwanted changes: orientation, exploration, establishment, management and disengagement. Musicians first learn their art through the music school or a mentor (orientation). When ready, they may be involved in some occasional performance gigs and part-time teaching opportunities (exploration). Aiming to further their career, they grow their reputation by engaging themselves in more music opportunities (establishment). Working through a portfolio career, they juggle various work and non-work responsibilities (management). They may depart for a new career prospect at an opportune time, such as full-time teaching (disengagement). A new adaptive cycle then begins for the new career.

The act of adapting presupposes a person's adaptiveness and adaptability, which Savickas carefully distinguishes. Adaptiveness refers to an individual's willingness to adapt, whereas adaptability denotes their "psychosocial resources" (p. 157), or capability. Both willingness and capability play an inextricable role for individuals to cope with "current and anticipated vocational development tasks, occupational transitions, and work traumas" (ibid.). Based on their willingness and capability, an individual undertakes the act of adapting, producing "adaptation results" (p. 162), i.e. a completed transformation. For example, some of my participants were in the process of adapting to a new career outside or alongside music performance.

For musicians, adapting to a new career or role can be achieved through "concern, control, curiosity and confidence" (Savickas, 2013, p. 158). Once propelled into the job market, musicians cannot avoid but show *concern* over how they position their niche, based on their existing skills and interests. They take *control* by migrating to other fields in or out of music when chances arise. They become *curious* by exploring other job possibilities, and learn and grow along the way. In the end, they gain *confidence* over their switch and mastery of newfound knowledge. Through self-authorship, they can develop a "character arc" (p. 151) or a

personal narrative that is coherently meaningful to themselves, deepening the sense of fulfilment and life satisfaction. Musicians can stretch beyond their performer-creator identity (D. Bennett, 2018) as they venture into other careers.

Besides career theories, the theme of adaptation also appears in the literature on musicians' professional development. Bennett (2018) advocates Baltes and Baltes's (1990) adaptive strategies for aging: *selection, optimisation and compensation*. For Bennett's purpose, selection refers to how musicians pick goals and courses of actions advantageous to their existing conditions. Optimisation denotes how musicians enrich, augment and maximise their resources and performance. Compensation comes into play when their capability to work in music is hampered. For example, this can occur through physical injury, hearing loss, or the lack of job opportunities. They counter the loss by adapting strategies to maintain a desired level of work, e.g. reducing work in music and wearing a hearing aid.

3.7 Pre-career training and transition to professional life

While career theories literature may broaden our understanding, much research knowledge on musicians' careers is realised in music education research. They mostly concern the pre-career development of musicians while they are enrolled in a tertiary programme and their early career stage. Research has supported the notion that the formation of a person's music career identity can be traced back to their pre-tertiary education, shaped by intrinsic (such as self-enjoyment) and extrinsic (such as praise) factors (Creech, 2009; Creech et al., 2008; MacDonald et al., 2008). Expectedly, the "introjection of guides and incorporation of models" (Savickas, 2013, p. 152) take place in this critical stage, steering a musician's self-making process. At the same time, they become knowledgeable of the world of work and weigh the prospect of pursuing a career in music against other fields. In the process, some may decide to undertake pre-career training.

Research has identified an often reported pre-career shift of identity, where musicians experience the transformation from student to

professional. The identity shift commonly occurs when music students enter tertiary education, up to the point of graduation and first career appointment. Creech et al. (2008) investigated twenty-seven undergraduates and working musicians from four genres and identified mentorship, peer networks, performance opportunities and autonomy as essential facilitators for the transition. Reid and Bennett (2014) explored what creativity meant to a group of music students in relation to their professional development. They found that students' study experiences contribute to their formation of professional identity and negotiation between personal and professional identities. Weller (2012), through the case of a young bassist, offered a framework of epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal understanding for young musicians to navigate the transition from study to career. Juuti and Littleton (2012) investigated the transition of four pianists from students to early-career professionals and found that they "constructed, re-constructed and oriented to notions of professional trajectories" (p. 5) through articulating their account.

Some tertiary music programmes proactively prepare students for a career by launching designated courses, such as *My Life as a Musician* in the Queensland Conservatorium, as a suite of core courses for their Bachelor of Music and Music Technology programmes (Carey & Lebler, 2012). Tertiary music institutions play a vital role in bridging the gap between the students' ideal identity and the actual identity needed in the real world of professional music fields. Other scholars have extensively discussed how to prepare music students to become professional musicians (Beeching, 2012; D. Bennett, 2012, 2013; Perkins, 2012; Smilde, 2012; Triantafyllaki, 2013; Weller, 2012).

3.8 Transitioning and adapting within a music career

Musicians can adapt to different career roles within the music fields. School teaching and instrumental teaching are common outlets for in-career musicians to utilise their learnt talent when a pure performance career is not feasible. As they develop their teaching career, teacher identity emerges gradually. When music graduates, especially non-

education majors, are propelled into teaching jobs, their musician identity naturally predominates over their teacher identity which is only starting to form, resulting in possible identity conflict (Aróstegui, 2004; Bouij, 1998, 2007; Froehlich & L'Roy, 1985; Mark, 1998; B. Roberts, 1991, 2000, 2004, 2007; Woodford, 2002). As time passes, the teacher identity gains dominance (Isbell, 2006, 2008), and the two can even rotate in dominance (Conway et al., 2010). However, musician identity, rather than being seen as an opposing force, is appreciated as an integral part of the music teacher identity (Bernard, 2004b, 2004a, 2005, 2007; Brewer, 2009; Dolloff, 2007; Dust, 2006; Ferm, 2008; B. D. Jones & Parkes, 2010; Kokotsaki, 2010; Parkes & Jones, 2012; Pellegrino, 2009, 2010, 2014, 2015a, 2015b; Russell, 2009, 2012).

With church musicians, the doubling and shifting of their identities resembles that of music teachers. Church musicians are not only performers but also considered "servants of the church" and community builders (Huhtanen, 2014, p. 30). Besides, they are frequently involved in educational tasks (Pirttimaa, 2009; Tiitu, 2009), such as coaching choirs and ensembles. As a result, some church musicians acknowledge educational elements as the key in their professional identity, alongside the musician and community builder identities (Huhtanen, 2014). For church musicians, spiritual beliefs and values may become more important factors for their careers than mere financial recompense.

Regarding musicians who work in the music industry, Weller (2014) found that young music graduates notably shift their identity from performer to composer/songwriter over time. Zwaan et al. (2010) investigated the career trajectories of Dutch pop musicians from 16 to 35 years old and identified four career patterns: upward/downward careers, stable successful/unsuccessful careers. They objectively measured music career success through media exposure, sales of recordings and live performance. It was found that the level of social support, professional attitude and extensive professional network positively correlated with a successful career trajectory in music. While the live music industry may generate substantial economic activities (Sanchez, 2018), the money does not deservedly end up with those who work in the field. Zendel (2014) investigated the insecure labour of musicians and technicians working in the live music industry and its detrimental effect on their career. He found that they are willing to accept a "psychic wage in lieu a living

wage" and can be considered as "lifestyle labour" (p. ii).

Professional orchestra players can also experience a shift in mentality (Westby, 1959), if not how they see themselves in identity. The study found that young professionals in their 20s aspired to become prominent soloists and were willing to take up symphony jobs as a stepping stone in the career. Musicians in their 30s started to realise that the dream may not materialise. Those in their 40s and 50s experienced deterioration in performing ability and a sharp decline in job passion, and consequently fostered a sense of bewilderment and a strong desire to quit. Gembris and Heye (2014) echoed that by finding that 40 to 50-year-old symphony musicians started to experience physical, cognitive, sensory organ and psychological problems and noticed a decline in overall performance.

The lives of many instrumentalists working inside and outside a professional orchestra are inextricably tied to teaching, especially pianists. Mills (2006) studied the working lives of 908 UK musicians, including 211 pianists, and the result suggests pianists gradually spend much more time teaching than performing as they age. Pianists also perform significantly less after their first decade of working life, compared to other alumni (most possibly instrumentalists) from the same conservatorium, who maintain a very significant (over 58 per cent) working time in performance.

Injury, declining physical health and emotional well-being can become crippling issues, especially for mid- and late-career musicians. Bennett (2018) reported that mid-career musicians experienced "identity trauma" and self-doubt amidst career change (p. 21), indicating worsening emotional well-being. In an auto-ethnographical study, J. Brown and Thomson (2018) detailed vocal health issues of the author and proposed strategies for maintenance and recovery. A. Mitchell (2018) recounted how her pianist spouse, who suffered a devastating stroke, tried to recover playing ability through a rehabilitation regime. Raymond III et al. (2012) revealed the common neurologic and musculoskeletal problems among mid-career orchestral musicians.

Besides research, plenty of valuable resources exist in the form of published books (D. Bennett, 2012; Conner & Laverty, 2014), websites (Thomson, 2012a, 2012b) and scholarly articles (Bartleet et al., 2012; Creech et al., 2008). They aim to help pre- and in-career musicians

understand the nature of their work. Particularly noteworthy is Bennett's (2012) *Life in the real world: How to make music graduates employable*. The scholarly book explicates the essential skills and attributes, such as entrepreneurship, communication and performance, that enable young musicians to sustain their lifelong artistic career.

3.9 Career switching in musicians

The research focused on musicians' career switches is scant. Mor (2013) explored mid-career change among musicians and their life after performance. The qualitative study investigated ten musicians who left the field due to a range of reasons: (1) injury, (2) inability to achieve financial independence, (3) dislike of the highly competitive nature of the profession, and (4) development of other interests. The musicians returned to school and were retrained for a new occupation. Some completely disengaged themselves with musical activity while some remained active but less. The non-injured musicians experienced "ongoing regret and grief" even having developed a successful second career (p. 239). Conversely, Taylor and Hallam (2011) shed light on how amateur musicians previously working in another field changed career to become instrumental and vocal teachers. The authors suggest that the amateur-musician-turned-teachers can benefit the music teaching profession.

Career switching or transition in musicians can be conceptualised by the theory of in- and out-bound professional trajectories (Nyström, 2009). A professional trajectory is "an interface between the formation of a professional identity … and a movement in time" (p. 48). An inbound professional trajectory happens when a musician strives to get established in their professional field. When they move on to a new professional area (within or beyond music), they are on the way of an outbound trajectory.

If the performer-creator identity (D. Bennett, 2018) is central to musicians, performance and composition/songwriting become the professional fields with which they identify themselves at the core. The career trajectory in or out of these core areas can be understood as follows:

1. Outbound but within music fields—from music-focus to education-

focus, e.g. from music performer to music teacher (Bernard, 2004b, 2004a, 2005, 2007; Brewer, 2009; Dolloff, 2007; Dust, 2006; Ferm, 2008; B. D. Jones & Parkes, 2010; Kokotsaki, 2010; Parkes & Jones, 2012; Pellegrino, 2009, 2010, 2014, 2015a, 2015b; Russell, 2009, 2012).

2. Outbound beyond music careers—musician moving from music to non-music fields (L. Hall & Wallis, 2011; Mor, 2013; Wakin, 2004).

3. Inbound towards music careers—musician moving from non-music to music fields (M. H. Berg, 2004; Taylor & Hallam, 2011).

3.10 Conclusion

The review of career theories and music education research has thus far provided initial touchpoints to understand my participants' career experiences. Super's "life-span, life-space" theory helps to 'connect the dots' from a chronological lens and put things into a broader perspective. Notably, this thesis studies early to mid-career musicians' experiences. Super's developmental trajectory which includes exploration, maintenance and disengagement, serves as an excellent reference point for the participants in this research. Also, many individual and contextual factors (Patton & McMahon, 2014b) contribute to a musician's career development. Among them, the knowledge of the world of work, spiritual beliefs, family, education institutions, and geographical location are particularly relevant to my participants' narratives.

To see musicians as career actors, agents and authors (Savickas, 2013) injects vitality to the way we think about their careers. They are not passive beings, manipulated by the unrelenting market forces dictated by consumerism and commodification. Instead, they can own their destiny through "creating a meta-identity" (D. Bennett, 2018, p. 25) that encompasses their musical self and beyond.

The concept of career adaptability can have a far-reaching impact on the lives of musicians. The protean artistic career is bound to have many unexpected tasks, transitions and traumas. To adapt means to harmonise the inner needs and outer opportunities (Savickas, 2013, p. 157), incidentally marrying the concepts of calling (inner needs) and career (outer opportunities) together. Later, the findings chapter will reveal how

the participants hang on to their musical calling and adapt to career challenges.

Beyond career theories, research on musicians informs us that identity shift occurs as they make career transitions, often causing identity conflict (Bouij, 2007) and trauma (D. Bennett, 2018). Also, the decline of physical and emotional well-being (Gembris & Heye, 2014; Raymond III et al., 2012) is inevitable for musicians, especially those in mid-career. These ideas can be potentially useful for understanding my participants' lived experiences.

Now with the conceptual foundation of both calling and career laid out, the next chapter considers the methodology of examining the callings and careers of the musicians.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter starts by laying down the research question and sub-questions as they drive the methodology. Next, the research paradigm and method will be explicated. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is the chosen method to elucidate musicians' lived experiences in their callings and careers. IPA's method, procedure and related issues will be discussed.

4.2 The research question

How do musicians experience and think about their callings and careers?

4.2.1 Sub-questions

1. How do musicians experience and understand their musical calling and other callings? How do musicians experience their musical calling from the outset and the changing sense of it over time?

2. How do musicians understand and adapt to their professional careers in the context of a changing world?

The purpose of the questions is to unravel findings that contain useful implications and applications for professional training and career practice for 21st-century musicians.

4.3 The research paradigm

This research falls under the qualitative paradigm. Qualitative research investigates "how people make sense of what happens [and] what the meaning of that happening is" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 45) using rich descriptions. Unlike quantitative research, it does not reduce information to numbers and statistics (Creswell, 2009, p. 217). To fully understand and study musicians' experiences in calling and career, a quantitative method would be too one-dimensional. It is better elucidated within a "constructivist-interpretivist paradigm" (Vachon et al., 2012, p. 152). A constructivist perspective forms the basis of the enquiry here. It presumes that "truth and reality are inevitably intertwined with social context and meaning" (Allen, 1994, p. 33). In music, Bowman (1994) argues that "music's distinctive nature and value lie in its … social character" (p. 66). Therefore, the social context also underpins musicians' career realities.

In this research, the interpretivist paradigm is reflected in the choice of the method: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). It will be used to find out musicians' experiences in their callings and careers. IPA is a common way for qualitative researchers to "focus upon people's experiences and/or understandings or particular phenomena" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 46). Epistemologically, the participant's text signifies and embodies their lived experience. In other words, their account is "the objectification" (Eatough & Smith, 2010, p. 2) of that lived experience, and thus provides a ground for interpretative engagement and an opening for understandings. As a method, IPA allows me as the researcher (with limitations) to "access [the musicians'] cognitive inner world" through a deliberate and detailed interpretation of their experience (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008, p. 215). The analysis will include not only verbal contents but also any emotional overtones and linguistic devices. IPA's contribution is unique from other qualitative methods. For example, IPA is more likely to yield a "more detailed and nuanced analysis" of the participants' lived experiences when compared to grounded theory (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 202).

4.4 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

The term IPA was originally coined by Jonathan A. Smith (J. A. Smith et al., 1996) to describe the qualitative method he used in psychological research. The method allows a "rigorous exploration of idiographic subjective experiences" (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008, p. 215).

In addition to its psychological context, IPA is underpinned by phenomenology. Phenomenology is a systematic study of phenomena, which can be traced to its Greek root 'phainesthai'. The word means "to flare up, to show itself, to appear" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). Phenomenology is described as the *science of essences* by its principal founder Edmund Husserl (Husserl, 1982, p. xx). Its original aim was to search for the intelligible, universally invariant and necessary qualities inherent in objects, whether in the empirical or transcendental realms, through a set of systematic and rigorous procedures. Later, as different versions of phenomenology stem from seminal works by philosophers such as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, it shifted towards existential and hermeneutical emphases. In particular, hermeneutic phenomenology studies the "experience together with its meanings", with an attitude of openness towards the multiplicity of meanings and possibilities in interpretation (Friesen et al., 2012, p. 1). In this light, IPA can be understood as a way to explore phenomena hermeneutically.

The *phenomenology of practice* (Van Manen, 2007) is also of particular interest here. Van Manen promotes the idea of the phenomenology of practice, as it can be applied to reveal the "pathic knowing" towards "situations and relations in which we find ourselves" (p. 11). The word 'pathic' is derived from its Greek root 'pathos' which means suffering and also passion. Thus, pathic knowing refers to the holistic understanding of the "general mood, sensibility, sensuality, and felt sense of being in the world" (pp. 20–21), often of an ineffable and obscure nature. This type of phenomenological understanding, however, is primarily practical and reflective in orientation, and may not deal with a deeper exploration within the realm of phenomenology as a philosophical pursuit. Also, the work produced by phenomenologists is essentially reflective and descriptive in nature (Embree & Mohanty, 1997, p. 10). The core of this research aims to elucidate the lived experiences of career musicians through descriptive and reflective writing.

The next section introduces several key concepts essential to IPA research: lived experience, idiography, hermeneutic circle, epoché and double hermeneutic. These concepts sensitise me as a researcher and make me aware of the dynamics of IPA, which is crucial for interacting with the participants and bringing the research to fruition.

4.4.1 Lived experience

Despite its deep philosophical roots, IPA seeks to understand the *everyday* experience of the common people. Doing phenomenology, such as listening attentively to other people's stories and reflecting rigorously on our perception of their accounts, is "a live dynamic activity, [not] just a scholarly collection of ideas" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 33). Also, the lived experience should take precedence. The resultant philosophical account should serve to illuminate the lived experience, rather than to outshine the primary account, which is the text (ibid.).

In this research, hundreds of hours were spent on listening to the musicians' interviews, reflecting on their calling and career experiences, and writing about them. It is hoped that the findings chapters portray their lived experiences in a meaningful way, serving as a firm foundation for further philosophical reflection.

4.4.2 Idiography

IPA adopts an idiographic approach to research which focuses on the particular rather than a general law or statistics that is reflected in the 'nomothetic' approach. IPA studies a phenomenon through the embodied and situated experience of the individual within a particular context, resulting in a perspectival representation of the phenomenon (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 29). In the case of calling and career, each musician experiences them in unique ways based on their background and life journey. However, the pursuit of peculiarity is not the end of IPA. Though committed to describing the details of "small, purposively selected and carefully situated samples" (ibid.), IPA moves beyond the specifics to achieve more general claims, as long as they are elaborated in a cautious manner. This transferability is echoed in Smith et al. citing Warnock's (1987) words: "an insightful case study can take us to the

universal because it touches on what it is to be human at its most essential" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 38). Besides, convergent and divergent patterns between the participants may be revealed and understood (ibid., p. 202), contributing to the general or macro-level claims. However, micro-level analyses should underpin the macro-level accounts. Therefore, the thesis is open to the emergence of macro-level claims and their relevant discussion. Research into musicians' callings and careers calls for a close examination of particular experiences, beliefs, thoughts, feelings and responses to events and processes that impact on their lives.

4.4.3 The hermeneutic circle

An IPA researcher needs to become aware of the hermeneutic circle, where the preconceptions of the researcher will be irretrievably altered by the interpretative engagement with participants.

In the hermeneutic circle, the understanding of individual parts of the text (and the lived experience depicted) constitutes an overall grasp of the whole. In return, the grasp of the whole provides reference and grounding for understanding the individual parts, thus forming a cyclic relationship and a never-ending process. Pilay et al. (2016) see the hermeneutic circle as a threefold process: first, individuals *understand* the life-world in the pre-ontological sense, i.e. they receive the experience as it is in a pre-judgemental way; second, they *interpret* that primordial understanding of the experience through deliberate explication; and third, they *apply* an "explicit interrogation" (p. 154) on the interpretation and the entailing possibilities for themselves. Throughout the cycle, layers of meaning are continually added through active interpretation and application, augmenting its understanding through the linguistic process. Thus, the hermeneutic circle does not arrive at a finite and stable truth; instead, it generates a truth that is continually morphing or evolving.

The implication of the hermeneutic circle to my study is twofold. First, musicians experience and understand their working life as it is preontologically. During the interview, participants interpret their understanding of their sense of passion and career life. New layers of meaning may thus be created and snowball into an enriched and renewed understanding for them, which may be revealed as the interview

progresses or in the subsequent communication. Second, as a researcher, I immerse myself into this ongoing interpretative process through systematic reflection (see Data analysis: processes and methods below). The narrative of the musicians and my interpretation continuously reshape my understanding about musical calling, career and implications for professional music training at large. This is an ongoing process that will help to shape the discussion at the end.

4.4.4 Bracketing/Epoché

The attitude of being open and the tact of bracketing preconceptions are also highly desired qualities in IPA research. In phenomenology, such a mental posture is known as the *epoché*. Epoché suspends "everything that interferes with fresh vision", including reflectiveness, judgement and leaping ahead to a conclusion (Moustakas, 1994, p. 86). In phenomenological research, preconceptions and presumptions may tinge and skew the perception of the phenomenon at hand. For example, as a professional musician, my particular experience and cultural background indubitably form a 'lens' that may tinge how I read the phenomenon of others as it is. I might infelicitously discard important details that do not resonate with, or that might run contrary, to my experience. Therefore as the researcher, I need to suspend judging whether what the musicians say is reasonable and let their experiences speak for themselves, at least during the beginning stage of data analysis.

4.4.5 A double hermeneutic

During the IPA process, a 'double hermeneutic' (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003) is in play: the researcher is trying to understand the participants making sense of a phenomenon. There are two levels of interpretations.

First, the phenomenon is interpreted by the participant. Then, their account is further interpreted by the researcher. This intimate interplay between the two levels of interpretation calls upon the spirit of empathy, as well as the spirit of questioning on the part of the researcher (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 36).

Empathy refers to taking an insider's perspective and standing in the participant's shoes. I have been a musician throughout my career who

has performed, composed and taught professionally. Therefore, the experience enables me to empathise with other career musicians easily.

On the other hand, questioning requires me, as a researcher, to embrace an analytical and cautious stance, to read between the lines and see things beyond their face value. As a researcher knowledgeable in music fields, I can stand alongside my participants and ask questions from different angles, clarifying issues and challenging assumptions when necessary. Smith et al. (ibid.) regard successful IPA research as effectively welding both the empathic and questioning stances. As the writing process moves from descriptive to interpretative, the elucidation becomes gradually less reliant on the participant's account, and increasingly more on the interpretative work of the researcher. This shift will be reflected in my findings chapters spanning Chapters Five to Seven.

4.5 IPA in music research

This research is further informed by phenomenological studies and methodological articles in music, especially those using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Liora Bresler is among the first scholars in music education to advocate phenomenology as one of the key qualitative research methods for music education research (1995, 1996, 2009). She used Kay Collier-Slone's longitudinal study (1991) on the lived experience of adults who were trained previously through the Suzuki Method, as one of the earliest recognised examples of phenomenological study in music education. Bresler (1996) argues for the case to study persons as they uniquely are through phenomenology, implying its idiographic nature (p. 11). Bresler (2009) further underscores phenomenology as the means to achieve "the goal of empathic understanding" (p. 12), in contrast to the positivism of seeking an objective truth. Her line of thought echoes Van Manen's (2007) "pathic sense" in phenomenological writing which denotes the affective modality of knowing and being (p. 21).

On the other hand, Holmes and Holmes (2013) also champion a phenomenological approach for music performance research. The advocacy aims to unravel the experience of the performer, especially in the aspect of "aesthetic embodiment" (p. 72), vis-à-vis the empirical approaches from psychology, physiology and psychoacoustics which

dominate the field.

Closer to home, Dawn Joseph (2014) has contributed a chapter on IPA in Kay Hartwig's *Research methodologies in music education*, commissioned by the Australian and New Zealand Association for Research in Music Education (ANZARME). Joseph surveyed several Australian studies that incorporate IPA. The topics include seniors' music-making experiences with children (de Vries, 2012); pre-service music teachers' engagement with the music of other cultures (Southcott & Joseph, 2010); experience of cello students undertaking instrumental exam from the Australian Music Examination Board (Li & Southcott, 2010); and the struggle of lacking in musical expertise experienced by the generalist primary and early childhood teachers (Bainger, 2010). Beyond Joseph's chapter, Hennekam et al. (2019) have used IPA as part of the study on how women composers use online communities of practice to facilitate career development and sustainability. To date, no IPA research in music education in the New Zealand context has been identified. It is hoped that this thesis can further contribute to the body of IPA research in the Australasia region.

Beyond IPA, several doctoral theses or dissertations in music incorporated phenomenological approaches in their methodology. The topic includes adult music engagement (Thornton, 2010); the meanings and values of music-making in the lives of string teachers (Pellegrino, 2010); parent involvement in instrumental music (Nolan, 2008); and the meaning-making process of older musicians (Reed, 2008). Among these, Thornton (2010) is the only one who explicitly uses IPA.

To conclude this section, IPA is often employed to investigate meaningmaking in music. Likewise in this project, IPA helps to investigate how musicians make sense of their musical calling and career.

4.6 Research design, procedures and associated issues

This section outlines the IPA research design, from sampling participants, and conducting interviews, to analysing data. The biographical sketches of participants will come to light. Ethical concerns, validity and trustworthiness will also be addressed.

An overview of IPA

Overall, IPA for this research involves the following steps:

- Develop research questions that are directed to uncover the musicians' lived experiences concerning calling and career.
- Conduct semi-structured interviews. They will be implemented in a way to allow room for elaboration and exploration. What the participants say in the interview will ultimately be the 'text' for interpretation.
- Analyse the data deeply. The analysis begins with an intimate and holistic understanding with the 'text' by repetitive reading and attention to "points of interest and significance". Next stage involves identifying themes and interrelationships and their connection with the original text.
- Write a data-driven report. In the end, the IPA procedure will lead to a multilayered report from "rich description through to abstract and more conceptual interpretations". (Eatough & Smith, 2010, p. 183)

4.6.1 Sampling and participants

The cohort of musicians was gathered from an extended network of professional contacts and the university. They were purposively selected to form a diverse group. They represent multiple musical genres, e.g. jazz, classical, rock, and various career trajectories (working towards or away from an artistic career). Some of them were involved in teaching, while some were purely performers. All of them had been working in music as a profession. In terms of age, they ranged from early 20s to late 40s. They were all based in New Zealand, including those:

- who were born in New Zealand
- who were not born but raised as second-generation immigrants, and fully identify themselves as New Zealanders
- who are first-generation migrants

- who had previously left New Zealand to pursue professional work in music elsewhere, and had come back.

In total, nine musicians participated in eight interviews between 2016 to 2017. All were interviewed individually except Robert and Amy. They are a couple who co-direct a choral organisation and therefore were interviewed together.

4.6.2 Biographical sketches of the participants

All the names used are fictitious. Caiah and Lilia have elected to choose their own pseudonyms. Other names were assigned by me.

Brian — classical pianist, photographer

Brian is a classically trained piano recitalist in his mid-30s. Born and raised in New Zealand, he studied piano performance in one of the universities here before moving abroad. He had extensive experience living and working in other countries before coming back to New Zealand to relaunch his music career. It is noteworthy that he has developed a deep interest in photography which has become his "parallel passion" alongside the piano.

Caiah — jazz singer

Caiah is a jazz singer in her mid-40s who has an extensive concert career and discography. She was born and raised in a European country. Her singing career started when she was only fifteen. She later won a scholarship to a prestigious music school in the United States. Also, she was contracted to an agent company very early in her career, and is thus well established as a professional musician. As a jazz singer, she has travelled all around the world to perform, and touring was her way of life. However, she decided to stop touring and move on to a teaching career in which she could share her invaluable expertise in stage performance. She has now made Auckland her base.

Sarah — jazz composer, multi-instrumentalist

Sarah is a jazz composer in her mid-30s. Her style is cross-genre and experimental. She plays multiple instruments and has worked for theatre and dance companies in the United States for many years. Born and raised in New Zealand, she obtained her music degree in a New Zealand university. She has also received numerous commissions and arts grants. She longed to move back to her home area and reestablish her career at this stage of life.

Robert — classically trained singer, music pastor

Robert, now in his mid-40s, was first trained as a music pastor in a South Asian seminary but later finished a postgraduate music degree in an Australian conservatorium, specialising in classical singing. He and his wife Amy now lead a Christian music organisation that provides large-scale concerts, choral and vocal training, and worship services for churches, both locally and internationally. He felt called by God since his youth and served in pastoral and musical roles for many years. His family migrated to New Zealand more than ten years ago.

Amy — pianist, conductor, music pastor

Like Robert, and of a similar age, Amy received musical training in a South Asian seminary. She has been working alongside Robert throughout the years and is the co-director of the Christian music organisation. As the main conductor, she directs the adult choir, children's choir and orchestra. Her career forces her out of her comfort zone as she was initially trained as a pianist and organist.

Lilia — opera singer

Lilia, in her mid-20s, is a fledging opera singer who has performed in landmark venues and key productions in New Zealand while studying music in a university. She complements her music career with various side jobs, including teaching singing in schools and working as a barista. As a devout Christian, she sees becoming a music pastor a possible future

role.

Joshua — orchestral conductor, real estate agent

Despite his young age (mid-20s), Joshua was already a seasoned orchestral conductor with multiple appearances as a guest conductor with professional orchestras around the world. He graduated from a prestigious music school abroad, majoring in conducting. At the time of the interview, he was working for a national orchestra in New Zealand as one of the conductors. However, realising the lack of paid work in the field, he turned to real estate and established himself as a budding agent. He maintained a parallel career and saw financial freedom as a way to empower his artistry at the podium.

Tyler — rock and jazz guitarist

Tyler, mid-20s, was studying in a music degree programme in a polytechnic at the time of the interview. He was developing a music career in both music teaching and recording. He regularly taught the guitar in a music studio. His non-music jobs included construction labour and bartender.

Eric — guitar teacher, veterinary surgeon

Eric, early 40s, is a classical guitarist and works as a guitar teacher. However, he worked as a veterinary surgeon before moving to New Zealand. Remarkably, an accident in the clinic revealed his inexorable passion for music, and Eric decided to forgo his lucrative career to become a full-time musician. As a performer, he also played professionally at weddings and was also featured regularly in a guitar society.

4.6.3 Interviews and peripheral data

Semi-structured interviews were considered essential to the IPAmethod. They were used to draw data for the research questions laterally rather than directly (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 58). The interview schedule was

developed around the research questions. It aimed to sensitise the participants and facilitate their description and reflection (see Appendix). With this in mind, the questions asked in the interview often involved synonyms of calling, such as 'passion', since the word 'calling' may not be a commonly used word in daily conversation. The purpose was to facilitate the flow of conversation and grasp of the topic for the participants.

In this research, semi-structured interviews were arranged with individual participants in cafés which provided a relaxed environment for conversation. Throughout the interview, audio recording and field notes were taken. The audio recording was later transcribed to become the core data. The field notes were used to record descriptive facts about the participants and reflective hunches by the researcher. Most interviews lasted about 90 minutes, with the shortest one about 60 minutes and the longest more than 120 minutes. Participant information sheets and consent forms were dispatched beforehand to notify participants of the nature, commitment and length of the interview. A digital audio recorder was used to record the interview. Transcription was emailed back to the participants for them to check and comment.

In addition to the interview transcript and field notes, publicly available information, such as musicians' personal websites and online biography, also become a source of data to depict their profile and substantiate the findings.

4.6.4 Ethical considerations

The protection of privacy and anonymity of the participants was given the highest regard. Security and ethical issues were thoroughly considered during the conception of the research design.

To protect participants' anonymity, the data collected did not contain any personal information. Fictitious names were used to protect participants from being identified. However, participants were notified that there might be a small risk that they could be identified through the information they shared during the interviews.

Freedom of participation in and withdrawal from the project was observed. Participants were allowed to withdraw anytime. Nonetheless, they were advised on the Participant Information Sheet that their

contribution up to the point of withdrawal could not be taken out. It was ensured that participants took part in the project by their own wish and not by external coercion. The Consent Form made it clear that their participation or non-participation would not affect their relationship and employment with the School of Music, the Faculty of Education and the University of Auckland at large; and their academic results in the university would not be affected.

4.6.5 Data analysis: processes and methods

Data analysis outlined here is an integrated approach based on several IPA literature, rather than a procedure prescribed by a single author. Finlay (2011) first provides an overarching twofold method of "engaging analysis" (p. 228) and "thematic analysis" (p. 233). To engage the analysis, Smith et al.'s (2009) specific procedures were followed. Then, to analyse the themes, I developed a procedure based on three sources (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Eatough & Smith, 2010; Groenewald, 2004).

The first part of data analysis—"engaging analysis" (Finlay, 2011, p. 228)—essentially involves:

1) *Dwelling*—pondering upon selected passages to project oneself into the experience of others
2) *Embracing an attitude of wonder*—letting the "gestalt" effect impress on the consciousness
3) *Evidencing the analysis*—putting the literary tendency in check through referencing the evidence given
4) *Capturing ambivalence*—accepting the sometimes contradictory feelings that emerged from the lived experience. This is facilitated by epoché, i.e. to let the lived experience present itself to the researcher's consciousness (as in points 1 and 3), without prejudgement (as in points 2 and 4).

The four steps laid out by Finlay provide a *general* approach. However, to facilitate the first stage of "engaging analysis", I adopted the *specific* procedure suggested by Smith et al. (2009). In the first step, I attempted to dwell in the world described by the participants, as early as possible in the transcription process, since it required repeated listening. As I was transcribing the interview, any noteworthy emotional response

would be captured alongside the speech content. Also, any initial thoughts stimulated by the participant's dialogue would be noted down separately. These fresh inklings, i.e. the initial notes and incorporation of affective content such as emphases, interruptions, laughs and giggles, serve as the backbone for further analysis. For interviews conducted bilingually or trilingually, instances of switching languages were also noted. Overall, I attempted to capture the interviews as they were, in their fullest extent. All these initial steps also contribute to 'rich and thick description' that enhances trustworthiness. Thus, the first step of *reading and rereading* suggested by Smith et al. (2009) was achieved through the elaborate transcription process, as well as the subsequent proofreading and additional readings.

Next, the second step *initial noting* suggested by Smith et al. (2009) involves three sub-steps which I have followed:

1. *Descriptive comments* were made, i.e. to take things "at face value" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 84). They were directed to underline "objects which structure the participant's thoughts and experiences", such as "descriptions, assumptions, sound bites, acronyms, idiosyncratic figures of speech, and emotional responses". This stage corresponds to seeing the lived experiences of the participant as they are, utilising the bracketing technique.
2. *Linguistic comments* were made to note their "pronoun use, pauses, laughter, functional aspects of language, repetition, tone, degree of fluency" (p. 88) as well as metaphors. During the process, I noticed the comments made in this sub-step had contributed substantially to my discussion of the data.

3. *Conceptual comments* were made. This involved taking an interrogative and questioning stance towards the participant's text. This part corresponds to the questioning side of the 'double hermeneutic' (see above). As the researcher, I allow interpretations to emerge naturally, drawing "on [my] own experiential and/or professional knowledge" (p. 89).

For the sake of visual clarity, the three types of comments were recorded by different styles of the font: normal for descriptive, italic for

linguistic and underlined for conceptual.

In the second part of the analysis—"thematic analysis"—I collate and streamline the IPA methods from the literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Eatough & Smith, 2010; Groenewald, 2004) into the following procedures:

1. Delineate and assign units of meaning or "code", such as a word, to the data.
2. Let themes emerge from the codes.
3. Name and define the themes and identify whether they are general (applied to all) or specific (applied to single context).
4. Explicate the themes, their interconnections and linkage to the "text" (lived experience as recorded on the transcription).
5. Synthesise the findings in writing.

During my thematic analysis over the eight transcripts, I coded 384 instances of finding, and organised them in a spreadsheet. I then arranged them under four levels of themes. Additional notes were made for the interconnection between the themes and beyond. Under the two overarching themes of calling and career, I identified 15 major themes and 91 sub-themes (and a number of sub-sub-themes). Since not all of them can fit the findings chapters, I had to be selective in discussing the more prominent ones.

4.6.6 Establishing validity and trustworthiness

This IPA research was informed by validity and trustworthiness concerns which are standards in qualitative research.

Validity

There are four guiding principles for establishing validity in IPA research: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, impact and importance (Yardley, 2000). These four principles are endorsed and recommended by the creator of IPA and his co-authors (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). While all four are important to this research, I will address the particularly relevant ones.

According to Yardley (2000), *sensitivity to context* is the key to formulating sound qualitative research. For example, the researcher

would show sensitivity towards the sociocultural setting of the participants, as well as the existing literature. As a music performer–educator for over two decades, I would be able to relate to how musicians lived their career. Based on my experience in negotiating a music career, I would be able to ask appropriate questions during the interview to unravel their experiences. During the stretch of leading eight interviews, I was increasingly aware of the "interactional nature of data collection within the interview situation" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 180).

For analysis, the sensitivity to context can manifest in an "immersive and disciplined attention to the unfolding account of the participants and what can be gleaned from it" (ibid., p. 180). The write-up would demonstrate a substantial number of verbatim quotes to form the argument. Interpretations would be understood as possible readings rather than the absolute truth. A general claim would then be cautiously established.

In the findings chapters, I left quotes in their verbatim form when appropriate. The purpose was to highlight their pauses, self-corrections and repetitions, as they sometimes revealed important hidden messages.

However, when dealing with a large number of participants and themes, there is a need to "judiciously select good and appropriate illustrations" (ibid., p. 182) for the themes which can be supported evenly across a number of participants. During the write-up, I was aware of the need to have an even-handed approach to the voice of each participant whenever possible. All participants have contributed to particular themes or sub-themes in the findings. Nonetheless, some participants were inevitably featured more heavily than others, due to the valuable insights they offered and themes generated.

Trustworthiness

Besides the guiding principles useful for IPA, there are general measures that can establish trustworthiness in qualitative studies. Creswell and Miller (2000) summarised nine methods: triangulation, disconfirming evidence, researcher reflexivity, member checking, prolonged engagement in the field, collaboration, the audit trail, rich and thick description, and peer debriefing. Here particularly related ones are addressed.

Triangulation offers multiple angles towards the subject in the study,

to detect convergence and coherence among different sets of data, thereby enhancing its validity. Denzin (1978) listed four types of triangulation: across different data sources, theories, methods, and through different investigators. Even though the latter three aspects may not be applicable in this research, basic triangulation can be done. The interview transcription, researcher's field notes, results from past research, relevant literature, publicly available information, e.g. the musician's biography, and ongoing statistics, e.g. Careers New Zealand, 2021, become the various data sources that provide basic triangulation.

Disconfirming evidence aims to present the complex and sometimes contradictory scenarios in the investigation, thereby establishing a sense of realism in the situation. As a researcher, I will actively search for incongruence in the data, especially at the later stage of analysis.

Researcher reflexivity involves the researcher revealing their "assumptions, beliefs and biases" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127) about the phenomenon and setting them aside. As mentioned in the research perspective section, this act is essentially the same as the phenomenological idea of epoché or 'bracketing', which aims to see what is revealed through the participants as it is, without prejudgement.

Member checking allows participants to validate that the account they give in the interview corresponds fully and accurately with the transcription. As mentioned in a previous section, the transcription was made available for interviewees' checking and comments.

Prolonged engagement in the field may not be directly applicable in my study, as this is not an ethnographic study. Understandably, I will not be able to closely observe the career life of musicians for a lengthy period. However, I have been working in various music fields throughout my career for more than two decades and have developed a prolonged engagement that sensitises my thinking. The prolonged engagement "solidifies evidence" (ibid., p. 128). As the researcher, I can compare the interview data with observational data—in this case, the background information on various music scenes and careers that I have experienced.

Peer debriefing can be achieved through the doctoral advisers of the researcher. They will closely monitor the research process and progress throughout, provide ample support as well as opposing views for refining the research.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the rationale of the chosen method and detailed its design, procedure and methodological approach. The philosophical underpinnings and relevant literature concerning IPA were examined. Features peculiar to IPA research such as hermeneutic circle, epoché and the double hermeneutic were discussed, acting as a springboard to engage with the participants' voices. Details of how the data were collected and analysed were outlined, addressing the ethical concerns and trustworthiness of the study. Overall, the chapter outlines the methodology that aims to generate the descriptive and reflective writing that can illuminate the lived experiences of the musician participants in a genuine way.

Thus far, the first four chapters have provided the contextual, conceptual, theoretical, and methodological background for this research, setting the stage for how the musician participants experienced their callings and careers. Chapter One has revealed that musicians' careers are at the mercy of the global music industry and other music-related sectors. Their careers are precarious and prone to exploitation. Such a volatility may be reflected in the participants' career decisions and experiences. Chapter Two has argued that music itself may be considered a source of calling. Calling research informs us that the sense of calling can fluctuate over time in musicians' lives. Also, both living out a calling and *not* living out one entail immense psychological and financial cost. These ideas served as latent points of interest as I engaged with the participants' voices. Furthermore, Chapter Three has considered music careers in terms of a lifespan perspective, an array of personal and contextual factors, and a standpoint of agency and meaning-making that reflect the way the participants are at different stage of their lives and careers. Each also have a unique set of personal circumstances and a peculiar way to make sense of their career journey. The ideas from the chapters hitherto contribute to understanding the lived experiences of my participants and *how* they can be understood. The next chapter reveals the findings on the participants' callings and how these callings were made manifest in each particpant's career.

Chapter 5

Findings I:

Experiencing a musical calling

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the musicians' interviews regarding their experience of a musical calling. The first section reveals how they pursued music in the first place, i.e. the origin of their calling. The second section depicts how they came to their current involvement in music, i.e. the formation of their calling. The third section illustrates the episodes that seared and perpetuated their love for music. Lastly, the fourth section describes how they experienced different callings at the same time and how their perception of calling changed over time.

The following table recaps essential information on the participants.

Participants	Key identity (as reported)	Age	Main job
Sarah	jazz composer	30s	performer at a theatre company
Brian	classical pianist	30s	piano teacher
Eric	classical guitarist	40s	guitar teacher
Joshua	orchestral conductor	20s	real estate agent
Caiah	jazz singer	40s	stage coach
Robert	music pastor	40s	choral director
Amy	choral conductor	40s	choral director

Tyler	rock/jazz guitarist	40s	guitar teacher
Lilia	opera singer	20s	student

The findings here are the result of the IPA method. IPA requires the researcher to be aware of both empathy and questioning stances when engaging with the data. The findings of this chapter and the next will focus more on 'empathy', rather than the 'questioning' stance in the double hermeneutic of IPA. The 'empathy' stance allows the researcher to stand alongside the participants when seeking to understand their lived experiences. As I attempted to 'stand alongside' the participants, I aimed to report what they thought and how they felt about their callings and careers from *their* perspective. The result is that Chapters Five and Six are more descriptive in nature, with the participants' voices foregrounded. On the other hand, Chapter Seven, i.e. the last findings chapter, reflects a more 'questioning' stance in the double hermeneutic. There, a more interpretative approach is taken. The participants' accounts and voices are compared and juxtaposed. Ultimately the interpretative process leads to a deeper space where the participants' assumptions can be challenged.

However, in the current chapter, the approach is more descriptive and direct. The next section describes the participants' perceived origins of their calling.

5.2 Origins of calling: God, art, and sociality

Some participants saw their calling as originating from a source beyond themselves. The findings show how God, art, and sociality (being with others) as origins of calling matter to them.

5.2.1 God

Robert, who has been a music pastor for over 20 years, ascribes his source of calling to God. More specifically, he believes that his calling is to praise God through music.

> Praise is my calling.
>
> I hadn't even finished high school when I was clear about this calling from God. I responded when I was fifteen. And then [in the next]

> three years, [the idea] slowly took shape, I understood, okay, this is the path that God wants me to go on … Those three years of incubation, through many circumstances, God had been proving to me [that] this is his calling [for me]. I needed to respond this way. I needed to respond this way. [sic] Several times, I wanted to be a "deserter". But then I didn't, because [the calling] was very clear. The steps ahead were very clear. [The calling developed] through many circumstances, through the singing competition, music ministry in the church and so on. (Robert, music pastor, 40s)

Robert's calling from God to do music developed over time. He initially felt called when he was fifteen. However, as he unfolded his life story, he revealed that the next three years as a teenager were pivotal in the confirmation of his calling ("God had been proving to me"). He found that his calling was further developed and reinforced "through many circumstances". Significant life events and experiences, such as winning a national singing competition and involving himself in church music ministry, created a convergence of meaning that brought together his sense of musical calling.

He repeated the phrase "I needed to respond this way", indicating a sense of compulsion to fulfil his vow to God. His multiple uses of "clear/very clear" in the quotation illuminate the sharpness of his calling and his increasing disinterest in alternative career paths. It is also interesting to note that his choice of the word "deserter" evokes a military overtone. But since he avoided becoming a "deserter", he might consider himself a staunch "soldier"—a frequent metaphor used in the New Testament Bible denoting ministers in particular. The subtext here is that he viewed his calling as an act of reverence and military-like obedience towards the transcendent entity who called him.

Similarly, Lilia, an opera singer in her 20s, also saw her calling as God-given. In her life example, an acquaintance's encouragement serendipitously bolstered her faith and calling in music. She met this acquaintance—a professional performer—during an overseas trip in Europe. She was overwhelmingly impressed by his track record in winning music competitions and substantial scholarships ("a £50,000 scholarship"). But perhaps most interesting and influential for her was the acquaintance's belief in God as a guide in his musical career, over and above his own sense of self.

> [E]ven if he doesn't believe in himself he knows that God still believes in him and that means that he feels that like no matter what performance he gives and no matter like if he mucks up or whatever, he still believes that God['s purpose] is what he should be doing. So I took encouragement from that like knowing that God believes in me in terms of me wanting to pursue a music career.

According to Lilia, this episode underpinned her own sense of calling. Here she fully espoused her acquaintance's distinction between self confidence ("believe in himself") and faith in God's purpose in one's life ("God still believes in him"). Despite his apparent relief from performance anxiety ("no matter what performance he gives …"), she took this encounter and the message as something special and a way to confirm her own musical calling ("God believes in me in terms of me wanting to pursue a music career"). In other words, she could have total confidence in pursuing a music career because God "believes" in her and thus would endorse and bless her choice. This transcendental belief helped to free her from any existential anxiety she had about choosing music over other more prosperous careers.

Both Lilia and Robert were clear that God called them into music. Their calling was similar to those who receive a vocation into the religious order, such as ministers and votaries.

5.2.2 Art

The findings suggest that art was a source of calling among different participants. Here art refers to a broad sense of expressive endeavour in and beyond music, even though the participants mainly worked in music. Participants reported two main ways they experienced a call from art: through a spiritual expression of self and connection with other artists; and through the aesthetic experience in itself. The following two cases demonstrate how both spiritual and aesthetic wonderment fostered a lifelong sense of calling for the musicians.

Brian, a classical pianist in his 30s, did not embrace any particular religion. However, for him, the spiritual quality in music still acted as a religious-like summons.

> I guess I believe in art … like a religion because art is like spirits to me. … I believe in that kind of spirit … kind of a spiritual nature of people. It's beyond material life. In artwork, the spirit of the artist remains. Like paintings from hundreds of years ago we can feel the spirit of the artist. So that's a wonderful thing to me.

To pianist Brian, artworks embody the artist's spirit and thus practising art was nothing less than spiritual. The spiritual encounter in the arts propelled him to perceive art as he would religion. He found his artistic experience spiritually gratifying ("wonderful thing"). This spiritual presence was what called and drove him to continue as a pianist.

Later in the interview Brian, both a pianist and photographer, proclaimed that his dual pursuit in the arts represented his very essence.

> Photography and piano … contain my spirit. The work [is the] centre of who I am.

For Brian, the call from arts was engrossing and involved the deepest part ("my spirit", "centre") of his being.

In addition to this spiritual contentment, participants reported that the aesthetic experience of music can also initiate a sense of calling. Joshua, who became an established orchestral conductor in his 20s, recalled a eureka moment when he was about fifteen.

> And then you suddenly clicked and started to see the *substance* of what you're playing. I think when I was about fifteen I experienced playing the Bach's *Toccata and Fugue*. It was just a revolutionary point in time, and I thought this is absolutely amazing. And I think for a lot of musicians, you have this revelation when you like Bach, everything else makes sense. Beethoven makes more sense. Mozart makes more sense. Schoenberg makes sense … That moment when I was fifteen, Bach just completely made sense to me. [It] really opened up, and I knew music was never going to be a distant part of my life.

The eureka moment was instantaneous ("suddenly clicked") and impactful ("revolutionary point in time"). The "substance of what you're playing" can refer to the underlying structure, coherence and continuity of a music tradition (from "Bach" … to "Schoenberg"). The trigger of the

eureka moment to Joshua was Bach's *Toccata and Fugue* (unspecific, sic). The use of emotive words such as "revolutionary" and "absolutely amazing" indicates the intense impact of the episode. In a flash, he noticed ("really opened up") the hidden connections and appreciated the coherence between music by different composers. This out-of-the-blue inspiration and revelation seared into his mind an indelible imprint for a lifelong pursuit in music ("I knew music was never going to be a distant part of my life").

These kinds of revelations by participants about the substance of the music being played pointed to an aesthetic experience in music that can be direct, intense and revelatory and has a long-term impact on calling. Both aesthetic and spiritual experiences from music can be deeply satisfying and meaningful. For both Brian and Joshua, music has become a source of calling, drawing them to a lifelong involvement in music.

5.2.3 Sociality

Some research participants found that they were drawn to being with other people in music as a kind of calling. For this thesis, being with other people is denoted by the term *sociality*. In particular, the participants experienced different types of social fabric' in music: the performer-to-performer, performer-to-audience, and teacher-to-student relationships.

For Sarah, a jazz composer in her 30s, her calling lied in the sociality between her and fellow musicians.

> I don't know what caused me to do the music. I think [it's] the people that I play music with. What really calls me to do it [is] the social aspect, like reconnecting with people.

At first, Sarah was taken aback by my interview question concerning what makes her do music ("I don't know…") perhaps because making music to her has been so intuitive and self-explanatory. But she quickly reflected on the reason ("the people") and even generalised the fact ("the social aspect") during the course of the interview. The swiftness of her response indicated that "the people" was the first thing in her mind, and possibly the most significant impactful factor of her musical calling. In contrast to Brian and Joshua, Sarah reported that the spiritual and aesthetic qualities of making music itself are not the main drivers. To her,

the core meaning of music-making and thus a music career, is to connect with likeminded people.

For Lilia (opera singer, 20s) however, a positive social experience in music-making heightened her sense of worshipful calling. In her interview she recalled her study in a music school that provided a unique blend of theology and performing arts prior to her university studies. As a devout Christian musician, she found many like-minded people in music school. Lilia recalled convivially:

> … We would have worship sessions in the morning before classes started and occasionally some of us would organise … prayer groups … we [are] all … musicians or dancers or drama people. That was a really cool experience.

In Christian practice, a "worship session" means a dedicated time for singing and prayer and is thus musical in nature. Lilia has been involved in musical worship since she was a child. Through the new music school experiences her solo worship experience through music (to be discussed under 'Proclivity' below) had been expanded into a social worship experience with fellow schoolmates. The social group aspired to advance their learning in the arts ("we [are] all musicians or dancers or drama people") and live a religious life ("have worship sessions … before class") at the same time. Lilia found this communal musical experience a highly positive one ("really cool").

Besides making music alongside others, making music *for* others, i.e. a performer-audience relationship, is another essential fabric of the sociality in music and relates to a sense of calling. For years, Caiah, a jazz singer with an established touring career, saw her singing as something imbued with greater significance than merely a music performance.

> When I do a concert and I see people crying, I know I'm doing something. I know I touched some parts in these people's heart, or … relieved some pain that needed to come out, or tears of joy … create a strong emotion … or just a feeling of relaxation … I think that contributes to *doing good* because you feel slightly better than what you felt when you sat down two hours ago … I'm not a surgeon, [so] I'm not saving lives per se. [But] I saved lives when … people [were] in a crossroad, a very slight shade on this end or on

> that end could turn [their lives] into a beautiful moment or tragedy … So to me, let me give you some happiness … if you want to suicide, do it tomorrow, take some happiness now. Don't even worry about that. (Caiah, jazz singer, 40s)

Jazz singer Caiah witnessed how her singing provided a therapeutic and cathartic experience for her audience ("relieved some pain … tears of joy") and even reasoned that her music could be a life-saving act for suicidal individuals ("I saved lives when…"). The fact that her strong conviction about her "doing something good" for her audience fuelled her musical calling came through strongly in her interview.

Likewise, a teacher–student relationship can be another important constituent of the sociality in music. Mature and experienced musicians are often driven by their urge to share their expertise for the benefits of students and for their friendship.

To Eric the guitar teacher, music teaching provided an outlet for him to fulfil his calling to be someone to look up to for young people.

> God has given me this gift to teach and to relate, because after a little while my students are like my sons. They see me like a big buddy, a role model … For example, recently there was a student, he studied with me for some time, then, went with bad company, ended up addicted to gaming and drugs. … [He was] about 16. … He had been a very respectful student, … then all of a sudden, he didn't turn up to the lesson anymore …. His mom was highly disappointed because he'd turned bad …. He needed lots of guidance. Even his pastor called me, "please, fit him in". So [I] gave this boy another chance. So from then, [I] was thinking, wow, [it's] not just teaching guitar really. You're teaching these young people about *life*. And what a privilege it is … So if you ask me … performing, yes, it's still in the pipeline, but education has a much greater meaning …. I want to be a role model … for my students. (Eric, classical guitarist, 40s)

Eric realised his natural ability ("this gift") to relate with his students. He also attributed the ability to God, which further underpinned his sense of calling in music teaching. His use of affective vocabulary towards his students such as "my sons" and "big buddy" indicated his fatherly

approach to teaching the guitar, or more precisely, teaching life through the guitar. His quote suggests a loving concern for education and young people. Through describing the case of a wayward student, he revealed his astonishment ("wow") and appreciation ("what a privilege it is") when he realised teaching music led to something bigger, i.e. life. Eric weighed the significance between performance and education and decided teaching trumped his pursuit to become a world-class guitarist ("education has a much greater meaning"). By mentioning being a role model twice, he reasserted his teaching philosophy of integrating music with a positive way of living. His energy and excitement throughout this account suggests he found teaching to be deeply meaningful and invigorating.

The above examples have shown that different kinds of social relationships draw musicians to music: a musician-to-musician relationship, i.e. making music alongside others (Sarah and Lilia); a performer-to-audience relationship, i.e. making music for others (Caiah); a teacher-to-student relationship, i.e. enabling music-making for others (Eric). The musicians see these different relationships as a strong call to engage in music.

To conclude this section, attributing the origin of calling to God seems to be the most straightforward explanation for calling for some musicians. However, the spiritual and aesthetic quality of art and the bond between people are other reasons that explain why musicians are strongly drawn to a musical calling.

5.3 Formation and interpretation

The musical calling that my participants experienced was formed and entrenched over many years. The elements that shaped the participants included environmental influences (family, teachers, communities and physical environments), personal circumstances (professional aspiration, natural ability, proclivity, lack of alternatives) and interpretations of experiences. Lilia (opera singer, 20s) and Sarah (jazz composer, 30s) both had a musical upbringing in their families. Brian (classical pianist, 30s) had a teacher who influenced him by introducing him to the classics. Joshua (orchestral conductor, 20s) was overwhelmingly impressed by the aura of a music school during his first visit. Likewise, Caiah (jazz singer, 40s) was awestruck by her encounter with her role-model singer, which

set off an unofficial 'internship'. Lilia also developed extraordinary musical ability and a natural appetite for music. Sarah and Tyler (rock/jazz guitarist, 20s) both bemoaned their lack of skills outside music. Collectively, all these experiences formed the participants' calling in music. Lilia and Robert (music pastor, 40s) also interpreted their life events as a propitious sign for pursuing music as a calling.

5.3.1 Environmental influences

The participants reported family (Lilia, Sarah), teachers (Brian), a musical community and physical surroundings (Joshua) as key factors for their formation of their callings.

Family

Both Lilia (opera singer, 20s) and Sarah (jazz composer, 30s) had a musical upbringing, which played a critical role in incubating their musical calling.

> I always knew that music was going to be a big part of my life because my mum was a musician. I was always going along to her concerts. (Lilia, opera singer, 20s)

> [My parents] are both musicians. They made it work somehow. … They make a living as music teachers. … I already have a model of people who haven't been afraid to [live outside a stable job] because they're not on salaries. (Sarah, jazz composer, 30s)

Lilia directly related her lifelong musical passion to the fact that her mother was a performing musician. Sarah saw her parents as role models boldly living out musicians' lives without a secure job. Family influence was powerful in the formation of their calling. Their parents imprinted on them not only what quality music was like, but also how to live as a career musician.

Teacher

Brian (classical pianist, 30s) recalled a memorable episode when his teacher first introduced him to the most respected icons in classical music and how he fell in love with their music.

> [My teacher] got me a book, called *The Hundred Best Short Classics*, which I still have. It's like easy pieces by Bach, Mozart and Schumann. I really love this book, and I love the pieces. And I was amazed that anyone could play—anyone could make pieces like [the] Bach minuet … So then I got really passionate about music. (Brian, classical pianist, 30s)

It was evident that Brian's teacher exerted a powerful influence over Brian's musical passion. As a teacher, he or she had in-depth knowledge of the musical tradition and thus picked a choice book for Brian which was full of famous classics. He or she also knew inside the book were timeless masterpieces that were suitable ("easy pieces") for Brian's development at the time. The teaching material he or she introduced had made an indelible imprint ("amazed that anyone could play/make …") on Brian, and predicated his lifelong passion for music.

Brian vividly recalled the name of the book ("*Hundred Best Short Classics*"), and then immediately revealed that he was fully aware of his current possession of it ("which I still have"). It suggested that the book held a very special place in his piano journey, worthy of keeping for decades. The teacher's skilful selection of teaching material had contributed to Brian's lifelong love for music.

Communities and physical environments

Joshua (orchestral conductor, 20s) considered the physical environment and being with other musicians pivotal in his commitment to his musical call.

> When I entered that building I thought, "That's it. I want to study here." It's the aura. It's the state-of-the-art, beautiful building. All Steinway pianos … New full scholarship. Big concert hall sits eight hundred—brand new … And It's the aura of being among serious

> musicians in—hearing the music ring through the corridors and seeing the artists who came through. Just it was a … very revelatory experience for a young person.

He vividly recalled how he was awestruck by the edifice of the music school as he stepped inside the first time. His immediate response was "That's it"—an unhesitating utterance expressing his split-second decision to study in this music school.

He then rattled off a quick sequence of succinct descriptions of the elements that combined and generated this holistic "aura" ("the state-of-the-art, beautiful building. All Steinway pianos … New full scholarship. Big concert hall sits eight hundred…"). These elements also imply a remarkable investment which signifies the sheer determination of the music school to create an irresistible, immersive, and revelatory environment. In addition to the architecture, the artists he saw and music he heard there forged his intense longing to join this cadre of serious musicians. By "hearing the music ring through the corridors", he could imagine how it would feel to be part of this community. His language was full of positivity and aspiration which clearly described an unmistakably strong draw of calling.

5.3.2 Personal circumstances

The participants found professional aspiration, natural ability, proclivity, and the lack of alternatives to be decisive factors in forming their musical calling.

Professional aspiration

Caiah's (jazz singer, 40s) calling was bolstered by a close encounter with a role model who had achieved stardom. The encounter turned into a month-long industry immersion for her.

> Three and a half hours concert … how do these people do that? So I just ran over to the dressing room. Met Ms Martha High. Martha High was James Brown's background singer for forty years. *Forty*. I went to her … I was in my twenties. I could've been her daughter or niece, so look, I just want to go with you. I pay for my own expenses. I pay with my own money. Just put me on the bus with you. I just

> want to go and see this every day. This is the best school that I could ever get. She looked at me like `are you serious?' `Yes I'm serious.' `So well if that's the case, if you don't mind…' This is Martha High. This is an icon in the *funk. music. world*. She saw me. … She didn't know anything about [me]. 'If you don't mind, I always have double bedroom accommodation. If you want, I can say you're my niece, and you just come on over with this. We're going to be touring in Europe. If you want, you can go with us for a month.

Caiah's excitement at meeting professional role model Martha High was evident in her vivid account of the experience. The way she accented on "Forty years" and "This is an icon in the funk. music. world" reflected her astonishment of meeting and touring with someone of such calibre. Her admiration for Martha High, the highly respected funk icon, was unmistakable when she addressed her not on first name basis but as "Ms". Caiah's account intertwined both storytelling and acting. She animatedly acted out the conversation as if she was reliving the moments. The switch between storytelling and acting went by seamlessly and swiftly. For instance, she went from playing Martha High "so well if that's the case, if you don't mind" to narrator mode "this is Martha High" in a split-second. The quick switch in her narrative generated a sense of thrill and created a powerful presence, leaving no doubt that this episode was life changing for her. This stirring encounter with Martha High during Caiah's early career, further affirmed her innate calling as a singer and aspired her to take on the international stage one day by herself.

Natural ability

Lilia's (opera singer, 20s) natural ability was unmistakable, aiding the development of her calling.

> I remember going to a choir audition and they had this small piano that they were using to test my range, and I remember it mustn't have been particularly big, but I remember my range became too high for this little keyboard.

Her pitch range was phenomenal, and she remembered this episode in vivid detail ("… for this little keyboard"). Besides her range, her vocal power was also impressive.

> I had a 200-person choir backing me. They forgot to give me my microphone, and I was singing the song 'Respect' by Aretha Franklin, and they could still hear me at the back of the town hall anyway.

Lilia's natural voice had a lot of volume and power and could cut through a large choir and band in a big concert hall. Her extraordinary natural ability in voice gave her a sense of ease and mastery in performance, confirming her calling as a singer and expediting her decision to take on a singing career.

Proclivity

Lilia (opera singer, 20s) also had a proclivity for singing to the point that she self-initiated her own formal learning.

> Once I started at intermediate when I was year seven, I begged my parents to let me having singing lessons …

Her proclivity for singing and music in general was evident from childhood to adulthood.

> it was about six or seven I tried to write my own little song. It was only about two lines like God created the sun, God created the sea, and the most special thing is he loves me. So it had two little verses like that, and I was very proud of myself and my mum put that to music, and it got me very excited.
>
> I would be listening to music occasionally when I was doing it, or if no one else was in the greenhouse with me I started doing a little bit of singing while I was in the greenhouse by myself, and it could help keep me going.

Being able to articulate these vignettes, Lilia showed a keen awareness of the development of her calling in singing through repeated self-initiated learning experiences.

Lack of alternatives

The lack of alternatives, albeit a disadvantage, can help a person to focus on their calling. Both Tyler and Sarah revealed that music was their only

choice because they assessed that they were not skilled enough in other areas.

> Just because I suck at everything else. I'm not good at anything else. I don't really have a choice. (Tyler, rock/jazz guitarist, 20s)

> I just wanted to play music and studied music. I didn't really think I could do anything else. I wasn't really good at anything else. I just like doing things that I'm good at because then I can be a know-it-all and be in my comfort zone. (Sarah, jazz composer, 30s)

Sarah's case revealed further details: she herself could be considered ultimately responsible for the lack of alternatives because she liked being in her "comfort zone". Compared to a sense of incompetence ("I wasn't really good at anything else"), the sense of mastery ("know-it-all") was naturally preferred. Likewise, Tyler saw himself having no other expertise and options. In both cases, the natural following of the most obvious option can perhaps be seen as a latent sense of calling itself.

5.3.3 Interpretation of experiences

Some participants interpret their life events as a confirmation of their musical calling. It is especially true for the participants who expressed deep religious beliefs. They correlated and linked their life episodes as an overarching narrative marked by divine interventions, ultimately fuelling their musical calling.

Lilia (opera singer, 20s) experienced an unexpected but very timely recovery after losing her voice. She regained her voice when she auditioned for a key opera role that had been her dream ("ever since I was six I had seen this show … I wanted to be [the character] in [the opera], and that was like my dream").

> I was trying to sing … [but my voice] would come out very raspy, but I auditioned, and my voice came back all of a sudden. I was able to sing notes higher than I had ever been able to sing before.

> … I got the role and my voice … came out of nowhere … I do feel like the timing was definitely something to do with God.

She emphasised the recovery was incidental ("out of nowhere"). She noticed not only had she recovered but also she had gained extra vocal range ("sing notes higher …"), potentially boosting her confidence. She attributed this inexplicable comeback to God.

Lilia also recalled an incidental encounter with someone who shared a similar musical and religious background and could serve as her role model.

> So there was one part of me that was like I almost want to become a musician chaplain. So someone who does ministry, butsomeone who also is very involved within the music community. And it just so happened that year I met … Mick Duncan who introduced me to Rodney Macann, who is a very famous opera singer, but also was a Baptist minister. So he gave me this long talk before I started uni about how to deal with being a musician and a person of faith. And all these different coincidences happened.

She sensed a calling to become, not just a musician but a 'musician chaplain', similar to Robert (music pastor, 40s). She specifically remembered the encounter happened "that year", underlining its coincidental significance. This episode was also interpreted alongside other similar episodes ("all these different coincidences happened"), such as the sudden recovery of her voice. They formed a coherent narrative that encouraged her to pursue her calling.

In a less specific way, Robert (music pastor, 40s) recounted his thirty years of involvement in the church. He outlined how other people realised their calling in the music ministry through observing and interpreting circumstances and reactions from others.

> [It comes with] a lot of confirmations: from people around, pastors, current involvement in the ministry. Those are the things we can [plainly] see. Most cases are like that. We can see that … hey, this person can [be a music minister] … Very difficult to describe. You'll just know.

To Robert, a calling was not merely a matter of personal proclivity or preference. Its manifestation was evident ("a lot of confirmations"; "we can see") within a community of people ("from people around … the ministry"). The manifestation of calling could also be intangible ("very

difficult to describe"), yet intuitive for others to notice ("You'll just know"). For Robert, it was assumed that an individual would be able to discover their musical calling as they interact with others.

What the person does ("current involvement …") also plays an important role. Robert previously mentioned his winning of a national singing competition when asked about how his calling came about.

> [The calling developed] through many circumstances, through the singing competition, music ministry in the church and so on.

Here he construed his professional experiences inside and outside the church setting as a constellation of signs or factors that he should take up this path as a music minister. In this regard, his interpretation of his specific life events was crucial to his resolution.

5.4 Intensity and perpetuity

The participants experienced critical moments that revealed their calling in music. Eric (classical guitarist, 40s) went through a physical trauma that made him realise how important music was. Brian (classical pianist, 30s) recalled vividly a childhood memory that cemented his intense love for music. He also suffered from great psychological stress and physical discomfort in his recitals. These episodes of stress and discomfort demonstrate the intensity of a musician's calling.

Music to some participants can be a lifelong commitment—the calling is continuous or perpetual. Sarah (jazz composer, 30s) insisted that music would be part of her life regardless of what the future held. Robert (music pastor, 40s) summarised his 30-year career by saying that God reoriented him back to his calling whenever he wanted to drift away. Lilia (opera singer, 20s) understood the vicissitude of calling and the need for a positive attitude for sustaining a calling. This section details how the participants experienced the 'strength' (intensity) and 'length' (perpetuity) of a musical calling.

5.4.1 Intensity

Eric (classical guitarist, 40s) worked as a veterinarian before migrating to New Zealand and becoming a full-time musician.

> My wake-up call was when I was trying to put a dog to the anaesthetic. When a car hit a [street] dog, someone drove it to us. So before I could treat the dog, I had to put the dog under anaesthetic. … But the dog was so strong and under-dosed. So what happened was, when I was trying to take the dog out from the cage, it bit me. Bam bam bam bam bam, it's eating [me]. … The scar is still there. … Then the first thing in my mind …: ``oh my goodness how am I gonna play my guitar?'' (Eric, classical guitarist, 40s)

In this dramatic episode, Eric recounted his "wake-up call" to a musical calling when he was bitten by a street dog he was treating. He had a vivid memory about the incident and was able to recall and reenact the moment ("Bam bam bam bam bam…"). The way he told the story conveys a sense of instant terror and the sharp pain caused by the snapping of the dog. The bodily damage was ineffaceable ("The scar is still there"). His on-the-spot thought was remarkable: his gripping fear that he might not be able to play the guitar again and fulfil a dream as a professional guitarist, rather than to continue his veterinary practice. This acute incident became a catalyst for him to take resolved actions to leave his lucrative profession, abandon his comfort zone and make a risky career move.

Similarly, Brian (classical pianist, 30s) recalled his intense craving for piano playing while he had to live away from his instrument.

> My mother had an art residency for three months in other towns in South Island. [So] I stayed with some friends, and they didn't have a piano … I really missed the piano a lot. So some days I used to walk up the hill to our house … to play the piano. I remember one sunny day … I was in a meadow, with butterflies and things and on that day … I remember that day. And I thought, no one in the world loves music as much as me. (Brian, classical pianist, 30s)

Being physically apart from his instrument, Brian yearned ("I really missed …") to go home and play the piano. In this instance his ardour overcame the physical inconvenience ("walk up the hill …"). His detailed description ("in a meadow with butterflies …") and declarative recollection ("I remember that day") revealed how significant the memory was to him: first, being apart, then reunited with his instrument, and the

inconvenient journey in between. He giggled at his callow self, thinking that his love for music had surpassed everyone else's ("no one in the world…"). His self-awareness ("no one … as much as me") was heightened. Such an intense love and longing hints at the captivation by a single entity, in this case, music.

Brian's intense love for piano later evolved into an acute love–hate ambivalence for concert performance. Brian became weary of playing in a concert to the point where he would be physically sick. As a concert pianist, the pressure of playing solo can be massive.

> I used to get really nervous before playing a concert. … I throw up before going on stage. But … I'm always real relieved when I finished the concert. Before doing the concert, I [felt like I] never want to do this again. But then immediately afterwards I was … looking forward to the next one.

"Throwing up" involves a prolonged feeling of disgust building up within one's stomach, followed by a fierce extrusion, a burning sensation and a repugnant reek afterwards. Brian went through all these discomforts while bearing the weight of the concert repertoire and the attendant anxiety. Such an ordeal gave him a strong sense of repulsion ("never want to do this again") at first. Yet something happened at the end to bring about a dramatic reversal ("immediately afterwards") of wanting to perform again. Perhaps the overwhelming satisfaction at the end of a concert outweighed the negative experience of feeling sick, such that he would wish to do this all over again ("looking forward to the next one").

For Brian, playing in a concert was a strong driver of his musical self and a concrete way of fulfilling his calling. In this light, the inconvenience and misery were merely transient. In this sense, the intensity of his musical passion outshone his pain.

5.4.2 Perpetuity

Sarah (jazz composer, 30s) had never thought of ceasing musicmaking. She foresaw that her musical calling would persist despite a potential career switch in her life.

> I think that always be some sort of music in there. I think I could

> imagine myself … working in gardening, or childcare, or something like that. But there'll still be music. Either I'd still be playing with musicians after hours. I just see myself as always doing lots of different things [in music] … You think it will always be music.

Having lived through her professional life abroad for years and now planning to re-establish herself in New Zealand, Sarah pondered coming back to work in jobs outside music ("gardening or childcare"). However, she saw that music would remain central to her life. In this short statement, four times ("always be … music"; "still be music";"always doing lots of different things [in music]", "always be music") she stressed that no matter what her day job became, she would engage herself in making music. The word "always" and "still" evinces a personal sense of perpetuity—that the calling has been there and will be there to stay, no matter what the circumstances are.

To Robert, his calling as a music minister and musician had continued since his youth.

> My feeling is that the calling will never cease. It's continuous. [I'm speaking from my] more than 30 years [of experience since] my calling when I was 15. Every time you want to escape this calling, God grabs you and reorients you. That's why I said the calling is continuous and will not stop.

It was apparent that Robert had considered other career paths and may have even explored some ("want to escape this calling"). But to him, there seemed to be an external force ("God grabs you") that replaced and reinstated the sense of calling the moment he tried to deviate from his ministry. Robert detailed such a moment earlier in the interview.

> I thought … pessimistically speaking … I shouldn't walk this path. I should walk another path, that is entirely unrelated to my previous training. I've thought of that. Very pessimistic … especially when things get difficult, I'd just go and find a job. Being a cashier wouldn't be too bad at PAK'nSAVE. … They live very well [laugh]. … Why do we need to suffer this much? So much toil and hardship. Just be a cashier. But thank God, [it did] not [turn out] like that. … Some people encourage me to work in the insurance sector because of our character, … like talking to people. Another [option] is to

> become a real estate agent. Have you ever considered these [options] seriously? Only a little bit. But then I gave up because my calling is greater than all these things. Sometimes I would ask myself, why do you have to even think about these things? [laugh] Why don't you think of this bigger thing?

Robert reflected on a period in his life that was so pessimistic he was on the brink of giving up ("I'd just go and find a job"). Through observing people living ordinary lives ("look at this cashier, they live very well"), he pondered whether the grass would be greener on the other side. For a brief instance, Robert doubted his choice of clinging to the music ministry that required personal sacrifices ("so much toil and hardship"). Here he alluded to a financial bind ("when things get difficult"). Even people around him recommended him to work as an insurance or real estate agent. However, he berated himself for cursorily considering options outside his calling ("why do you have to even think about these things"). He quickly shifted his focus back to the grander scheme of his life ("this bigger thing"). He reoriented himself back to his music ministry, rather than drifting to a more lucrative career.

To Robert, his divine call outshone and outlasted any alternative careers. The calling was perpetuated through sheer will and his sensitivity towards God, who made the call, in Robert's view.

Holding a similar religious faith, Lilia (opera singer, 20s) saw that clinging to a musical calling would naturally accompany the vicissitude of feeling:

> You are not always going to be one hundred per cent in love with somebody all of the time. That would be exhausting. So that is what I feel about when it comes to my calling as a musician …. It is about continuing when you feel or hear nothing and … knowing that there is always going to be benefits …, things you get out of those moments. You are learning to strive more and becoming more of a whole person.

Lilia here sketched her philosophy about her calling as a musician using a metaphor of a love relationship ("in love with somebody"). To Lilia, while a calling was admittedly consuming, it would not be sustainable if it kept operating at the maximum ("one hundred" per cent)

at all times. She believed there would be benefits to clinging to your calling even when the feeling did not seem congruent ("feel or hear nothing") at certain moments. The implication is that *while calling as a purpose can perpetuate throughout one's life, calling as a passion can fluctuate*.

5.5 Multiplicity and mutability

The participants revealed that they had multiple callings (multiplicity), and the callings could change (mutability) during their career. Brian (classical pianist, 30s) embraced photography as a competing calling to piano. Joshua (orchestral conductor, 20s) grew into loving his real estate work and embraced it as a fulfilling endeavour. Caiah (jazz singer, 40s) transformed her love for singing into a love for teaching. Participants' own perception of calling could swing or change as well. Amy (choral conductor, 40s) unusually did not see conducting as part of her calling, and Lilia (opera singer, 20s) experienced self-doubt that seemingly diminished her sense of calling.

5.5.1 Multiplicity

Multiple callings can co-exist in a person's life. Brian (classical pianist, 30s) experienced a parallel calling in two art forms. Brian has been a concert pianist but has since developed an intense interest in photography.

> In [another country], I started to really love photography. So that became another passion…
>
> Photographers really inspired me …. That was like the development of a … parallel passion with photography.

For several times in the interview, Brian mentioned both piano and photography in the same breath. The parallel interests seem to bear an equal footing and are both integral to his identity.

> Photography and piano … contain my spirit. The work [is the] centre of who I am.
>
> When I started playing the piano, I never thought that I could be a

> professional pianist. Just like love. The same thing [with photography]. Same. I never thought that I could be a professional photographer. Oh, just a love of it.

Brian's love for piano and photography was mainly intrinsic at first, and he was oblivious about career concerns ("never thought … could be a professional …"). The idea of turning photography into a career came much later.

> There's only, like, after like several years taking photos, I sort of thought maybe I can do this professionally.

> When I came back to New Zealand, [in fact] gradually [towards] the end of that six years in [the other country], I kind of think, oh maybe I should be a photographer instead of a pianist. I felt like that was becoming an even [more] dominant passion over the music.

As he became more confident, his passion for photography started to overshadow his piano work.

Besides his project-based work in conducting, Joshua cultivated a parallel career in real estate. He grew into his new career, and it became his new passion eventually.

> But the two things that really make me feel it's worth it, and it's not money at all. Number one is the amount of people you meet. You get to know their needs. You change your personality to serve them and to get a reward off them. I feel it's really fulfilling. And the second thing is that you realise how big the world is besides music.

For Joshua, working as a real estate agent seemed not to be motivated by financial gain, but rather by the excitement of expanding his social circle ("amount of people you meet") and learning about the people ("know their needs"). The process involved adapting to clients' needs ("change your personality") and anticipating potential recompense ("get a reward off them"). His high satisfaction ("really fulfilling") originated from the social aspect of the work, similar to being with others in music, i.e. sociality.

The expansion of his horizon through the new career also revamped his world view fundamentally (to be discussed further in Chapter Six).

The combination of the eye-opening experience and learning about the world outside music had injected value ("it's worth it") to his career, instigating a new kind of calling. Joshua did not regard his real estate role as merely perfunctory and pragmatic but it had developed into a genuine passion that ran parallel to his musical one. Multiple callings are evident here.

5.5.2 Mutability

The participants showed that a musical calling is mutable in two senses: first, it can morph into a new calling; second, its intensity can fluctuate within the subjective experience.

For Caiah (jazz singer, 40s), her musical passion had switched from performance to teaching when she finished her singing career.

> I kept my promise to myself when I'm turning old, and I'm going to teach* (very assertive) *. I'm going to turn back to young adults that are dying on stage. I'm going to teach them overcome stage fright.

> [I want to] … be a point of reference for younger adults that are actually sharing the same dream that I had when I was [about] sixteen.

> To me the main thing is to put [myself] at the service of the younger people because when I was growing up, I found all kinds of musicians and people that I crossed path with, were encouraging me. Apparently for no reason [they said,] just do it. To me, it meant a lot, and I brought to where I am. So I just want to *be* that person now.

For Caiah, the performance stage was the nexus connecting her callings in performance and teaching. She had experienced the terror of stage fright and developed a way of overcoming it. Now she longed to share the techniques with others. She wanted to help others to 'own' the stage like her. The stage had become a portal in which she could transit from a calling in singing to teaching.

Caiah demonstrated a firm resolution ("kept my promise … I'm gonna *teach*") to revolutionise her music career. She decided to cross to the other side of the fence and be a role model ("point of reference") and

encourager. She used to be on the receiving side and benefited ("people … were encouraging me"; "it meant a lot …"). Her change was altruistic and reciprocal ("turn back to young adults … teach them overcome stage fright") in nature.

Besides a change from one calling to another, a shift in perception within one calling can happen as well. For Lilia and Amy (choral conductor, 40s), their perception towards calling changed, especially when they faced challenges and had to step outside their comfort zone.

It is remarkable that Amy, despite living out her music calling as a choir director-cum-music pastor, surprisingly considered that conducting was not her calling per se. The incongruence is striking.

> R: What is not part of your calling but you do it anyway?
>
> A: Conducting! [laugh] … I've never thought of … [that I'd become a conductor].

Later she revealed in the interview that she was trained as a pianist. Becoming a conductor required her to overreach herself in acquiring a new skill set. It seems that since she was not initially trained in conducting, she regarded the activity, despite integral to her ministry, *not* part of her calling. When one faces new career challenges, though situated within the purview of their calling, their sense of calling can become muddled. Calling-related activities, in Amy's case conducting, can be so distant, alienated and elusive that one may dismiss them as part of their calling.

Lilia (opera singer, 20s) also reflected on a similar experience when she felt challenged.

> R: Do you find it up and down in your sense of passion [towards music]?
>
> K: Yes, I do a lot. Sometimes if I'm struggling with learning things …, I'd tell myself, is this really what I'm meant to be doing if I am finding it so hard?

In her musical journey, Lilia had experienced challenges that she found so difficult that they fomented self-doubt ("is this really…") and

undermined her sense of calling ("what I'm meant to be doing"). The perception of calling is liable to change.

The collective findings here showed that the participants experienced the change of perception of their calling over time. In Lilia's case, the sense of calling attenuated to a point where hesitation surfaced. Amy's case was even more extreme. Her sense of calling plunged to the negative territory. Conducting, supposedly an integral part of fulfilling her calling, was eventually seen as a *non-calling*.

This section has depicted how the musicians lived out more than one calling. For Brian, his secondary calling served as an interest, whereas for Joshua, it became his new career. Musicians were also candid about how they felt as they lived out their calling—the calling did not always feel like a calling. Lilia experienced self-doubt and Amy, even denial of the calling.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has depicted some of calling's characteristics through the participants' lived experiences. First, the origin of a calling can be religious, artistic, or social in nature. Its formation process is shaped by family, teachers, communities and physical environments. Individuals' natural abilities, proclivity and aspiration in music also contribute to their calling formation. Years of devotion to music may limit their career choice, further amplifying a musical calling. Their interpretations of life narrative provide an interesting account of the nuances of calling.

Musical calling is experienced through sometimes intense episodes, yielding a long-running career or hobby. A musical calling can also be multifaceted and mutable in nature, and run alongside other simultaneous callings. Quite often, musicians experienced the calling in an intuitive and inexplicable way. Admittedly, the findings here are merely scratching the surface of the topic. My effort here is still far from doing justice to describe the nebulousness and profundity of the musical calling. With the themes in calling elaborated, the next chapter will reveal how my participants understand and navigate their careers in a practical sense.

Chapter 6

Findings II:

Negotiating a music career

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses insights into the specific pathways of musical careers as reported by the nine interview participants. The participants' awareness, agency, adaptability and resilience played a vital role in bringing musical success and overall well-being. The interpretative phenomenological method was used to foreground participants' voices.

The first section sheds light on the participants' awareness of professionality and sustainability. It reports on what being a professional musician meant to the participants and how they made decisions conducive to career success. Understanding what it took to sustain a music career led them to think more realistically about their musical future.

The second section describes the participants' agency in planning their career and in seeking artistic freedom. Their agency was exercised within a range of actions, and those actions were related to their particular world view.

The third section details what challenges the participants faced, and how they responded in an adaptive and resilient way to these challenges. A music career often requires multiple skills that overreach the initial

training of the musicians. Sometimes financial hardship also ensues. In some cases, faith-based calling helped participants stay adaptive and resilient.

Like the previous chapter, the findings are elicited through the application of the IPA method. Particularly, the 'empathy' side of the double hermeneutic is in play. As researcher, I sought to empathise with the participants to understand their lived experiences and describe them through the participants' lens.

6.2 Awareness of their music career

The participants gradually developed an awareness of their career through day-to-day experiences and eventually established a form of expectation of 'career' outcomes. In particular, they thought about what it meant to be a professional musician, i.e. awareness for professionality, as well as what it took to be a professional musician in terms of viability, i.e. awareness for sustainability. It is noteworthy that the term 'professionality' is not as common as professionalism, which usually refers to a positive attitude or work ethic. For this thesis, professionality denotes the notion of where a musician stands in relation to the professional field, which is one of the participants' concerns.

6.2.1 Professionality in music

During the interviews, the participants revealed how they perceived their involvement (or that of others) in their professional field. They tended to think some activities were more professional than others, implying a spectrum of professionality in music fields. They considered the involvement with the establishments, ability to make a living, and level of speciality to be indicative of their professional status.

Establishments

Some participants saw that being recognised with an established entity denoted a professional status.

> Unless you're affiliated with the [established] orchestras, … the

> quartet, maybe the trio, then you're not really a professional performer. You're just freelancing, you know. (Joshua, orchestral conductor, 20s)

Joshua saw that playing in professional ensembles gives musicians a special status. This referred to established music ensembles, especially those receiving public funding at the regional or national level. As someone who performed at the national level, Joshua did not see working as a freelancer in music as a 'professional proper'. "Freelancing", as he expressed, carried a somewhat condescending overtone. To Joshua, it implied a failure to reach the upper echelon in the music fields. For him, the key criterion to determine whether a musician is professional or not was whether the musical work associates with the existing establishment. According to this view, such differentiation is extrinsically determined.

Likewise, Brian (classical pianist, 30s) saw being established in a national art organisation as a landmark step in his career, implying a professional status.

> I was trying to make a career as a pianist. … I've applied to a concert for Chamber Music New Zealand. … But I was rejected. … I was struggling to make myself established … to become established like a concert pianist. (Brian, classical pianist, 30s)

Though Brian had played in numerous recitals and concerts, he said that he was only "trying to make a career". He counted his existing career achievements not worthy enough for him to uphold the title "concert pianist", which was his goal. He did not see himself as "established" enough because a professional body had rejected him. Joshua's and Brian's cases pointed out that some classical musicians have a high regard for affiliation with the establishments and see it as the key to claiming professional status.

Income

Brian (classical pianist, 30s) also intuitively linked making a living to being a professional.

> But would you consider yourself a professional musician now here? I guess so but maybe, yeah, maybe still a struggling one. That's not easy for me to make a living as well.

When asked whether he considered himself a professional musician, Brian hesitated ("guess … maybe") to acknowledge himself as one. His view of professionalism lay in whether he could make a living or not, not because of the specialised nature of his work, i.e. classical piano performance. Though Brian was working as a piano teacher, he maintained that making a living was "not easy".

Brian was visibly excited when he talked about another professional musician who has successfully established a sustainable career. He depicted his career in great detail and spoke about him with admiration:

> [This German singing teacher] was a famous tenor [and has] recorded with Solti. … He gets paid like fifty thousand per concert. … He taught at this university in [a foreign city] [for] two days a week. And he flew up [by] plane especially. In the morning, he goes and teaches here. … He taught for twelve hours in a row, and then he goes back to the plane. The dedication was incredible. … I was really excited about this [opportunity to be the accompanist in his classes]. Around the same time, Ashkenazy was conducting the student orchestra and. So I went to the concert. … After the concert I went up to him said I wanted to talk to him. We talked for about an hour. … And then he invited me to play for him. … so I played for him [in] an orchestra pool, and he said it's really nice.

Here, Brian mentioned this singing teacher and the world-renowned pianist Ashkenazy in the same breath, implying that this teacher had also made it to the professional rank like Ashkenazy. He was able to command a lucrative fee for singing in a concert and now carved out a stable teaching career in a university. In this sense, following a sustainable career was deemed to be the benchmark for professional status, even though the unnamed singer did not have the same reputation as Ashkenazy.

Likewise, Eric noted that a professional identity in music performance hinged on one's earning ability.

> So how do you view your own professional identity? … As a guitar teacher, or as a performer? I don't think I could make [a living] … I'm not going to call myself a performer. I'm more of a guitar teacher.

Eric did not see himself as a professional performer since he could not earn enough money from this role. The ability to generate a substantial income, to him, was a mark of professionality as a musician and that income helped him to determine professionality in music. It seems reasonable enough to think that a professional service, music performance included, warrants a professional fee. Therefore, in this sense, income can be used to gauge a musician's professionality.

However, both Brian and Eric conceded that they were not able to make a substantial income through performance, and that this undermined their professionality as a performer.

Specialities

Some participants considered that being a specialist in music separated them from laypeople, and warranted professional status. While Robert's comments were situated in a religious context, the principle at stake also applied to a general context.

> Music is specialised. I use the Bible's principles to see this thing. Why does our God call an entire [Israelite] tribe specifically to manage this ministry? They were well-trained. There was a reason [for them to exist]. I hold on to this principle. I think … this is something that cannot be compromised. (Robert, music pastor, 40s)

Robert (music pastor, 40s) reckoned that professional musicians have a specialised function in society and being an accomplished musician requires specialised training ("they are well-trained"). Drawing an analogy from an ancient biblical context, he saw that musicians played an irreplaceable role ("a reason") in the community and society at large. He also expressed the importance of a musicians' speciality with conviction ("hold on to this principle" … "cannot be compromised").

Elsewhere in the interview, Robert contrasted the professionality of the

musician with the layman's haphazardness in concert organisation. In this regard, he recalled an episode working with a group of volunteers and amateurs in his organisation.

> [The lay committee] didn't get [the] vision. So when they said they wanted to do this concert, they treat this venue-hunting … they couldn't think of the big picture, like finding the Holy Trinity Church. They may not think of that. Even if they could come up this, they would still not know when the best time is for the concert. In terms of repertoire, they have no idea. They don't have such exposure.

To Robert, the lay committee, despite their musical passion, were incapable of managing a concert to fruition. They lacked discernment about fundamental aspects such as venue and time, and knowledge of repertoire. As a result, Robert saw his unique professional role as guiding them through the process. Whether in a religious or general context, it is fair to say that professional musicians act as artistic leaders in a community and of successful community events.

On the other hand, Eric (classical guitarist, 40s) saw specialisation as a portal to the professional world of music.

> I've been keeping myself in the field. For example, I attend the monthly meeting at the … Classical Guitar Society. Just to get to know who's in the field. And then I met some guitar teachers. So I told them I hoped to make a living, so a teacher introduced me the Suzuki method. And then … I applied for two years. … After training, I could start to build up my studio.

To establish his guitar career in a new country, Eric strived to make a name in the field. Therefore, he joined a network of specialised performers ("the Classical Guitar Society"), and he also sought a specialised qualification ("the Suzuki method"). In the process, he forged his professional identity as a guitar teacher.

6.2.2 Sustainable careers

The participants were well aware of how to sustain their career through a variety of resources and recourses. They understood the supply and demand within their music fields, i.e. the market dynamics. They also

knew what to rely on in case of trouble, such as social benefits and family support. Remarkably, some of them also had faith in the gift economy and divine providence.

A side note on terminology is appropriate here. While the term "sustainability" is more prevalent in environmental sciences and its education, it can be readapted here to describe the person's awareness of the viability of a career. More specifically, the concept in this context denotes sustainable career awareness in music.

Market dynamics

As a professional orchestra conductor regularly engaged in concerts, Joshua (orchestral conductor, 20s) noticed a trend in classical music—an aging population:

> …I think classical music seems tumbling here. You just have to go to a Town Hall concert. You just have to look … count how many white heads there, and how many non-white heads. And then you realise we're in a lot of trouble in about five to ten years. When they all pass away, that's fifty to sixty per cent of the concert hall gone. And the rate at which they are leaving does not match the rate at which new people coming in. So logic tells you that in five to ten years you're going to be really struggling for music numbers here. (Joshua, orchestral conductor, 20s)

From his first-hand observation, Joshua induced a bold prediction that classical music performances would struggle to be sustainable in the future. He noticed that numbers in the incoming audience ("non-white heads") could not replenish the outgoing audience ("white heads"). This insight was gained from observation and through the "logic" of an inevitable decline in job opportunities in music, which could also stifle his career.

Without elaboration, Eric (classical guitarist, 40s) bluntly declared the fact that it is close to impossible to make a living as a performing guitarist.

> Cannot really make a living as a guitarist, as a performer. I think it's very hard … especially for classical guitarists.

On the other hand, Sarah (jazz composer, 30s) thought she could always establish a career in piano teaching.

> What a music career is just … I just assumed that I'd probably make money from giving piano lessons. And I just wanted to play music and study music. (Sarah, jazz composer, 30s)

Her assumption about a feasible career in instrumental teaching perhaps came from her parents, who were also music tutors. Teaching the piano could fulfil her desire to "play and study music", yet remained a viable career path. Her awareness of having a sustainable career lay in her *knowledge of the world of work* in music, i.e. the relative abundance in teaching opportunities compared to performance and composition.

Tyler (rock/jazz guitarist, 20s) held a similar idea and knew that opportunities in music performance and production were scarce.

> If you think of music as a product there is a lot more product than there are people consuming that product … There are a lot more musicians there. (Tyler, rock/jazz guitarist, 20s)

He postulated that the supply of existing music profusely surpasses the demand for music and subsequently the need for musicians. He had gained such insight through his observation of market dynamics and his understanding of economic principles. This awareness of career sustainability perhaps acted as a tacit guide for him to position his career and financial well-being: more weight on teaching and less on performance and recording.

It is remarkable to note that all four musicians had a pessimistic outlook on a performance career, regardless of genres. Some assumed that a teaching career was the only viable option to make a sufficient living. They all demonstrated that, through their career and life experience, they had cultivated an awareness about the sustainability of their respective careers. Such an awareness guided them to make bold choices, such as in Joshua's case, to switch career, or in the case of others, to think strategically how to resort to teaching while remaining engaged in the professional performance scene.

Support systems

In addition to knowing about market supply and demand, the participants also developed a sense for the support systems outside music that sustained their career. From the interviews, the participants revealed both realistic and elusive support systems they could rely on.

Social benefits and family support

> New Zealand [offers] social welfare and things, so if you need any money, the government will give you money. In [a foreign country] that wasn't like that. So I had to work. (Brian, classical pianist, 30s)

Born in New Zealand, Brian understood that he was eligible for social benefits. He would be able to gain subsistence through the social system as a financial fallback. He contrasted this with his overseas experience where he lived as a foreigner. Ineligible for social benefits overseas, he had to rely on teaching the piano as his sole income. This awareness of the social welfare system perhaps emboldened his pursuit of a performance-focused career. Focusing on music performance was not something that would pay back immediately, but was more like a long-term investment. Nevertheless, Brian knew the government could provide a safety net if he encountered problems.

> I am pretty happy at the moment how I'm living … off music, but I'm also in a fortunate enough position that if something really did go wrong, then I do have my parents and [others] that would help me out. (Tyler, rock/jazz guitarist, 20s)

Tyler knew his family would be able to help him financially, and this helped ease his mind from money concerns. The support gave him a sense of security, providing a backstop and underpinned his pursuit of music. He considered his situation to be “fortunate” and “pretty happy”, reflecting his well-being thanks to the readiness of the family’s financial support.

The gift economy and divine providence

> I think music … falls outside of that kind of economy. It's a little more in the 'gift economy'. … So I think you have to give it. I think you have to give it [first] and you have to just trust that you're going to receive something. You have to be smart about who you're going to give it to. But you have to give it with all your love. (Sarah, jazz composer, 30s)

Sarah distinguished between the everyday economy ("that kind of economy") with the gift economy. The everyday economy is transactional, with predetermined or negotiated value exchanged between two parties. On the other hand, the gift economy is indeterminate, with goodwill and beneficial acts passing onto one another unrequitedly or reciprocally, often not calculatedly. Her view was that one needs to take the initiative to give and then have faith that the other party will give something back. She also advised on a selective ("smart about who you're going to give it to") yet full-hearted ("with all your love") approach, to giving. In this disposition, the "trust" is placed on the community, which is the beneficiary of music, offered by musicians who may not set a fee on their work. The faith is predicated on a belief in the inherent goodwill of people.

Like Sarah, Robert had experienced first-hand the gift economy since his work was mainly sustained by donation.

> But that ecology is different. … You cannot use the method of this world to look at this. You cannot understand it. Very difficult to understand. (Robert, music pastor, 40s)

Different from Sarah, Robert used the term "ecology" rather than "economy" to denote this phenomenon. Here he referred to the world of producers and consumers, benefactors and beneficiaries as an "ecology". Ecology included multiple constituent parties, such as professional and lay musicians, audience, patrons and the like. Robert used the phrase "method of this world" to denote the everyday transactional economy, as well as the underlying value system. However, he felt the value in music is elusive in the supply-and-demand economy. Thus, Robert regarded it as "very difficult to understand", from the everyday economic perspective, that people are willing to donate for music's sake.

> Some people would [financially] support … not only support this ministry. Or [when] they know that he's as a pastor, people would support [him], based on their spiritual promptings and time. (Amy, choir director, 40s)

Here Amy substantiated Robert's comments. She revealed that people had indeed donated in the past to their ministry and their family. People appreciated that they were doing religious work in music. It is common for churches or para-church organisations that intersect religion with music to rely on financial support from stakeholders.

Interestingly, Robert and Amy also relied on the "spiritual promptings" of individuals who supported them. In a Christian context, spiritual promptings are known to originate from a person's divine experience. To Robert and Amy, others' spiritual promptings to give had become a sign of divine providence which they had experienced first-hand. They saw this as a real and legitimate source of sustainability. To them, this was by no means mythical or wishful thinking. Instead, they felt it was rooted in the spiritual bond of the community and was manifested through their spiritual benevolence. Amy and Robert's experience was similar to charity and philanthropy in the non-religious context.

Thus far, this section has illustrated that the participants had developed keen awareness about the sustainability of their career. They understood the market dynamics and trend of their work areas in performance, recording and teaching. This way they *worked towards guaranteeing career sustainability*. Also, through their life experiences, they cultivated knowledge and faith towards the tangible and intangible support systems, such as social welfare, family, the gift economy and divine providence. In this case, they *worked because their career sustainability was guaranteed*.

6.3 Agency in a music career

Many participants exerted control and proactive management to shape their careers. Exemplifying career agency, they planned their steps in detail and considered future possibilities. They pursued artistic freedom through building a sustainable career, even outside music if

necessary. Their career actions were mainly predicated upon their world views—based on music, or beyond music.

6.3.1 Life planning

After several years of performing overseas, Sarah (jazz composer, 30s) pondered on the possibility of returning home and reestablishing a base for a teaching career. She laid out a blueprint of how she might realise her move.

> I now have the need to have a home base. I have a need to earn more money. I have a need to *be* in New Zealand. … I need students. … I may decide that I need more qualifications [in] teaching … or music therapy. … I may decide that I need to open my own music school, to create a community …. I need to start designing more group classes, of the ways for people to come in and experience [ensembles and experimental] music. So I'm going to need people that want to be my subjects to come and try these exercises. (Sarah, jazz composer, 30s)

Remarkably, the first thing she mentioned was "a need to earn more money", hinting that her income level was probably not satisfactory. There was a sense of urgency as she, at this particular moment in time, instinctively prioritised finance over artistic achievement. The second immediate need that she stressed was being physically in New Zealand, her homeland. She revealed a strong motivation of reuniting with her family and musicians' network at home. The third immediate item was her "students"—the lifeblood for a steady income. Then she elaborated on how she might develop a music learning community by attaining the required qualifications. In the previous chapter, Sarah expressed the primary motivation for making music was the social aspect. There was no surprise that her new career plan was quite socially oriented ("create a community … ensembles … designing more group classes"). Her musical expertise in experimental music and improvisation remained in the frame, as she expressed her desire to make such musical outreach to the community ("have people that want to be my subjects to come and try these exercises"). She was trying to meld the two ends: her desire to continuously engage in experimental music and the needs of the community to explore such music. Sarah wanted to achieve a sustainable

teaching practice that was entrepreneurial and not necessarily market-driven; community based, and not necessarily rooted in the school system.

In Sarah's account, the flow of thought was remarkably fluent. Perhaps this was a plan Sarah had carefully devised and vividly rehearsed in her mind for some time? The word "need" dominated her account, hinting at a sense of urgency as well as agency, as she felt ready and needed to take on new actions decisively and look out for opportunities proactively. Sarah was ready to readapt, shifting from a performance-focused career to an education-focused one, also from overseas to local. Sarah's intent of a bold move provides a strong case for career agency in action.

Likewise, Joshua revealed his plan for the future during what he considered a critical stage of his life. He aimed to develop a double career in both music and real estate and explained his rationale.

> Project-based every time … You're really not looking at a figure that would allow you to have a good life for the next ten years. Once you have age and experience, then you're looking at something maybe six figures and above. But some people can't wait that long. … I feel, even if I spend the next four to five years, doing … something else like real estate, and earning a very good income from it, I'm only thirty-two. … I'm still qualified by every single competition [for young conductors] out there. I can still do anything after I finish that. But if I mess up this period of time, maybe I'll lose my relationship, I might lose my family. If I lose my sanity, that's gone. And if I try to do it later, it's too late. That's just how I thought in the last year or so. (Joshua, orchestral conductor, 20s)

In making this comment Joshua was cognisant of the behind-the-scenes financial operations of a national orchestra. Disappointingly, the meagre project-based income could not serve his long-term plan, that was, "to have a good life for the next ten years" and to raise a family. He reckoned he was not alone ("some people can't wait") in the category of musicians who temporarily put off their music career in this way. He then elaborated on his plan to divert into the real estate business, while keeping his conducting career active. Calculatedly, he figured he would still be eligible for the major competitions for young conductors. He was planning to balance a double career: to remain active and competitive at

the highest level as a conductor, and simultaneously develop his fledgling career in real estate. He reckoned he could keep his options open ("I can still do anything after …"), and thus the plan seemed full of prospects. Joshua's plan was also based on his vigilance. He figured his financial risk was high and the possible knock-on effects would be calamitous. He pithily linked the financial and career mismanagement to the potential loss of his relationship, and family, and ultimately "sanity", all collapsing in a domino fashion if he didn't have financial security. In other words, it would be "insane" if he did not take up this career change because the consequences would simply be unthinkable. Also, he reckoned there was only a limited time window to act ("if I try to do it later, it's too late") in his life. This added to his sense of urgency and resolution to take action. He had been weighing and formulating his plan over a considerable period ("in the last year or so"), albeit rather recently, suggesting that it was not a rushed decision.

Similar to Sarah, Joshua too demonstrated his career agency through life planning: he was enabled to think for himself. He did not feel bound by his education at an elite music school, or the concomitant inculturation that music should be the prime cause of his life. He resolutely readapted his life plan according to his most imminent needs, putting his promising music career on hold and taking up the enormous challenge to start afresh in a new career. Career agency demonstrated through life planning paves the way for the idea of freedom, both financial and artistic, in the next section.

6.3.2 Freedom in a music career

Joshua (orchestral conductor, 20s) revealed how his financial security, in his case from real estate, had in return benefited his musical performance. It was achieved through a heightened sense of freedom.

> [It was] the first time … where I felt completely liberated. I don't have to worry about anything. I don't have to worry about how much they're going to pay me, although I knew. But it doesn't matter to me. I don't have to worry about whether they invite me back or not. And I just was able to make music and because of that, [the orchestra] invited me back and everything went well. (Joshua, orchestral conductor,

20s)

Joshua found it refreshing to re-engage himself in professional concert performances after launching his real estate career, and he clearly remembered feeling "liberated" about this. The pressure to perform and impress others dissipated as his conducting career was no longer on the line, as he was now not afraid of losing it—he had a financial fallback in real estate. Recompense through music performance, in his words, "does not matter anymore". The absence of fear of failure freed up Joshua's mind and enabled him to make more inspiring music. In Joshua's case, a strong sense of financial well-being facilitated freedom—artistic freedom in particular. Such artistic freedom and the ensuing quality of work enhanced his career prospects too ("they invited me back").

On the other hand, Brian (classical pianist, 30s) found that the lack of financial well-being inhibited his freedom.

> I have no money it's because I can do the things I love---just play the piano or take my photos or whatever but I guess it's only really difficult when it's like, I feel kind of stuck. I'm kind of trapped. Because It's something I want to do but I can't do them because I don't think I've got the money. I [want to] go overseas, for example. It can be really important for me to go overseas … it's like … Sometimes I feel, kind of um … trapped. Yeah … and yeah. So It's like … [very long pause] So I mean there's some people who just think about money you know all time. You know business people or whatever. And that kind of [mentality] is very foreign to me … I think I'm realising more that, I need to think about that side of things as well … [in order] to do things in the future.

Brian displayed a sense of dejection and wistfulness arising from his financial bind. The transcription above was intentionally left in its verbatim form to include fillers and pauses. The purpose was to evince the hesitancy throughout the account and reveal the critical moment of transformation. First, he ascribed his lack of financial security ("no money") to the fact that he was free to do artistic things. The result was a feeling of predicament ("really difficult"), confinement ("stuck … trapped") and disempowerment ("I want to … but I can't") due to a lack of money.

Brian revealed in other parts of the interview that his ultimate dream

was to pursue further study and live in Europe. The lack of money had thwarted his ambition. Perhaps after contemplating the forlorn dream for a long time (thus the very long pause), it dawned on him that money can be a crucial enabling factor for his artistic pursuit. He suddenly thought about the way business-minded people think. More reflective now, he admitted that a business mentality was "very foreign" to him but became increasingly useful to consider, in order "to do things in the future". For someone artistic like Brian, the business and entrepreneurial mindset belongs to "that side" of things—the antipode of his sense of artistry. The pronoun "that" signified otherness, alienness and distance. However, the revelation had come to him that he needed to embrace his antithesis and take a more balanced approach towards money and life.

The two cases indicate that career agency enables freedom, first in a financial way, then in an artistic way. Joshua took a bold action (career agency) in launching his real estate career (more financial freedom), which freed his mind for a liberating performance (more artistic freedom). The other way is also real: a lack of career agency can restrict freedom, firstly in a financial way, and then perhaps in an artistic way. Brian exemplified the case. He was stuck in his artistic pursuit (lack of career agency), leaving him short of money (less financial freedom), meaning he could not go overseas to pursue his career further (less artistic freedom).

6.3.3 World views in a music career

The participants expressed different world views as they described their careers. The world views serve as meta-cognitive constructs, influencing their career agency. They also work as latent lenses to help the musicians make sense of their career and calling.

The participants inspired me to coin the term 'intra-disciplinary world view' and 'extra-disciplinary world view' for the research. The intra-disciplinary world view refers to a concept in which one understands the world *through* the lens adopted by means of disciplinary practice. It is an art-centric world view. The extra-disciplinary world view refers to a concept in which one understands the world *beyond* the lens adopted by means of disciplinary practice. Some musicians may treat music as peripheral to what truly matters in life.

The intra-disciplinary world view

> Whenever we're in music, we think it's the world. And it's true. You have to. When you're studying Beethoven, or studying whatever, you have to feel like this is the most important thing. Otherwise, you can't deliver.

Joshua (orchestral conductor, 20s) saw music as *the world* in professional situations. For him, such a mentality was imperative to ensure a professional outcome ("otherwise, you can't deliver").

The word "world" implies an intricate network of things. For conductors like Joshua, it could comprise musical details and the multilayered meanings of the work itself. To see music as the world requires one's undivided attention as the musician engages in the creative process.

Working within the musical world, the musician also needs to consciously block out the outside world, in order to summon all their mental, physical and spiritual energy. Extrinsic thoughts, such as career and recompense, would be temporarily suspended. Such a frame of mind was exclusive in nature. It was situated within the discipline of music, and hence could be viewed as an intra-disciplinary world view.

Joshua also presumed that other musicians held this world view ("we're … we think … you have to"). The pronouns "we" and "you" not only included me as the listener, but also musicians in general. His statement was an attempt to illustrate a general truth applicable to all.

Likewise, Brian (classical pianist, 30s) saw his artistic endeavour through an all-in perspective, i.e. letting art become his world.

> The artistic things that I want to do … include piano, include photography, includes [lots of] other things … Just build that kind of world.
>
> Yeah it's like music … to me … everything goes into it.

In this sense, Brian saw himself as a world-builder. To build a world, there needs to be a concept about the world in the first place. The world

also meant "everything" to him. In the second quote, "everything" perhaps can be viewed in two senses. First, it indicates an immersive experience in his artistic world. Second, the purpose of the existence of the outer world is to serve his artistic world.

> When I started playing piano, I never thought that I could be a professional pianist. Just like love. The same thing [with photography]. Same … I never thought that I could be a professional photographer. Or just a love of it.

Brian also suspended any thoughts extrinsic to his passion, such as career and making a living ("never thought that I could be a professional pianist"). Here, the sole reason for making art was pure love. For Brian, the intra-disciplinary world view—taking music as his world—was motivated by a love and fascination of the arts. However, it could also lead dangerously to a suspension, either temporarily or permanently, of care towards the outer world.

Concluding the two cases, there are two ways that the intra-disciplinary world view can be enacted. First, through this intra-disciplinary world view, music becomes musicians' self-defined world so that they may continuously dwell in it. They take in the outer world through the lens of their self-defined world view. They are willing to sacrifice their time, effort, even their well-being, for the sake of the "high calling" of music, or in Nettl's (1995) term, "priesthood" of being a musician. In other words, music becomes their life mission.

Second, this particular world view relies on very pragmatic reasoning. What is at stake in forging a musical career, especially at the highest level of art music, is considerable. Prestige and future career prospects hinge on the success of each performance. Through sheer single-mindedness, a musician may succeed and rise to the top.

The extra-disciplinary world view

Some participants also expressed the opposite view, i.e. an extra-disciplinary world view. Such a world view temporarily suspends the all-in mentality towards the discipline and undertakes a meta-perspective beyond the discipline.

Joshua (orchestral conductor, 20s) revealed his preference for

embracing an extra-disciplinary world view and thinking broadly:

> Music is *such* a, *such* a small little thing. Whenever we're in music, we think it's the world. And it's true. You have to. When you're studying Beethoven, or studying whatever, you have to feel like this is the most important thing. Otherwise, you can't deliver. But, in reality, music is *so* small."

Here Joshua's quote from the previous section is 'zoomed out' and reveals the opposite stance: the extra-disciplinary world view. While he was willing to block out outside things and make music his prime focus, he was also willing to consider things outside music. The quote hints that he emphasised how insignificant music is compared to the real world at large. The intensifiers "such a" and "so" reflect his conviction of the need to look outside music. He further explained:

> Beyond music, the world runs on really important rules and … social factors, like the economy, like finance, like property, and all of that directly impact the society as a whole. One little thing can change in property market … a lot of people are affected. One thing can change in music, and no one will care. And when we talk about effects, it's talking about people's livelihoods. People need to be able to know how much they can spend, how much they can't, … [things] that can impact their livelihood. But in music, it impacts on your soul. So it's a different business.

Here, Joshua juxtaposed the case for livelihood ("economy … property") and the case for music. While affirming music's aesthetic and spiritual influence on people, he saw a more significant impact from other spheres of society towards people's lives. Seemingly, Joshua gave more weight to matters outside music ("talking about people's livelihoods") than the importance of music ("one thing can change in music, and no one will care").

Similarly, Sarah (jazz composer, 30s) made light of music in the scope of life and death.

> Music at the end of the day it wasn't heart surgery. Nobody died.

> People might be psychologically slightly changed. But hey, they're okay.

To Sarah, while music is her career and the passion of her life, she jovially acknowledged that it is inconsequential to people's lives as a whole. Like Joshua, Sarah recognised the subtle impact music can have but knew well enough that the impact is not of a life-scale. It is telling that Sarah expressed such a view, as the rest of her interview centred on musical matters. Joshua's and Sarah's cases point to the fact that it is possible for musicians to espouse both world views, despite their conflicting nature. The question is *when* they choose to see things through a particular world view. The choice here is a matter of agency.

To conclude this section on agency, we have seen how musicians take hold of their life planning; how they choose their path that enhances or vitiates their sense of freedom; and how they adopt their world views flexibly. Their life planning incorporates knowledge of work and sustainability awareness. Their artistic freedom is empowered or restricted by their financial strength. Also, their world views empower them with the flexibility to see things beyond their artistic space.

6.4 Adaptability and resilience in a music career

Robert (music pastor, 40s) and Amy (choir director, 40s) detailed how they persevere and adapt to career challenges. They undertook challenging and sometimes unforeseen tasks that demanded growth and steered them away from their immediate comfort zone.

6.4.1 Musical challenges

Robert and Amy experienced challenges and pressure as they organised an overseas concert tour. They directed and performed multi-movement works of sacred music with their regular choir members, volunteer choristers and amateur musicians from local churches, as well as locally hired professional musicians. The challenges are not only musical but also paramusical, i.e. requiring ancillary tasks, such as music administration.

> R: In that Melbourne concert, … I was responsible for some conducting. But then I still need to work on many other businesses,

> like moving the choir riser. We did everything ourselves, like negotiate how we'll use the venue and so on. Email is useless.
>
> A: [He] needed to text every choir member. And he needed to conduct half of the concert.
>
> R: I was responsible for half. … I'd say it's a challenge to myself. I haven't conducted an orchestra before. We've been working with choirs all along. It's a completely different thing. So near the end, I spent two days, locked myself up, prepared, studied the music, practised. Sometimes I felt so challenged because your entire training [and] knowledge did not prepare you for this.

As the head of the organisation, Robert had to attend to multiple administrative ("negotiate … email … text") and physical ("moving the choir riser") tasks. However, his key concern was a musical one, because he was responsible for conducting half of the concert. Although he had been a singer and choral conductor for many years, the concert presented a brand new challenge as he needed to conduct an orchestra—a task never attempted before. While such a musical challenge demanded much focus and time on one side, the mundane yet urgent non-musical tasks also called for attention. The two forces joined and created a problematic situation that made Robert feel overwhelmed ("felt so challenged") and out of his depth ("your entire training and knowledge did not prepare you for this").

Working alongside Robert, Amy revealed the challenges on her part in the same concert tour:

> A: You cannot do too much nor ask too much from them, seeing their limitation. But you only have two hours and you have to rehearse so many movements. You have to make sure everything falls into place.

> A: You don't know what to expect in rehearsal. And then you don't know these professional players [but] you [need to] conduct [them]. Then you have to rehearse with the choir. Because you don't have enough time. These are not the players that have been working with you. It's not like we have four to five times rehearsals to [get to know them]. Probably, we couldn't afford to pay these musicians more. We can only ask them to come three times in two days.

Amy elaborated on the specific difficulty she had when working with a mix of professional and amateur orchestral players. As a musician pastor, she dealt with two conflicting responsibilities. First, Amy realised her pastoral responsibility and sympathised with their inadequate musical ability ("seeing their limitation"), so that she could not force them to achieve the ideal result ("ask too much from them"). Second, as a conductor and trained musician, she would have a musical ideal in mind yet she felt constricted ("cannot do too much") to achieve it. Her concern was a pastoral one.

To complicate the problem, she faced a group of professional players whom she did not know personally. She felt lost in that situation ("you don't know what to expect"). At the same time, the financial constraint ("we couldn't afford…") and time constraint ("only have two hours") were palpable. These adverse factors, along with the pressure to deliver the multi-movement work that already caused much mental stress, made the situation very difficult for her. Nonetheless, Amy and Robert committed to the cause and brought the concert tour to fruition. They both demonstrated how they adapted to unforeseen career tasks, constant shifting between musical and non-musical roles, and different approaches to handle both professional and amateur musicians.

6.4.2 Financial challenges

Besides musical challenges, Robert and Amy had also faced a very pressing financial need in the 20 years of their music career.

> R: Difficulties … Those five years … the most difficult …
>
> A: Was when we didn't receive our salary. Experienced not having our salary paid … [But] you [still] have this and that to pay. You need to have this cheque, in order to pay your bills.

Their salaries as music pastors were suspended due to lack of funds available. Despite no income, expenses remained the same. Even though they did not mention further details, anyone who experiences unemployment and carries a family burden can imagine the difficult situation of seeing savings depleted. However, the situation did not

discourage them or deter them from a meaningful career. Robert recalled another episode of financial predicament:

> R: Sometimes we feel we want to say to others, we're actually experiencing difficulties. But sometimes, you can't say it. Can't say it. So what can you do? You look up. [laugh] You can only lift your head and look up to God [for his provision]. Very fascinating, actually every time when [we] have needs, God has his own timing [to provide]. Someone will appear, not a cent less, to give you a cheque, give you a donation.

Robert has revealed his urge, during that difficult period, to let others know about their troubles, but ultimately dismissed the idea ("can't say it"). The sense of mortification and social ramifications were perhaps too immense and intricate. To him, sharing a personal financial struggle and asking for help would bear a stigmatising effect. Instead of letting others know about their difficulty, he relied on his belief that God would move others to donate in a timely manner, just as he had experienced in the past ("very fascinating … every time").

To Robert, his music career, albeit fused with a religious ministry, was led by his faith and was thus preserved and sustained by a divine power. Such unwavering life purpose stemming from his religious faith undergirds his career resilience. In other words, career resilience can be a manifestation of calling.

It should be noted that Robert and Amy's case is the only case presented here to demonstrate career challenges, adaptability and resilience due to the limited scope. In fact, the other participants did respond to the question about career challenges. For example, Sarah (jazz composer, 30s) alluded to the challenge of group music improvisation, in which there is a conflict between expectation and reality from the musical result. Tyler (rock/jazz guitarist, 20s) and Joshua (orchestral conductor, 20s) noted the market dynamics was not in favour of musicians in their respective genres, implying the scant amount of paid work available. Likewise, Lilia (opera singer, 20s) struggled to find work in performance. Moreover, while some participants such as Sarah and Brian acknowledged that they did not have much money, they did not perceive it as a financial challenge. Instead, they appreciated the free time they gained from being underemployed and used them for rewarding creative

activities. Their limiting financial resource did not pose any real threats to their livelihood. Overall, there is no supporting evidence from the interview data that the participants experienced musical and financial challenges as acute as Robert and Amy articulated. As a result, their case is the only one highlighted as it is significant enough to illustrate career challenges, adaptability and resilience as important themes in musicians' careers.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined how the participants negotiated their protean and multifarious careers. They developed a professional awareness—what it means to be a professional musician. The awareness captures a certain professional image, or a set of expected career outcomes that propel them to their goal: to be involved in the establishments, to be recompensed, as well as to be specialised enough to command respect. They also developed sustainability awareness for market dynamics and support systems. Remarkably, participants broached the idea of the gift economy and divine provision as viable factors for a sustainable career.

The participants exercised their career agency in three ways: making practical life plans, finding freedom in their artistic pursuit, and shifting between the two world views (intra- and extra-disciplinary).

Finally, some of them exhibited adaptability and resilience amid acute career challenges. Musical challenges arise from working in areas foreign to the original expertise, as well as facing imminent constraints of time and resources. Financial predicaments have also plagued some of them in the most unpleasant way. Their resolve in continuing their career lay in resilience stemming from their inexorable sense of calling.

Thus far, Chapters Five and Six have identified the key themes of *what* matters in calling and career for the participants. The next chapter presents an alternative reading on the data and illuminates the subtle ways they articulate their callings and careers, drawing out new points of interest.

Chapter 7

Findings III:

Reading between the lines

7.1 Introduction

This chapter complements the previous two findings chapters by cross-analysing the excerpts from another angle: *how* the participants reported their experience, rather than the experience itself. The "how" aspect corresponds directly to the research question of *how* musicians make sense of their callings and careers.

In the previous two chapters, the *whats* have been identified: the origins, formation and characteristics of calling; as well as the awareness, agency and adaptability in career. This chapter focuses on how participants reveal their sense of calling and concerns for a career. Through a more in-depth micro-textual analysis, emphases were placed on linguistic devices, multilayered meanings, tones and subtexts. The linguistic commenting is a critical part of following through the procedures of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

There are four areas of interest:

- How assertive or tentative the participants' tone was when they talked about their calling

- How a musical calling arose from self or things outside self
- How participants adopted the term calling. These three areas home in on *how participants relate themselves to the idea of calling*
- How participants articulated their professional identity.

Addressing the thesis topic, the first three areas centre on calling and the last one concerns career. It should be noted that this chapter reuses quotes previously presented to generate new analyses. However, sometimes fresh quotes are incorporated to support the point.

Unlike the previous two chapters, the writing of this chapter adopts an increasingly 'questioning' stance in the double hermeneutic of IPA. Through the interpretative process, I allow myself, as the researcher, to enter into a space where the assumptions of the participants can be examined and challenged.

7.2 Assertiveness vs tentativeness

This first section discusses the tone of participants as they told what a calling means to them. Articulating a sense of calling can be easy for some participants and hard for others. Some of them gave straightforward answers, almost as if premeditated. Some appeared more hesitant and ambiguous in their account.

When Robert, the music pastor, described his calling, he did not need to think twice:

> Praise is my calling.

Robert articulated his calling in a forthright manner. The word "praise" carries multilayered meanings. "Praise and worship" is a common musical practice in the Christian context. To him, praise and music were inseparable. The object of praise, i.e. God, was also implied in the word. The pithy use of the single word "praise" thus reflects his calling in both musical and religious senses.

Since calling may not be the first-choice word for many people to describe what they do and why, one would expect moments of hesitation, or a build-up in speech when being asked to give an account (as in Brian's and Sarah's cases below). However, Robert's answer seemed ready at

hand and almost premeditated.

On the other hand, Caiah (jazz singer) represented a case very similar, but different to Robert's. Like Robert, her speech was definitive; yet unlike Robert, she did not consider herself religious. While she disclaimed any religious affiliations during the interview, Caiah was utterly convinced being a singer was her inborn calling.

> I knew I'm a singer. [voice with absolute certainty] I knew it in preschool. I was just born knowing it. It's like a mission you have in life. I knew I was going to sing. (Caiah, jazz singer, 40s)

When I did the transcription, I was struck by her powerful expression. Her tone was so brisk and firm that it compelled me to insert the commentary "voice with absolute certainty" the moment I was transcribing the passage. Here the word "knew/knowing" appeared four times, as she underscored the indubitable self-knowledge of her calling. Also, the past tense in "I knew" conveyed that her calling or mission originated a long time ago, and it has carried on until now.

It is interesting to see that both Robert and Caiah expressed their calling in a similarly sharp and forthright manner, despite their difference in religion and level of religious commitment. They both perceived their calling in an intuitive, almost instinctive way and spoke of it in a powerful manner.

On the other hand, some participants expressed their calling tentatively and ambiguously, as in Brian's and Sarah's accounts:

> I guess I believe in art … like a religion, because art is like spirits to me … I believe in that kind of spirit… kind of a spiritual nature of people. It's beyond material life. In artwork, the spirit of the artist remains. Like paintings from hundreds of years ago we can feel the spirit of the artist. So that's a wonderful thing to me. (Brian, classical pianist, 30s)

> I'm pretty spiritual. But I think my religion is nature. (Sarah, jazz composer, 30s)

> I don't know what caused me to do the music. I think [it's] the people that I play music with. What really calls me to do it [is] the social

> aspect, like reconnecting with people. (ibid.)

Brian responded to my question on calling and religion starting with the tentative expression "I guess I believe", whereas Sarah used the phrase "I think" and "I don't know". On why Sarah devoted herself in music, her response started with "I don't know", but she immediately revoked the initial statement by supplying an answer. In both cases, these lead-in phrases 'bought time' for them as they tried to gather meaningful thoughts to respond to my questions. The fact that they needed time to articulate contrasts with Robert's and Caiah's split-second answers.

To sum up this section, participants' tone when they talk about their calling is variegated. To some, the calling is clear and can be expressed in an assertive manner. In Robert's and Caiah's case, their sense of a music mission is deeply ingrained in their being, and thus their responses came out intuitively and coherently. To others, the calling can be intuitive, yet nebulous and elusive, and thus can only be articulated in a tentative manner, as in Brian's and Sarah's cases.

7.3 Autonomy vs heteronomy

This section investigates how a musical calling arose from participants' self or things outside themselves. Chapter Five *Experiencing a musical calling* identified three origins of a musical calling: God, art and sociality. Here the discussion unveils further that self plays a crucial role in identifying and interacting with those origins. Some showed a strong desire for autonomy as they committed themselves to bond with people and art. They acted out of their own choice and preference. Some let their sense of self recede to a more passive position as they considered their calling. They thought more about how a 'higher power' (in the participants' case, God) influence them.

For Brian, he saw his self inextricably fused with his art. He desired to preserve his spiritual being through artistic means.

> Photography and piano … contain my spirit. The work [is the] centre of who I am. (Brian, classical pianist, 30s)

Despite having no religious affiliation, Brian had a spiritual reason to

engage in the arts. He saw the work of art itself, whether a piano performance or a photograph, as a "container" that holds his spirit. Brian further elaborated that this spirit was the essence of his being ("centre of who I am"). He saw his photographs and piano performances as an inseparable part or extension of himself.

The language used here ("my spirit", "who I am") evokes a strong sense of autonomy. When the artworks embody the artist's spirit, the artist's self becomes augmented and transfigured. Through the augmentation and transfiguration process, new meanings and experience can arise and, in turn, fuel the artist's sense of autonomy.

Similarly, Sarah's quote reveals the idea of autonomy, albeit in a less obvious way.

> I don't know what caused me to do the music. I think [it's] the people that I play music with. What really calls me to do it [is] the social aspect, like reconnecting with people. (Sarah, jazz composer, 30s)

As she unfolded her cause for music, she identified a need to "reconnect" with people, most likely the musicians with whom she previously worked. She wanted to make music, but only according to her preferred condition. It is worth noting that she used the word "reconnect"; she did not say "connect" with people, which would have included the possibility of expanding her network and in turn dealing with new situations. Nevertheless, Sarah ascribed the reason to engage in music to something ascertainable—her existing circle of musician associates and friends. It is reasonable to think that the more ascertainable a situation is, the better control one can exert over it and thus the more autonomy one can exercise. To Sarah, it seemed that the idea of autonomy and control was an important one:

> I just like doing things that I'm good at. Because then I can be a know-it-all. And be in my comfort zone. (ibid.)

Here she offered another reason why she engaged in music. Playing music allowed her to exert full control and display mastery. The idea of autonomy again lay as a subtext here.

In another case, the way Caiah enunciated her new calling in teaching also evokes a strong sense of self-determination: she made a promise to

herself to quit her concert career and turn to teaching.

> I promised myself when I turn old, to me it would have mean forty years old—now I'm forty-five—I flipped it … yet I kept my promise to myself when I'm turning old, and I'm going to *teach* (very assertive). I'm going to turn back to young adults that are dying on stage. I'm going to teach them to overcome stage fright. (Caiah, jazz singer, 40s)

Unlike Sarah, Caiah decided to leave the comfort zone of an established career and start afresh. She launched a spate of declarations starting with "I'm going to …", underscoring her sense of determination. Her voice was injected with such striking enthusiasm that I jotted down "very assertive" alongside my transcription. Caiah's expression was resolute, exemplifying her autonomy and decision to switch her career.

For Brian, Sarah and Caiah, the pronoun "I" played a central role in their narratives and was emblematic for the idea of autonomy.

However, for some participants, the "I" in their narrative played a different role. It was used in relation to a higher power and often appeared as "me", signifying a perspective from the receiver's end.

> I was clear about this calling from God … And then [in the next] three years, [the idea] slowly took shape, I understood, okay, this is the path that God wants me to in … Those three years of incubation, through many circumstances, God had been proving to me, this is his calling [for me]. (Robert, music pastor, 40s)

To Robert, his musical calling was essentially a religious one, directly bestowed from a higher power. The "I" for Robert was a concept in relation to the higher power, rather than a self ipso facto. It is evident when he said "God wants me to …" and "God had been proving to me". Here the "I" turned into "me"—the subject turned into the object of the sentence. As a result, the term 'heteronomy' can be considered to denote this phenomenon as a contrast to autonomy. To Robert, he saw himself being subjected to God, rather than being the subject itself. Such a stance is the obverse of the autonomous stance that exemplifies self-agency in the previous three participants.

Lilia's account also demonstrated a similar stance:

> [E]ven if he doesn't believe in himself he knows that God still believes in him and that means that he feels that like no matter what performance he gives and no matter like if he mucks up or whatever, he still believes that God['s purpose] is what he should be doing. So I took encouragement from that like knowing that God believes in me in terms of me wanting to pursue a music career. (Lilia, opera singer, 20s)

Likewise, the word "God" appeared many times as the subject of the subordinate clause in the sentences. The persons in question, i.e Lilia and her friend, became the receiving end of the higher power's thought ("God believes in him/me"). It is apparent that, to Lilia, calling and career were intertwined, and she saw them in relation to a higher power that assured her undertaking. The emphasis did not rest on her *wanting* to accomplish anything, i.e. autonomy, but rather her *knowing* that she was tied to a higher power, i.e. heteronomy.

It is worth noting that the idea of heteronomy, especially in relation to perceiving a calling, is not necessarily bound to a theistic paradigm. From an atheistic perspective, any higher power beyond self, such as an authoritarian government, market force or technological advance, can also exert power over individuals' perception of their calling.

To Robert and Lilia, their callings were not autonomous—hence heteronomous. They saw their callings as something bestowed from a higher power or some external entity. Conversely, for Brian, Sarah and Caiah, self was the entity that instigated and directed a musical calling. To conclude this section, a heteronomous stance in calling places emphasis on the relationship of self and the other entity to whom the self is subjected, while an autonomous stance focuses on one's own agenda and actions.

7.4 The currency of calling as a term

This section analyses *how* participants used the term 'calling' in their speech. The quotes showed a wide of range of attitudes towards the term: from confidence, reluctance and ambivalence, to complete indifference. Overall, the term has not gained much currency on the interviewees' part despite its frequent mentioning by me as the interviewer. Participants

used the word sparingly. For those who used the term most frequently and meaningfully, there were only a few instances out of a stretch of over one hour, many limited to one or two utterances, mostly as a borrowed idea. Some never used the term in the entire interview. The findings suggest that 'calling' is not a popular term used by the musicians.

During the interviews, I used the terms calling and passion interchangeably, and often side by side. The intention was to communicate my central idea and questions as clearly as possible. Considering an atheistic standpoint, I understand the religious overtone of the word might become puzzling and even suspicious for some. As a result, I tried to be as tactful as I could to my interviewees when I presented my questions. The mixed use of the two ideas (calling and passion), however, may affect how participants caught on using the term calling when they expressed their views.

The findings in this section zero in on parts of the interview where the keyword 'calling' appeared, or moments when the interviewee articulated *how much* they love music (or other passions). The analysis will start with those who used the term with conviction (Robert, Lilia, Caiah); then those with limitation, reservation and equivocation (Joshua, Eric, Sarah); finally those who did not use the term at all (Brian, Tyler).

> Have you ever considered [other careers] seriously? Only a little bit. But then I gave up, because my calling [as a musician-pastor] is greater than all these things. Sometimes I would ask myself, why do you have to even think about these things? [laugh] Why don't you think of *this* bigger thing? (Robert, music pastor, 40s)

> Do you find it up and down in your sense of passion? …You are not always going to be one hundred percent in love with somebody all of the time. That would be exhausting. So that is what I feel about when it comes to my calling as a musician … It is about continuing when you feel or hear nothing and … knowing that there is always going to be benefits…, things you get out of those moments … You are learning to strive more and becoming more of a whole person. (Lilia, opera singer, 20s)

Robert (music pastor, 40s) and Lilia (opera singer, 20s) fully embraced

the term 'calling' as the word to describe their central identity and core passion. Robert regarded his calling in music for religion above other promising careers ("greater … bigger"). He also used the term a few times in other quotes analysed earlier. Like Robert, Lilia also used the term a few times during the interview. The quote above was picked because she explicitly mentioned her "calling as a musician". This instance is remarkable since in my question for her, I used 'passion', but she responded with the phrase "my calling as a musician". First, it showed that for Lilia, 'passion' and 'calling' were similar concepts to be used interchangeably. Second, she adopted the idea effortlessly, perhaps because the phrase genuinely reflected how she felt about her calling. Amongst all participants, she was the only person who conflated the idea of 'calling' with 'musician' explicitly, and of her own accord.

Likewise, Caiah (jazz singer, 40s) used the word 'call' instead of 'calling' to convey the same idea:

> I was going to do the homework real quick, and then my time was just dedicated to that. *I never wanted anything else*. I didn't want to have a boyfriend, girlfriend, new shoes … *That was my call, that was my life* That's it. (As a singer?) Yes. So automatically that made me a happy person because I could do it. (Caiah, jazz singer, 40s)

Caiah used the word 'call' instead of 'calling'. But the equivalence of meaning is evident. She placed "my call" and "my life" side by side, indicating singing was her single focus in life. Elsewhere the words 'calling' and 'passion' were absent from her speech. However, the dynamism of her affirmation about her calling in singing was evident throughout the interview.

For some, the word 'calling' was delimited to religious-focused endeavour, as in Joshua's (orchestral conductor, 20s) case:

> Have you ever thought of that you might have a calling from God to do music? … Haven't thought much about, having great ambitions, like setting up Christians-only orchestras, or like, that sort of stuff. I don't feel that that is my calling right now. (Joshua, orchestral conductor, 20s)

Joshua used the word 'calling' only once in the interview. His use

connoted a religious service, despite within a professional music context ("Christians-only orchestras"). It seemed that his idea of calling was reserved for something significant ("great ambitions"). To Joshua, an endeavour that qualified as a 'calling' would involve utilising his expertise (i.e. orchestral conducting) to contribute to a religious community. Forming a Christian-only orchestra would qualify as a big enough challenge to be coined a calling, though he was not ready ("don't feel …") to take up this possible, yet worthy, path.

Like Joshua, Eric (classical guitarist, 40s) used the word 'calling' in a reserved manner:

> After two and a half years working [as a vet], I was starting to ask myself, why am I doing this? Why am I not happy? There's a huge vacuum in here that's not being filled up … But like you say, the calling [chuckles] … is there. (Eric, classical guitarist, 40s)

Eric adopted the word 'calling' somewhat carefully, rather than assertively. This is the only place he spoke the word in the whole interview. He made it clear that he borrowed the term from me ("but like you say"), rather than espoused it as an idea already ingrained in him. If the latter had been real, one would expect that he might simply integrate the word 'calling' in a statement without clarification. Eric's use of the word contrasts the point-blank expression of Robert ("praise is my calling") and Lilia ("my calling as a musician").

Sarah (jazz composer, 30s) illustrated a similar hesitation towards the term 'calling':

> I think that right after leaving jazz school when I started running the big band, and interacting with more experimental musicians. *I didn't think I have a calling but I think that's what was going on.* You know what I mean. I was just doing it. I didn't even think about it. It wasn't difficult. (Sarah, jazz composer, 30s; emphasis mine)

In the first half of the sentence ("I didn't think …"), she considered that 'calling' did not fit the description for her experience. However, in the second half, she affirmed that she was experiencing something that resembled a calling ("but I think that's what was going on"). This ambivalence showed that, like Eric, Sarah was hesitant to embrace the term entirely, though it was clear something substantial took place

during that period of her life. The above quotes show that the participants understood and applied the word 'calling' with subtle nuances. The term was spoken with limitation (Joshua), reservation (Eric) and equivocation (Sarah).

It is worth noting that the participants' adoption of the word 'calling' does not seem to correlate to their religion or spirituality. While Robert, Lilia, Joshua and Eric all affirmed their religious faith in the interview, they exemplify a broad spectrum of adoption of the term. Robert and Lilia used the term explicitly; Joshua hinted at a dedicated use for things religious; Eric used it cautiously. Somewhat surprisingly however, Caiah, who had disclaimed her affiliation with religions in the interview, adopted the idea naturally ("my call").

Other participants also had various ways to describe their central life endeavour without referring to the term 'calling'. Brian (classical pianist, 30s) and Tyler (rock/jazz guitarist, 20s) never uttered the word in the entire interview. The absence of the word in their speech contrasted with the other participants discussed above. Notably, Brian adopted the synonym 'passion' to describe his experience. Tyler and Sarah simply portrayed the calling phenomenon through how they feel and think in everyday parlance.

> And I was amazed that anyone could play … anyone could made pieces like Bach minuet. So then I got really passionate about music. (Brian, classical pianist, 30s)

> In [another country], I started to really love photography so that … I felt like … that was becoming an even more dominant passion over music. (ibid.)

> I guess when it comes down to it, I just like playing music. I like it so much that I'd be happy if that's something I can do for the rest of my life. There's no really … deep and meaningful reason that I know. I just really enjoy doing it and [it] makes me happy (Tyler, rock/jazz guitarist, 20s)

Brian used words such as "passionate", "passion", "really love" to describe his gravitation towards the two things he loves: piano and photography. On the other hand, Tyler's account was replete with words

that denote positive moods. He used verbs such as "like" and "enjoy"; expressions such as "can do for the rest of my life" and "makes me happy"; and intensifiers such as "so much", "just really". These linguistic devices reflect their deep passion for music.

Having a calling in music was a straightforward matter for Tyler ("no deep and meaningful reason"). A similar thought also appeared in Sarah's quote discussed previously ("I was just doing it. I didn't even think about it"). Tellingly, there was an absence of reflexivity and metacognition in their action. Such absence of reflexivity remotely echoes the idea of calling as a "consuming passion" (Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011, p. 1005). Tyler and Sarah revealed that their music endeavour was so consuming and engrossing, to a point that there was no room to think about why they played music in the first place.

Also, Sarah furthered the idea that there was no struggle and deliberation involved ("it wasn't difficult"). Such ease of following a calling is contrasted by Amy's (choir director, 40s) account:

> What is not part of your calling but you do it anyway? A: Conducting! [laugh] … I've never thought of [that I'd become a conductor]. (Amy, choir director, 40s)

In an interview dominated by her partner Robert, this was the only place Amy alluded to the concept of calling. Interestingly, she considered her current role as a choir conductor *not* her calling. Originally trained as a pianist and organist, she found conducting and managing a large choir challenging. The task was so remote from her comfort zone and expertise that she dismissed conducting, albeit half-jokingly, as her calling. Her quote implied that there had been struggles and deliberation involved in order for her to take on the demanding new role.

The way Amy saw that struggles and deliberation were remote from calling echoed the way Sarah saw that the absence of them was characteristic of calling. The two views are essentially the two sides of the same coin: experiencing a calling can be easy and familiar (Sarah), whereas experiencing a non-calling can be difficult and foreign (Amy).

To conclude this section, there was a wide range of attitudes towards the term 'calling' as demonstrated by the participants. They used the term with conviction (Robert, Lilia, Caiah), limitation (Joshua), reservation (Eric) and equivocation (Sarah). Some participants (Brian, Tyler) did not

use the word ‘calling’ at all, though they vividly portrayed their calling through the means of synonyms or everyday parlance. Incidentally, the textual analysis in this section provides a sidelight to the nature of calling: the absence of reflexivity, struggle and deliberation can be seen as a characteristic of calling.

7.5 The all-or-none dichotomies

This section unravels three dichotomies derived from the interview data on how the musician participants perceived their professional identity, which is inextricable from their calling and career. While the same quotes have been presented in Chapter Six, the discussion here aims to uncover new findings from a more linguistic perspective. First, Brian (classical pianist, 30s) hinted at the dichotomy of being generic versus specific, as he was a pianist who strived to be a concert pianist. Then Eric (classical guitarist, 40s) alluded to the dichotomy of performer and educator, in which he felt compelled to choose only one as his professional identity. Lastly, Joshua (orchestral conductor, 20s) revealed the dichotomy between professionals and non-professionals in music. Such a dichotomy is particularly controversial in the first place since musicians, laypeople and policymakers do not necessarily agree on what it means to be a professional in music. Moreover, the problem with the dichotomies is that they offer an oversimplified model for people to understand musicians’ careers. All these ideas will be unpacked in this section.

> I was trying to make a career as a pianist … I’ve applied to a concert for Chamber Music New Zealand … But I was rejected … I was struggling to make myself established … to become established like a concert pianist. But I wasn’t. I was kind of frustrated because I wasn’t. (Brian, classical pianist, 30s)

In this narrative, Brian made an unconscious distinction between a mere ‘pianist’ and an archetype in classical music—‘concert pianist’. A ‘concert pianist’ is a loaded career designation. It connotes a fully established status in a very niche genre, e.g. being able to play concerti and highly advanced repertoire in classical piano, and command a strong audience following. On the other hand, a ‘pianist’ can be simply a generic term to describe someone who can play proficiently, regardless of

professional status and genre. Brian's dissatisfaction with his own career seems to root from not being recognised, or in his words, not "established" among the world of pianists.

In fact, Brian seemed trapped in a terminological dichotomy. He knew he was not yet a concert pianist, but he was more than a pianist in a generic sense. This can be seen from his statement "I was trying to make a career as a pianist". In essence, he saw himself as a 'career pianist'. However, the term 'career pianist' would sound awkward to denote someone trying to make a career playing the piano—something Brian wanted to do. There seems to be no middle ground in terminology for musicians like Brian. The career designation is either too generic or too specific.

Besides the generic–specific dichotomy, another one concerning performer and educator can be found in Eric's account.

> So how do you view your own professional identity? … As a guitar teacher, or as a performer? I don't think I could make [a living] … I'm not going to call myself as a performer. I'm more of a guitar teacher.

It is telling that Eric came up with two career types of his own accord ("as a guitar teacher, or as a performer?") as a response to my question. He weighed the options quickly and answered incisively. For Eric, "making a living", i.e. having a sustainable income from a professional role, is a critical criterion for being a professional musician. In a split second, he abruptly broke off his sentence without finishing it ("I don't think I could make …") and simply skipped to the conclusion. The sheer speed suggested that he was utterly convinced about his criteria—he did not need to think twice. Based on these criteria, he concluded that his professional identity was one of a guitar teacher and not a performer.

Eric's case presents a false dichotomy: he could only be an instrumental teacher, or performer professionally—either/or—not both. Being analytical, he forced himself to choose his professional identity. Despite being a professional performer by playing at weddings and also in front of a professional audience (at the guitar society), he ruled himself out as a professional performer simply because the role did not support his living.

Such a false dichotomy is perhaps rooted linguistically. In everyday

language, there is hardly a neat way of describing a professional musician who works across performance and teaching. As seen in Eric's case, there are two career designations for professional musicians: performer, i.e. instrumentalist, or instrumental teacher. For musicians, both terms are incomplete in portraying who they are and what they do, since many work as both. However, like Eric, many would feel compelled to pick a side. When musicians identify themselves as a performer or educator and present such an identity to people they are associated with, they are in essence crafting a professional image for others. The professional image is encapsulated by the career designation, e.g. in Eric's case, a performing guitarist or a guitar teacher. At the moment of the interview, Eric chose 'guitar teacher' over 'performer', but he was actually both. However, such a choice may dissimulate his performership and undermine his career development as a performer, since people would know him mostly as a guitar teacher rather than a performer. The dichotomy thus potentially presents a dilemma for some musicians—it can be equally unsatisfactory to choose performer or instrument tutor as their career designation.

To think beyond the 'performer/educator' dichotomy, one may identify oneself as a 'performer–educator' musician. However, since performer and educator are two distinctive specialities, such a combined role inconveniently projects an image of 'jack-of-all-trades'. Despite the inconvenient image, it is still possible for a musician to inwardly embrace both performer and educator identities. However, outwardly any career designation beyond purely a performer or educator can risk being too elusive and inelegant for laypeople to grasp. Therefore, it is not hard to imagine someone would opt for the false dichotomy for the sake of easy communication. Their professional identity or career designation works as a 'Hello my name is' tag, serving as a ready answer whenever someone asks the common question: "What do you do for a living?" It needs to be as simple and digestible as possible. Such a need fuels the dichotomy.

A third dichotomy, here between professionals and those who are *not* considered professionals, can be seen through Joshua's quote.

> Unless you're affiliated with the [established] orchestras … the quartet, maybe the trio, then you're not really a professional performer. You're just freelancing, you know. (Joshua, orchestral

conductor, 20s)

To Joshua, one needs to be performing with "*the* orchestras, *the* quartet … *the* trio (emphasis mine)" in order to be called professional. The multiple uses of "the" rather than "a" as the article indicate that the groups are well established with a national or regional standing. Since these performance groups likely receive public funding, they are authority-endorsed, rather than self-proclaimed. Therefore, to Joshua, a musician's professional status would be endowed by an authority, albeit indirectly. In New Zealand, the performance groups that Joshua alluded to are funded by Creative New Zealand. By his implication, one could be only recognised as a professional if they belong to an entity that qualifies for public funding. Such a view can be problematic and controversial. One may construe Joshua's words as carrying a condescending overtone: freelance musicians are less professional than their counterparts who have secured an affiliation or full-time position within an establishment, though they may work in an equally professional way.

Here in Joshua's words, another dichotomy is in play: one is either a professional musician or not. Musicians who are freelancers, semi-professionals, amateurs or hobbyists are considered less than having a full professional status. If such a dichotomy is valid, freelance musicians would be deprived of professional status, although they earn a living by working professionally. Under the New Zealand Government framework, musicians are part of the "creative professionals". Essentially, anyone who "earn[s] at least some income from their creative work" (Brunton, 2019, p. 4) is a creative professional. Therefore, freelance musicians who create or perform music are counted among creative professionals. These two distinctive views reveal that musicians themselves and those operating in the authority understand the term 'professional' differently. For some professional musicians like Joshua, it is the association with an entity endowed by an authority that counts; for the authority, i.e. Creative New Zealand, earning some kind of income is all that is necessary to be considered 'professional'. In this sense, the latter view from the authority coincides with Eric's understanding, i.e. making a living. This view is further echoed by Carruthers (2014): a professional musician is "someone who makes a living in and by creating music" (p. 42). This is a much broader view than Joshua's, since he only

considered a very small group of elite musicians to be professional. Nevertheless, it is not hard to imagine some musicians would tend to agree with Joshua's view. In Brian's and Eric's accounts, they also struggled to identify themselves as professional performers, despite their track record in performance. When these two kinds of understanding about professionality co-exist between musicians, laypeople and policymakers, it will inevitably lead to ambiguity, confusion and conflicts in dialogues.

So far, this section has examined the participants' quotes and revealed three types of dichotomy: generic–specific, performer–educator, professional–non-professional. A dichotomous model seems to prevail in how musicians think about their professionality. First, a musician's speciality, such as 'pianist', can be a catch-all term that includes anyone along the professional–amateur spectrum. There is a lack of terminology to portray one's professional standing and speciality in a succinct way. Sometimes the career designation is too generic or too specific, without the necessary nuances. Second, the performer–educator dichotomy is a false one since musicians can be both. Nevertheless, the need for communicating effectively and projecting a professional image fuels the inconvenient dichotomy. Musicians may feel compelled to pick a side, i.e. the prominent role, while undermining the lesser roles. Third, the professional–non-professional dichotomy raises controversy on the criteria of being professional, as people understand professionality differently. The dichotomies entail career designations that exclude many shades for hybrids and intermediates along the career spectrum. As a result, musicians, especially those who do not consider themselves professional enough, may find themselves in an undesirable intermediary space.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter set out to find out *how* musicians talk about their musical calling and career, hence the title *Reading between the lines*. Their underlying frame of mind that reflects their understanding towards calling and career was revealed. The first three sections focused on calling and the last one on career—specifically on professionality.

In the first four sections, the discussion illustrated the broad spectrum

of how participants think about and speak of their calling. The four themes revealed that there is no uniformity when people experience a musical calling.

Some participants espoused the calling or life mission as an integral part of their life and thus forthrightly expressed it so. Their response was sharp and quick. Some expressed it in an exploratory and equivocal manner. Their response was more hesitant and slow in the build-up. There was a wide spectrum in tone when they articulated their calling, from assertive, tentative, to completely indifferent.

Some participants thought of their calling as self-given, whereas some, especially those with religious faith, as other-given. It is hoped that this dichotomy of autonomy and heteronomy can fuel further research and debate over calling.

Moreover, the participants' use of the term 'calling' has demonstrated a wide range of attitudes. The term can be uttered with conviction, limitation, reservation, equivocation, or simply avoided in speech. A calling may also be so consuming that it leaves no room for reflexivity, struggle and deliberation for the participants. For some, it was as natural and effortless as 'going with the flow'.

The last section revealed three dichotomies (generic–specific, performer–educator, professional–non-professional) through how participants thought about professional roles in music. It is worth noting that the three dichotomies coincide with the findings discussed in Chapter Six, i.e. three considerations that indicate professionality: establishments, incomes and specialities. One being involved in an establishment, for some musicians, would be integral to whether they can be considered professional. This corresponds to the professional–non-professional dichotomy. On the other hand, professionality can be purely determined by income, especially from a government statistic standpoint (cf. Brunton, 2019). Musicians may take a side in the performer–educator dichotomy, based on their source of income, in order to determine their professional identity. Furthermore, whether one has a skill specialised enough to be called professional is reflected in the generic–specific dichotomy. The issue of career designations also arose from the discussion. Some musicians find it difficult to identify themselves with a label that depicts a skewed or incomplete career reality.

So far, this chapter has produced an alternative reading of the data.

The result is a thickened interpretation and enriched understanding. The next chapter will recap and discuss the findings from Chapters Five to Seven as a whole.

Chapter 8

Discussion on findings:

Adding countermelodies

8.1 Introduction

This chapter connects the findings with the previous literature chapters, i.e. calling and career research. The connection then leads to discussion of how the findings confirm, challenge and potentially expand the knowledge within existing literature. While every participant has contributed to the findings and is re-presented in this chapter, it will appear to the readers that some of them have a more dominant voice. It is an expected development, since some themes from the findings naturally lead to deeper discussion, and not everyone played a part in those themes.

The sections are presented in the following order. First, the findings are summarised and reframed as a long answer to the research question and sub-questions stated in Chapter Four. Second, the findings are cross-examined with the research on calling from Chapter Two. Third, the findings are discussed in relation to career development research from Chapter Three. Fourth, an outstanding theme among the findings is highlighted for discussion: the notion of professionality in music, i.e. what it means to be or become a professional musician.

8.2 Addressing the research questions

This section addresses the research questions of the thesis. It also serves as a summary of the findings. The overarching research question is "How do musicians experience and think about their calling and careers?" Chapters Five and Six have outlined the experience of the participants—the *what*—and Chapter Seven has discussed the way they expressed their ideas—the *how*.

8.2.1 Sub-question one: callings

1. How do musicians experience and understand their musical calling and other callings? How do musicians experience their musical calling from the outset and the changing sense of it over time?

The participants experienced the development of a musical calling over many years of incubation and revelation, which was centred around their physical surroundings, influential individuals, and themselves. For some, the sense of calling wavered over time. Parallel callings also cropped up in the process. Interestingly, the development of calling itself was mostly unnoticeable to some participants.

Identifying the origins of a musical calling

The participants experienced their musical calling throughout their lives, often starting from a young age. Chapter Five revealed that for the participants, the origin of a musical calling can be religious, artistic, or social in nature.

Some participants demonstrated that religious belief could serve as a powerful source of calling. Robert (music pastor, 40s) succinctly stated "praise is my calling" and Lilia (opera singer, 20s) saw that "God believes in me in terms of me wanting to pursue a music career". Both of them revealed explicitly that their musical calling came directly from their religious belief.

Music, as an art, can also stir up a sense of calling. Brian (classical pianist, 30s) revealed that "I guess I believe in art … like a religion, because art is like spirits to me". Another example can be found in Joshua (orchestral conductor, 20s). He recalled how a eureka moment

("suddenly clicked") instigated his lifelong involvement in music after he was able to make sense of the works by great composers such as Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and Schoenberg.

Sociality, i.e. being and participating with other people in music, can also motivate people to engage in music, acting as a source of musical calling. Sarah (jazz composer, 30s) and Lilia (opera singer, 20s) were drawn to make music with like-minded musicians. Caiah (jazz singer, 40s) connected with her audience in a powerful way. She had seen how her singing impacted people's emotions, producing a cathartic release that could be a lifesaver for depressed individuals. Further, Eric felt compelled to connect with his students in a positive way by setting himself as a role model through music.

Regardless of what drew the participants to music in the first place, they all experienced something profound and transcendent that had wielded a powerful influence over their course of life.

Experiencing the development of a musical calling

Collectively speaking, the musical calling of the participants was formed and nurtured through family, teachers, communities and physical environments, and was facilitated by their natural abilities, proclivities and aspirations. Sometimes even a lack of alternatives in career fuelled their musical calling.

Some participants found their musical upbringing strongly influential to their calling. Lilia and Sarah had close role models in their families whom they could emulate. On the other hand, Brian reported that he was mesmerised by his favourite piano book in childhood, suggesting an immensely positive influence from his teacher.

Professional music training and career experiences also shored up the calling of the participants. Joshua was overwhelmed by a sense of awe as he walked into a prestigious music school with all the first-class facilities and elite peers. Caiah found the "best music school" in a concert tour with an idol that she highly respected.

Natural ability and tendency to make music, in Lilia's case, proved to be vital as her musical calling took shape. Lilia realised her powerful voice could cut through a 200-person choir and band. She also had a

natural proclivity for music—she wrote and improvised songs even when she was very young.

In a positive way, the lack of alternatives forced some participants to pursue a music career, which in turn clarified their musical calling. Sarah preferred to stay in her comfort zone since she was good at music, and Tyler felt he did not have other career choices besides music.

Interpretation of experiences played a crucial role in confirming the participants' calling. Lilia believed her calling came from a higher power, as she experienced a miracle healing to regain her voice right before her audition. Robert depicted a convergence of events and circumstances that could point to a person's musical calling.

Some participants recalled memorable moments that epitomised the intensity of their music calling. Eric shared the painful wake-up call when he was bitten by a dog. He feared that losing his hand would impact on his guitar playing and this issue meant more than retaining his veterinary career. The episode compelled him to rethink and reposition his career as a musician. Brian developed an intense love–hate relationship with concert performances. He was so nervous that he threw up before the concert but longed to do it again right after.

The participants found musical calling to be dynamic as it could run alongside other callings simultaneously. Brian developed an intense interest in photography, to a point it almost surpassed his passion for piano. Joshua found a deep sense of fulfilment working as a real estate agent, while remaining engaged with conducting. Caiah found her calling shifted from performance to teaching, as she longed to influence young people in a positive way.

The sense of calling changed during a music career, as reported by some participants in this research. For example, Amy unexpectedly regarded conducting as a "non-calling" since she felt so challenged and distant from her original expertise which is piano playing. Lilia also experienced a wavering sense of calling when she struggled with learning music.

Some musicians experienced the calling in an intuitive and inexplicable way. Tyler and Sarah both recalled no specific reason why they engaged in music-making. There was a telling absence of deliberate thinking and reflexivity. The process was natural and effortless for both of them.

Framing the experience of a musical calling

The participants framed their calling experiences in various ways. Robert, Lilia and Caiah spoke forthrightly of their calling, despite their vastly different view towards religion. Brian and Sarah were tentative and speculative when they articulated their thoughts about calling, despite being spiritually oriented.

The way participants framed their experience also revealed how they thought about the source of their calling. Some participants viewed their calling as other-given (heteronomous), whereas some participants revealed the self-given (autonomous) nature of their calling. Both Robert and Lilia used the word "God" as the subject of their narrative, contrasting the use of "I" in Brian's, Sarah's and Caiah's cases.

Participants also conveyed a broad range of attitudes in how they use the term 'calling' or its variants such as 'call'. Robert, Lilia and Caiah uttered the word with a clear conviction, denoting their life mission. Joshua used the term carefully, delimiting it with a religious connotation. Eric also adopted the word with reservation. Sarah used the word fleetingly but with a great sense of equivocation—she did not think she had a calling, but she was living it. Neither Brian nor Tyler used the term at all but described their calling experience using everyday language.

Since the topic of calling does not often appear in conversation or one's reflection, the participants might have found themselves somewhat 'caught off guard' by the interview questions. The interviews thus provided a perfect window to their true-to-the-moment response of what calling meant to them, and shed light on their varied understandings of the subject.

8.2.2 Sub-question two: careers

2. How do musicians understand and adapt to their professional careers in the context of a changing world?

The participants understood their career through reflecting on what it means to be a professional musician, how their music careers can be

sustained, and how to strike a balance between artistic and financial freedom. They also subconsciously made sense of their what they do through an artistic or worldly lens. Some of them demonstrated remarkable readiness to adapt to career changes, and great resilience to cope with acute challenges.

During their careers, the participants developed a sense of *professional awareness*, i.e. what it meant to be a professional musician. Three considerations emerged from the findings: establishments, income, and specialities. Joshua saw that some musicians were more professional than others they worked with, or in musical establishments such as national orchestras and ensembles. In the same sense, Brian doubted his own professionality since his application for concert pianist was rejected by an art authority. Also, some participants saw that earning a liveable income in music delineates one's professionality. Both Brian and Eric hesitated to acknowledge their professional identity since the income from being a performer could not bring in enough money to sustain their living. Furthermore, Robert saw that professional musicians can be identified by how specialised they are in their expertise. In other words, for these participants, their unique speciality determined their professionality.

Besides professional awareness, participants also developed an *awareness for sustainability* as they sought to come to terms with their changing musical careers. They had an instinctive perception of the job market and the supply–demand relationship integral to the changing world of music. Joshua sensed a danger for classical music, as he observed how his audience was ageing, without any sense of expansion. Sarah presumed she would be able to make a living by instrumental teaching. It was clear to her that the demand in instrumental education seemed more stable than performance and composition. Tyler perceptively noticed the unfavourable supply-and-demand dynamics in music, making musicians' living difficult.

Besides actively earning income through working in music, the participants also considered social welfare and family as *support systems* that could sustain their artistic endeavour. For example, Brian relied on the social welfare system in New Zealand as his financial backstop. Tyler also saw his family as a safety net in case of trouble. Interestingly, Sarah, Robert and Amy placed their trust in the gift economy in music and the implied goodwill of people. Furthermore, Robert and Amy thought of the

timely donation they received as divine providence.

The musician participants also exercised their *career agency* through various means: they made life plans, pursued greater artistic freedom, and interpreted their artistic endeavour through different world views. Sarah laid out a detailed blueprint of moving home and re-establishing her career. The way she articulated her plan was remarkably fluent, as if it was premeditated, hinting at her mental readiness to enact the plan at any opportunity. Joshua determined that it was a critical period for him to increase his earning capability, or else he might regret it for life.

Some participants' cases also revealed the relationship between artistic freedom and financial freedom. In a positive way, Joshua experienced an invigorating performance conducting the orchestra since he did not have to worry about whether he would be invited back. His financial stability allowed him the freedom to engage in conducting as he wished, as he no longer relied on it as an essential source of income. On the other hand, Brian's case revealed a negative relationship. He felt the financial bind of not being able to go overseas to pursue his dream career. A verbatim quote about this in Chapter Six (Section 6.3) emphasised that it slowly dawned on him that he needed to adapt to the business side of music if he were to realise the dream.

Some participants made sense of what they do through the lens of an *intra-disciplinary or extra-disciplinary world view*. Brian saw himself as a world-builder, and the art was his world. Art to him was so invaluable that he would pour "everything" into the endeavour. In contrast, Joshua regarded that things outside music such as economy, finance and property directly impact people's livelihoods in ways music cannot. Sarah also admitted that music's influence is limited: it can change people's psychology but not much beyond that.

Adaptability and resilience were two characteristics some of the musicians have demonstrated amid acute career challenges. Going beyond the usual tasks required of musicians, Robert and Amy reshaped themselves into organisers, administrators, even physical labourers, to prepare for concerts. They also underwent crippling financial pressure but never deviated from their career and sense of mission, demonstrating a mark of resilience.

Besides these points, the way the musicians articulated their career shed light on their *dichotomous understanding* about professionality. There

are three types of dichotomies discussed in the previous chapter: generic–specific, performer–educator, professional–non-professional. In this respect, Brian saw himself as a pianist (generic) struggling to become a concert pianist (specific). However, there appears to be hardly any other career designations between these two ends, presenting a practical dilemma for musicians like him. In this vein, Eric regarded himself as an educator but not a performer in the professional sense, simply because he could not make a living performing music. Such an either/or understanding could not adequately reflect who he was—he could be seen in fact as both an educator and performer professionally. Joshua notably differentiated professional musicians from freelance musicians, hinting at a hidden hierarchy embedded in these notions. In everyday terms, either one has 'made it', or not. These dichotomous ways of reading the music profession can continue to be controversial and problematic.

8.3 Findings and calling research

The findings substantiate calling research by describing the lived experience of musicians. For example, some participants experienced multiple callings, and some lived through physical, psychological, and financial costs from having a calling. The research also adds new insight and challenges to the existing research in this area.

Some participants saw having multiple callings as a means of *self-expression and self-expansion, rather than conflict and imbalance*. Multiple callings cause tension and force people to prioritise their callings, or see them in a "hierarchical structure" (Oates et al., 2005, p. 215). People also seek to balance their callings in an ideal way (J. M. Berg et al., 2010, p. 985). However, there was no such problem for these particular participants who exhibited multiple callings.

For Brian (classical pianist, 30s), his callings in photography and piano complemented each other in terms of his self-expression, rather than competed for resources. He considered that both arts "contain [his] spirit", signifying a way of expressing himself and thus the "centre of who [he is]". His love for both photography and piano seemed to coexist peacefully as he used "love" and "passion" multiple times in the same

breath. Yet there was a striking lack of negativity in his description too. He spoke of how his artistry in photography enhanced his piano performance in a way that his audience would find his rendition mesmerisingly visual ("[another musician commented that] you could see pictures [in my playing, so photography] must fit into it"). The two callings—one visual and one acoustical—seem to dovetail perfectly in Brian's self-expression, creating for him harmony, not conflict.

Similarly, Joshua (orchestra conductor, 20s) embraced his fledging real estate career as a new calling and a form of self-expansion. Outgrowing his established music career, he ventured into the business world. He enjoyed meeting people from all walks of life in this new career path, adapted to their needs and let himself wonder "how big the world is besides music". Again, there was an absence of negativity towards the diminishing prospect in music in his narrative. The new endeavour was refreshing and liberating to him, even rejuvenating his musical passion. He felt he was "completed liberated" and didn't have to "worry about anything" as he performed in an overseas concert. His enthusiasm for real estate brought him success on the business front, but also indirectly on the musical front. Joshua's extra-musical calling, like Brian's photography, somehow contributed to sustaining his musical calling.

Incidentally, both cases echo Berkelaar and Buzzanell's (2015) call to "decouple calling from paid work" (p. 169). Brian's pure love for both photography and piano was never motivated by financial gain. Likewise, though Joshua's real estate career was highly lucrative, he was drawn by things that were "really fulfilling" and "not money at all", i.e. excitement gained from serving new people and adapting to their needs.

The disconnect between calling and paid work allows consideration of "broader, more flexible ... multiple callings" and reconciliation of "work-life contexts" (ibid.). While the idea may mainly resolve "work–parent" and "work–family" conflicts (Day & Chamberlain, 2006), it may also turn out well for any *'work–artist' conflict*, as far as this thesis is concerned. While there is no conflict for Brian and Joshua, musicians may find that having to work outside music clashes with their artist identity.

The insight from these two participants may shed light on how to avoid or reconcile the potential 'work–artist' conflict. For Brian, he saw photography and music as "love", not work. For Joshua, real estate was a kind of work that he loved regardless of recompense. On the musical

front, his new career path meant he didn't need to worry about how much the orchestra paid him, contributing to a "liberating" experience. For them, identifying passion in work and mentally dissociating pay and calling may have mitigated, or even eradicated, the tension between callings. Instead, they found the callings to be compatible and even complementary.

In calling research, vocational identity, well-being and life satisfaction are closely related factors and the data and analysis of this research provide further insight in the case of musicians. Vocational identity can be central to an individual's well-being (Billett, 2011) and is positively correlated with life satisfaction (Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007). This is reflected in Brian's case in a negative sense. Brian's calling in music as a concert pianist was unfulfilled, leaving him frustrated and dissatisfied. Moreover, the dilemma with the career designation in music is not helpful either. The 'all-or-nothing' career designation, in his case—being a 'concert pianist or nobody'—implies a dichotomous understanding that can be detrimental to one's self-image.

Brian's case sheds doubt on some of the promising effects as described in calling research. For example, having a calling is seen to enhance meta-competencies such as self-awareness and adaptability, which contributes to employability (Hall & Chandler, 2005). Also, calling is associated with a strong sense of vocational identity (Hirschi, 2012; Hirschi & Herrmann, 2012), providing "a strong cognitive and affective foundation" for employability (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008, p. 508). Despite Brian's strong sense of calling and aspiration to become a concert pianist, he lived with a sense of forlorn ambition and unfulfilled career, showing no signs of enhanced employability. A strong calling in a niche discipline that is out of step with the employment market may not lead to improved adaptability and employability.

The research findings also resonate with calling research that looks at the way pursuing a calling can result in high physical, psychological and personal costs (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Dempsey & Sanders, 2010). My participants demonstrated such costs in concrete ways. Brian's acute stage anxiety caused him to throw up before concerts. Robert's financial predicament was an inherent personal cost of following his calling. It was difficult for him to ask others for help. Likewise, Brian's financial constraints did not allow him to pursue further overseas study,

indicating an opportunity cost.

The research findings supplement existing research by providing additional reasons on why the sense of calling changes over time. Calling is a dynamic, measurable phenomenon (Dobrow, 2013). Possible causes of a decreased calling include the "big-fish–little-pond" effect and "honeymoon–hangover" effect (ibid., p. 436). The "big-fish–little-pond" effect (Marsh & Hau, 2003) happens when equally competent students have higher academic self-concept when placed among less competent peers, and lower self-concept when placed among more competent peers. Take promising young musicians in high school as an example. They may move on to study music in a university, placing themselves among more competent students, which leads to their lowered self-concept. According to Dobrow, the decreased self-concept would lead to decreased calling. On the other hand, the "honeymoon–hangover" effect happens when individuals remain in a calling for a prolonged period, leading to "burnout, habituation, changing values and priorities over time" (Dobrow, 2013, p. 436) and thus a decreased sense of calling. However, the research participants gave insight indicating further possible reasons.

In the cases of Lilia (opera singer, 20s) and Amy (choir director, 40s), if their sense of calling was measured as in Dobrow's research, it would have led to declining levels of calling. Lilia and Amy revealed that when they found learning or professional development in music challenging, their sense of calling decreased. And in this way, Lilia doubted the significance of the struggle. The sense of calling, in Amy's case, reached negative territory in terms of conducting, even though leading the choir was clearly her calling. The two cases here provide examples of how a sense of calling can diminish over time: *intense learning specific to an area,* and *acute challenges in career*. These two reasons add to the list of causes that include the "big-fish–little-pond" and "honeymoon–hangover" effects as mentioned above in the existing literature.

From an ethnomusicological standpoint, the research findings affirm Nettl's (1995) description of how a music institution is likened to a religious one. The quasi-religious lure of music can act as a source of calling. This was captured in Joshua's (orchestra conductor, 20s) interview. He was captivated by the "aura" of the music school building and decided immediately that he wanted to study there. The great composers, i.e. the music "deities" described by Nettl, also played a

critical role in Joshua's reported eureka moment and this notably helped establish his lifelong relationship with music. Through this realisation, he was able to see the connection between Bach and other composers such as Mozart and Beethoven. These combined factors contributed significantly to the development of his musical calling.

The research findings also confirm that a calling can be seen as one originating from an external source, rather than purely arising from self. Dobrow (2013) states that people are either "explicit that callings are found or they do not address calling's origins" (p. 433), hinting at the fact that origins can arise beyond self. Likewise, Berkelaar and Buzzanell (2015) refer to the way a calling comes from "someone or something external to the person being called" (p. 166). Among my participants, Brian and Joshua saw art itself as a source for their musical calling. Lilia and Robert regarded a higher power such as God as the source, whereas Sarah was strongly drawn by the sociality of music. All three scenarios indicate that the sense of calling begins when self interacts with an *exogenous entity*, such as art, God or other people.

The previous chapter *Reading between the lines* is a close reading of *how* participants articulate their calling, potentially enriching the field of calling research. The findings reflect their sense of autonomy or heteronomy in their narratives. These concepts are yet to be discussed in the literature. Among my participants, Brian (classical pianist, 30s), Sarah (jazz composer, 30s) and Caiah (jazz singer, 40s) appeared to let the self take central stage, i.e. taking an autonomous stance, in determining and materialising the calling. Their prominent use of the pronoun "I" in their quotes reflected this tendency. On the other hand, Robert (music pastor, 40s) and Lilia (opera singer, 20) demonstrated the heteronomous stance by placing God as the subject in their narrative. In addition, the assertive and tentative tones of the participants when they articulated their calling, and how they used the word 'calling' with conviction, limitation, reservation and equivocation, may present interesting results from a phenomenological method that can stimulate further similar research on calling.

To summarise, some of the findings have substantiated calling research, and some have challenged or augmented existing ones. Multiple callings were seen as complementary rather than competitive. A potential *work–artist* conflict can be mitigated when calling is decoupled

with the notion of pay. The benefit of calling towards well-being can be doubtful in the case of musicians. Two additional reasons for a decreased sense of calling were identified: intense learning and acute challenges in career. Moreover, the autonomous/heteronomous stance, the assertive/tentative tone, and the connotations attached to the word 'calling' serve as some phenomenological discoveries that may contribute to calling research.

8.4 Findings and career theories

This section discusses findings in relation to career theories and concepts presented in Chapter Three. There are several themes stemming from major career theories worth considering: a lifelong perspective (Super, 1990) for musicians' careers; personal and contextual factors (Patton & McMahon, 2014a) that affect their decisions to launch, maintain or quit a music career; musicians themselves as career actors, agents and authors (Savickas, 2013).

8.4.1 A lifelong perspective

As expected, the participants' career experiences largely coincide with Super's (1990) lifespan theory. However, beyond providing concrete examples situated in a musician's context, they add nuances to Super's theory, especially when they are somewhat 'out of sync' with its timeline. The lifespan theory involves the stages of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and disengagement. Typically speaking, growth and exploration take place from young age to early adulthood, establishment and maintenance in mid-adulthood, and disengagement (or retirement) in late adulthood. For example, Lilia and Tyler, in their 20s, were at a relatively beginning stage in their career and trying to establish themselves. They were both studying music at the time of the interview; however, both had already made professional appearances in landmark venues. Their growth, exploration and establishment phases somewhat overlap. It is telling that while they had somewhat established themselves professionally, they decided to look to formal education as a means for professional development. This resembles a loop-back to the previous career phase and indicates that the growth itself can be a lifelong

endeavour, going beyond a mere career phase as described by Super.

On the other hand, Eric, Amy and Robert, all in their 40s, had settled in their teaching and performing careers, exemplifying a maintenance stage. However, Eric expressed a desire to study a formal music degree despite having a teaching qualification in the Suzuki method. For many, being truly established in a music career requires not only industry credentials and networking, but also academic credentials. It implies that as musicians work across different fields, bearing in mind the stage at each field can be different, they would be experiencing multiple life-stages at once. They may go through two disconnected stages, such as growth and maintenance simultaneously, in a non-linear fashion. For example, Joshua (orchestral conductor, 20s) *maintained* his conducting engagements while he *explored* the real estate business. Somewhat differently, Caiah (jazz singer, 40s) *disengaged* herself from a touring career and tried to *establish* a teaching business. Furthermore, returnee musicians from overseas would need to *re-establish* their careers, as in the case of Brian (classical pianist, 30s) and Sarah (jazz composer, 30s). These findings serve as nuanced examples to complicate Super's somewhat linear and discrete theory.

8.4.2 Personal and contextual factors

The participants' experiences substantiate the personal and contextual factors discussed in Patton and McMahon's (2014) career development framework. Personal factors concerning age, gender, ethnicity and race, sexual orientation, disability, physical and mental health are mostly unrelated to my findings. Similarly, contextual systems such as peers, education institutions, employment market, social media, workplace, social groups, and globalisation are either absent or bear insignificant connection with the findings. As a result, only more relevant factors will be discussed in relation to the findings.

My participants demonstrated their instinctive awareness about the *knowledge of the world of work* (G. W. Peterson et al., 1991, 1996, 2002; Reardon et al., 2011). For example, Eric (classical guitarist, 40s) was aware of the importance of networking and exposure in the professional scene to bring about teaching opportunities. Sarah (jazz composer, 30s) perceived the relative abundance of teaching opportunities compared to

performance and composition. Tyler (rock/jazz guitarist, 20s) understood market dynamics and their underlying economic principles. He saw that the production of music had outweighed consumption, implying a dire career outlook for musicians. They all utilised their knowledge and made informed career decisions.

Spiritual beliefs and career values played an important part in the participants' careers. Spiritual beliefs and career values favour psychological satisfaction and alignment with self-concept over financial recompense (Bloch, 2000, 2004; Bloch & Richmond, 1997; D. Brown, 1996, 2002b, 2002a; Hansen, 2001; Oliveira, 2000; Savickas, 1997). Among the participants, Robert (music pastor, 40s) and Lilia (opera singer, 20s) highlighted how they saw their music career as a calling from God and thus kept to their careers despite the insecure income from music. Their cases echo Creech et al.'s (2008) study, where some musicians may accept jobs that align with their musical aspiration, rather than financial recompense. To Robert and Lilia, their careers were somewhat divinely preordained. Robert interpreted the aggregate of his life events and experiences as a convergence of meaning that gravitated towards his transcendental calling. Lilia believed in God's purpose in one's life, and such a belief freed her from any existential anxiety that she might make a career blunder. On the other hand, Sarah's and Tyler's values caused them to pick music over other careers. Their values favoured a relatively easy lifestyle that allowed them to be in their "comfort zone". Their preference for a "comfortable life" was reflected among "conventional values" in Holland's Personality Types in career research (Brown, 2002, p. 382).

The musician participants also considered *social relationships* to be an important career consideration. The findings unravelled some new insights peculiar to musicians' context, potentially deepening the understanding of the social factors in career theories. For Patton and McMahon (2014), social factors that affect careers include family, education institutions, peers, social and mainstream media, workplace, and community groups. However, my participants, found musician-to-musician, performer-to-audience and teacher-to-student relationships to be deeply meaningful.

As an expat, Sarah looked forward to "reconnect" with her musician friends in New Zealand, signifying a musician-to-musician, or peers'

relationship. Lilia enjoyed the communal music experience within a formal education setting, pointing to a mix of social influences in the form of community, peers and education institution. Lilia's experience also echoed Sarah's in the sense that it was mostly a musician-to-musician connection.

On the other hand, Caiah the jazz singer experienced a strong connection with her audience. The performer-to-audience relationship cannot be adequately fitted into Patton and McMahon's (2014) framework. Such a 'social' connection in music can resemble many things: as intimate as a family, and as influential as a community group. It also goes beyond a mere 'workplace' connection though it may happen in a 'workplace' for musicians. As a result, such a social connection unfolded in music is unique in its nature, beyond what any career development framework can describe or categorise.

Furthermore, Eric treasured the teacher-to-student relationship as a key motivation for his teaching. He enjoyed the avuncular connection—being the role model for his students fuelled his sense of life mission. Again, such a social relationship fostered in instrumental teaching somehow eludes the formal boundaries of education institutions, workplace, and community.

Besides the relationships peculiar to a musician's context, family as a social factor was considered important to the participants. Sarah was emboldened to take on a music career thanks to the family factor: her parents taught music professionally. Tyle saw family support as a financial fallback and a source of security so he might pursue his music career.

The notion of *homecoming,* typically from overseas study or work was a strong pull factor for some participants. This goes against the common view that New Zealand musicians and artists tend to leave the country to further their careers. The notion of homecoming situates within the factors of *geographical location and migration* in career research, which are considered among the environmental-societal factors that affect career decisions (Patton & McMahon, 2014). The homecoming aspect is perhaps under-reported in research and public reports concerning artists' careers. Instead, they highlight that countries isolated from major art centres of the world became a push factor for musicians to go abroad (Daniel, 2016; Markusen, 2013). Historically, Australia had seen the trend of talented

artists moving overseas (J. Holmes, 1998; Robertson, 2014). Likewise, New Zealand had seen musicians moving to Australia, Britain and United States for better career prospects (Swarbrick, 2014).

However, my findings tell the other side of the story—the homecoming of musicians. Sarah (jazz composer, 30s) desired strongly to return home where she could set up her music enterprise and reunite with her family and musician network. Joshua (orchestral conductor, 20s) and Brian (classical pianist, 30s) also returned home after their extensive musical pursuits overseas. While they have not elaborated fully why they prefer to return, one can speculate that having been exposed to international experience would greatly enhance the prospect of securing local professional opportunities. It might especially hold true for Joshua since he manged to secure a contract with a major orchestra in New Zealand on his return. These homecoming participants may value family connection and local networks in music and beyond, over a prolonged expatriate life.

In additional to the homecoming participants, the stories of my migrant participants have also confounded the expectation of an egress of musicians from New Zealand. Eric (classical guitarist, 40s), Robert (music pastor, 40s) and Amy (choral conductor, 40s) were all first-generation migrants who worked full-time as musicians in their adopted country. This coincides with the fact that New Zealand has experienced strong net migration in the past two decades (Stats NZ, 2021a) and testifies that the country has many desirable factors, such as high quality of life, to attract musicians from other parts of the world.

8.4.3 Career actors, agents and authors

My findings are in line with Savickas's (2013) career construction theory and can serve as concrete examples. Some participants have demonstrated that they proactively took charge of their careers and authored meaning of their lived experience. Savickas depicts self as an actor, agent, and author.

For "self as an actor", Savickas understood the term 'actor' beyond merely someone who does an action, but someone who performs on the stage as an actor. The latter meaning requires "taking in" the attitude and "taking on" (p. 152) the quality of others, in order to imitate them for

career success. The taking-in and taking-on processes were reflected in my participants. Lilia (opera singer, 20s) mentioned how she met a famous opera singer who happened to be a minister for a church. The episode gave her the aspiration that she could do the same. Brian (classical pianist, 30s) recalled his memorable encounter with Ashkenazy as well as an unnamed German singing teacher, as they both lived a successful career—something admirable and imitable for him. Brian was clearly impressed with what they had achieved and longed to become a successful musician himself. In both cases, Lilia's and Brian's role models became the object of the taking-in and taking-on processes, allowing them to be the 'actor' in their careers.

Some participants exemplified the idea of "self as an agent" in their changing career trajectory. Sarah (jazz composer, 30s) detailed a plan to move back and re-establish her music career in New Zealand. She took a proactive approach to map out a workable scenario, rather than to sit back and idle. Joshua (orchestral conductor, 20s) developed a real estate career alongside his existing conducting career, as he sensed the decline of classical orchestra concerts in general. Sarah's readiness and Joshua's adaptiveness for a substantial career change illustrate how they took their careers into their own hands and what career agency can mean for musicians at large.

Lastly, the notion of *self as author* points to individuals' acts of interpreting their lives and career episodes in a meaningful way for themselves. Lilia recalled the incident of miraculously regaining her voice before an important audition and regarded it as a divine sign for her music career. Robert (music pastor, 40s) also outlined how a set of circumstances such as winning a national singing competition and serving in the ministry had confirmed his calling. They had both interpreted their life experience as a constellation of converging signs that wooed them into undertaking a music career.

To summarise, the findings both confirm and complicate some of the major career development theories (Patton & McMahon, 2014a; Savickas, 2013; Super, 1990). While the participants mostly went through career stages linearly, non-linear patterns also arose since they undertook parallel careers. This adds nuanced examples to Super's (1990) notion of a changing career pattern over a lifespan. Social relationships in musicians' context, namely musician-to-musician, performer-to-

audience and teacher-to-student, somewhat eludes the categorisation offered by Patton and McMahon (2014). Also, the participants add a countermelody to the theme of geographical location and migration previously preoccupied by the stories of expatriate musicians. Musicians' homecoming and migrating to New Zealand are equally valid.

So far, the discussion has centred on how the findings inform calling research and career theories. The next section discusses a potentially impactful theme which has arisen out of the findings itself—what it means to be professional in music.

8.5 Professionality of musicians

As some participants openly reflected on their careers, they alluded to their professional identity, or what it means to be a professional musician. The idea can be encapsulated in the term *professionality*. Chapter Six has presented the relevant findings preliminarily: *establishments, incomes* and *specialities* stand out as three considerations that differentiated professional musicians from the rest. To explore what it means to be a professional musician ties in closely to the interest of the international community of musicians (Education of the Professional Musician Commission, n.d.). Further discussion would benefit the ongoing discourse in the academic community of professional musicians and beyond.

8.5.1 Establishments: traditional vs technological

The participants were only concerned with traditional establishments such as national orchestras, ensembles or funding organisations. However, it can be argued that technological advances have disrupted the 'game' of what it means to be professional in music. This section explores the contrasting ideas.

For my participants, direct association with traditional establishments was essential in proving their professional status in the field. Both Joshua (orchestral conductor, 20s) and Brian (classical pianist, 30s) hinted at what makes a musician professional: association with a professional body, or recognition by an authority. Joshua's quote suggested implicitly that freelance musicians have a somewhat lower professional standing than

their more established counterparts, i.e. those working with a national orchestra, quartet or trio. Brian also doubted his professional status since he was turned down in his application for concerts endorsed by a national funder. Since both Brian's and Joshua's quotes were spoken under a classical music context, their concern for professionality thus has a limited scope. One must engage with national orchestras, music ensembles, organisations, universities and enterprises, i.e. the usual 'power players', in order to be considered 'professional proper'.

Nevertheless, in the 21st century where digital technology enables the megatrends of decentralisation and individualisation, an establishment can also be anything that is 'established' enough to facilitate instant grasp, association and consumption. Social media and digital streaming platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, iTunes and Spotify fall into this category. They have become almost ubiquitous and inextricable from people's daily digital life. They offer an entrepreneurial platform for musicians to outreach to and interact with their audience in ways not possible in previous decades. Nowadays, any musician can set up their professional page or channel and post their work on such platforms. Playbacks, views, 'likes' and clicks become the new currency for popularity and visibility, which can in turn be monetarised by musicians. However, involvement in these new forms of establishments do not necessarily warrant professionality for musicians. Sometimes the musical content published on these platforms simply does not reflect professional quality. The phenomenon of technological establishments calls for further research on its nature and impact on musicians' careers.

8.5.2 Income

The research participants thought that earning a sustainable income through a musical role indicated professionality. Brian (classical pianist, 30s) regarded a German singer-professor highly since he was able to command a lucrative remuneration for a concert. He also led a university teaching career, generating a presumably sustainable income. For Brian, such a remunerative portfolio of work had endorsed the singer's professional status. On the other hand, Eric (classical guitarist, 40s) did not regard himself as a professional performer because he could not generate a liveable income through that role, rather than how

professionally he played.

Such a view somewhat agrees with a government policy perspective. For statistical purposes, any individuals, musicians included, who "earn at least some income from their creative work" can be called a creative professional (Brunton, 2019). In other words, any musician who earns at least some income from performing or creating music can be called professional. However, such an oversimplistic view is problematic for understanding musicians' professionality. What if an amateur musician earns an income from some casual performance? Would the income suddenly qualify him or her to be classed as a professional musician? The answer would be no. Therefore, it is inapposite to use income alone to gauge a musician's professionality.

8.5.3 Specialities

The findings also supported the idea that the level of speciality or expertise distinguishes professional musicians from those who are less trained. Robert (music pastor, 40s) considered himself professional because he is specialised in singing and had substantial training in a conservatorium. To him, laypeople and amateurs were incapable of envisaging and overseeing a satisfactory concert. Thus, there was a need for specialised musicians, especially those trained in formal settings, to serve as cultural leaders who guide the development of community music.

On the other hand, musicians from an informal training background can also become specialised through practical career experience. Caiah (jazz singer, 40s) started her career when she was a teenager. She was later immersed in what she called the "best school", i.e. gaining industry exposure by touring alongside her idol. She subsequently embarked on a fully fledged singing career. The day-to-day experience with rehearsals, concerts and tours gave her the know-how of working with her bands and entertaining the audience. The practical knowledge and professional insight gained on the stage granted her the legitimacy of being specialised as a jazz singer, not her formal training. As a result, specialities gained by either formal or informal settings can be regarded as legitimate towards earning professional recognition.

8.5.4 Some strings attached

Indubitably, there is a need for some musicians to be recognised as professionals, especially those who are highly trained. It is the only fair way to recognise their expertise and unique contribution to the world. The existence of the Education of the Professional Musician Commission (CEPROM) in the International Society of Music Education testifies to such a need. Therefore, the discussion of what it means to be professional in the music world is not only practical, but imperative.

However, there are a few caveats in the discussion of professionality here. Laying out the three considerations for professionality, i.e. establishments, income, specialities, does not mean there are only three. There are more facets of professionality waiting to be discovered. Also, the discussion does not aim to set hard boundaries on who can qualify as professional. There is bound to be ambiguity in the criteria. For example, it would be difficult to pinpoint how much involvement in the establishments (and what kind of establishments) would cause a musician to be seen as professional. Similarly, while having some form of income might qualify an individual as professional *quantitatively* for statistical purposes (cf. Brunton, 2019), it cannot determine their professionality *qualitatively*. The consideration of specialities is perhaps even more elusive. Individual expertise in music regards what it takes to be a professional differently. For jazz musicians, it can be a list of peers and venues in the biography; for classical musicians, it can be degrees, competitions and scholarships; for musicians in popular genres, it can be the sheer number of listens, downloads, clicks and views. There are different expectations for different musician types. Therefore, the outline of the three considerations is meant to be explorative, not prescriptive and conclusive. It is recommended that all three considerations (and beyond) need to be taken into account to weigh an individual's professionality.

Moreover, the discussion of professionality should not be understood in the spirit of exclusivity. Instead, it should be understood from the standpoint of education and human development. It means that one tries to be as inclusive and affirmative as possible. Some musicians could have been regarded as professional, but the ambiguity of professionality itself makes them see themselves otherwise. For example, Eric (classical

guitarist, 40s) ruled himself out as a professional performer, but in fact he can be considered as such since he did receive remuneration from playing for weddings ("income") and performing in front of a professional audience from the guitar society ("speciality"). The understanding of professionality outlined here would affirm him as a professional performer. On the other hand, Brian (classical pianist, 30s) hesitated to admit he was a professional musician since he struggled to establish himself as a concert pianist. However, the lack of recognition does not necessarily nullify his professional status as a pianist. He can be considered specialised, and thus professional enough, thanks to his substantial track record as a recitalist. In this renewed light of professionality, his self-doubt could have been somewhat allayed.

To conclude, my findings suggest that, for these participants at least, there is a tacit and nebulous consensus among musicians about professionality. However, that elusive consensus also points to the consideration of *establishments, income* and *specialities*. Since the consensus on professionality is ambiguous and disputable, I contend that we can safely rule out a dichotomous view of yes/no, either/or. That is, this musician is considered professional because she has earned this much income through music, and the other person is not since he has not made that much. Or this musician has collaborated with an established group, and that person has not. Such a dichotomous representation would easily become problematic. Instead, I propose a more continuous view—not just a spectrum view, but a cross-spectra view—of professionality in this context. Professionality should be diverse and include a 'basket' of considerations, such as establishment, income, speciality and beyond. This way, all types of musicians—professionals, amateurs, hobbyists, students—may be understood in the same group of spectra concerning professionality.

8.6 Conclusion

The first section of the chapter summarised the findings in the form of answering the research questions. The findings have addressed the origin, process and framing of calling. Regarding careers, the findings have unravelled the awareness of professionality and sustainability, intra-/extra-disciplinary world views, and dichotomous understanding

in participants' narratives. These diverse themes reflect how the participants grappled with the need of balance between passion and practicality in their careers.

The second section of the chapter linked the findings with calling research. My findings do not always confirm previous research. For example, multiple callings in my participants were seen as a means of self-expression and self-expansion, rather than conflict and imbalance. Regarding a calling that declines over time, intense learning and acute challenges in career pose as possible factors, in addition to ones proposed in existing research. The phenomenological method for this research also generates findings of *how* participants frame their calling. These new insights can add a new voice and expand existing calling research.

The third section examined the findings under three career perspectives: life-span, personal and contextual factors, and self-agency. These findings add nuances to Super's life-span theory since participants experienced career stages in a non-linear fashion. Homecoming and migration also add a countermelody to the predominant expat theme in terms of where New Zealand is in a geographical location. There are also social relationships unique in music: musician-to-musician, performer-to-audience, teacher-to-student. These findings complicate the established career theories and can engender further research.

The fourth section delved deeper into the notion of professionality that sprang from the findings. There is a tendency to define a professional musician quantitatively and qualitatively, but often over-simplistically. Establishments, income and specialities represent merely a starting point for further discussion. The next chapter will conclude the thesis and examine further implications.

Chapter 9

Conclusion: Fuelling callings and empowering careers

This chapter concludes the thesis by summarising its method and findings, exploring their implications, and discussing the limitations. The heart of the chapter is about drawing out potential application for musicians and pointers for further research. The themes include how the notion of 'one true calling' can affect individuals; how callings beyond music can reinvigorate the musical calling; how to deal with the wavering sense of calling; and how to be vigilant, adaptive and enterprising in a music career so that a meaningful lifelong engagement with music can be sustained.

9.1 A summary of the research

The thesis set out to explore what it means to have a calling and career in music for musicians by looking carefully into the lived experiences of a small but interesting group of active musicians in New Zealand. To this end, it draws on the growing body of research on calling and several established career development frameworks. It is one of the first studies that welds calling and career research and sets them as the backdrop to study musicians' lived experiences. Calling's multiple and dynamic nature, employability, life satisfaction, costs and adverse effects such as exploitation has informed the complex contexts of these musicians. On

the other hand, career development frameworks provide a lens that encompasses life-span, personal and environmental contexts, and self-agency for this study.

The nine research participants came from all walks of life, different musical genres, educational backgrounds and spiritual beliefs. However, they shared one thing in common: they all were or had been based in New Zealand. They were honest and open about their love and pain in their career journey. They also represent a spectrum from idealists to pragmatists.

Using an Interpretive Phenomenologyical Analysis framework to engage with the participants, the findings revealed the origin, formation and framing of a musical calling in the lives of the participants. The origins identified are religious, aesthetic and social in nature. A calling is nurtured through years of influence from family, teachers, communities and physical environments. Its formation is also facilitated by musicians' natural abilities, proclivities, aspirations and limitations. The participants also articulated their calling differently, even those with the same religious beliefs. On the other hand, some framed their calling in a similar way to others, despite their different religious orientations. They also said the word 'calling' with the overtones of conviction, limitation, reservation and equivocation.

On the career front, the findings have shown that the participants developed an awareness of professionality and sustainability. Particular to what it means to be professional are considerations of how one affiliates with establishments, how liveable an income one is able to make, and how specialised one's skill set is. To sustain their career in practical ways, the participants looked to market dynamics, funding opportunities, family support and the gift economy. They recognised that more financial freedom leads to greater artistic freedom. The findings also suggest that a flexible mindset is beneficial, i.e., switching between intra- and extra-disciplinary world views. Musical and financial challenges are expected but can be mitigated by the resilience stemming from a strong sense of calling.

Furthermore, dichotomous understandings about musicians' career designation and professional identity have been identified. Their career designations may be too generic or specific to fit their circumstances. Also, their quest for self-identity may push them to categorise themselves

in certain ways: being a performer or educator, being a 'professional proper' or someone less professional. However, these false dichotomies are problematic and do not help to create a positive image for musicians. Instead, there is an alternative way of understanding—a continuum (or continua) of shades in identity, opening up linguistic and conceptual possibilities in which musicians can identify and affirm themselves.

This thesis discovers three ways that calling and career are connected in musicians' lives, each entailing implications for reconceptualising their callings and careers. First, for the participants, an intra-disciplinary world view concerning career likely originates from a musical calling. Here is how it unfolds. The calling leads to intense creative activities in which musicians construct artistic worlds. The world-creating process enables them to see the actual world—to them only one of the possible worlds—through an artistic world view. That kind of world view can be seen as intra-disciplinary, i.e. interpreting how the world works within the framework of the discipline, in this case, musical art. This intra-disciplinary world view then permeates and perpetuates throughout the musicians' careers, affecting their actions and decisions. Second, both calling and career share the two attributes of multiplicity and mutability. It is not uncommon for musicians to have multiple callings and careers, and each calling and career can change over time. Third, career resilience is manifested through a strong calling. These connections provide a springboard with which to explore implications for musicians.

9.2 Implications for musicians and further research

9.2.1 Looking beyond the 'one true calling'

The thesis offers some practical implications for musicians. First, one needs to be aware of the inadvertent blindsiding effect by the hidden narrative of the one "true calling" (Newport, 2012, p. xvi). The notion of having one true calling is predominant due to its historical root and religious connotation, which evokes an image of an individual's lifelong dedication to a cause. Musical legends (cf. Nettl, 1995) who have devoted their whole lives to music simply reinforce this notion. They become exemplars and role models musicians strive to imitate, as explained in Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2013). This further strengthens the narrative and ties it in with the "prosperity gospel" for calling: following the dream will guarantee material success (Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015, p. 171), which is not always the case. The 'one true calling' narrative also nurses an intra-disciplinary world view—a tinted lens through which musicians understand the world. The findings have suggested that musicians' intra-disciplinary world view can lead to a lack of concern for important things in life, such as financial well-being, as seen in Brian's and Robert's cases. The blindsiding effect here is apparent. To elude the effect, musicians should embrace an open stance and think beyond the 'one true calling' narrative where mastery and devotion to the art mean everything.

Furthermore, to this end, musicians can proactively discover and cultivate multiple callings as a means of self-expression and self-expansion. While some literature found that multiple callings caused conflicts (Oates et al., 2005) and imbalance (J. M. Berg et al., 2010), the findings here suggest otherwise. An extra calling that is artistic allows an additional outlet for self-expression, as in the case of Brian, who was both a classical pianist and a photographer. An additional calling that is pragmatic unlocks new connections to people and the world, as seen in Joshua, who was a conductor and real estate agent. While callings may compete for effort and resources, they can also complement each other to make each calling more flourishing, as seen in both cases. Since having

multiple callings are common, they should be anticipated and even proactively cultivated. More importantly, one should be encouraged to explore the complementary qualities between existing callings.

On the other hand, in case the callings compete with each other, the discussion on findings has alluded to possible ways to circumvent the dilemma: seeing work as calling and dissociating pay and calling. Both Joshua and Brian treated their second calling as something they love rather than something they depend upon to make a living. Such a perspective could mitigate the tension of competing callings. However, this suggestion warrants further research for validation.

Relevant to the calling theme, another application for musicians is that they should anticipate the *wavering sense of calling*. This was first found by Dobrow (2013) as the "dynamics of calling" (p. 431), which is corroborated by the findings here. The participants experienced wavering due to intense learning and acute career challenges. However, a reduced sense of calling need not indicate the end of a calling. The situation could be seen as a test of resilience. In this case, calling could be regarded as a purpose (Dik & Duffy, 2009; McGee, 2005) that the musician can hold on to steadfastly, regardless of the changing perception.

Amid a wavering calling, one may find self-help and self-care *from within*, as suggested by the findings. It has been shown that a musical calling originates from one's spiritual belief, aesthetic aspiration and social bond. This finding helps musicians reflect and realise the source(s) of their calling. They could remind themselves why they pursue music in the first place when they experience a calling decline and the resulting self-doubt. Besides appreciating the origin(s), one could also reflect on how the calling was nurtured. The findings report that families, teachers and communities contribute to the formation of calling in significant ways. Musicians can develop a deeper appreciation of how others have journeyed with them, contributing to who they are today. Moreover, memorable episodes that have seared a calling could be brought to the forefront to rekindle a dwindling calling.

9.2.2 Pre-empting and persevering through career challenges

The findings reflect a somewhat gritty outlook for career musicians and thus urge them to become adaptable and resilient. In other words, 'expect

the unexpected'. Musicians face challenges well beyond musical ones. In music, they often need to overstretch themselves to learn new skills, instruments or genres during their career. Beyond music are operational challenges, such as promotional, administrative, and even labouring tasks at times—something they may not have foreseen. Furthermore, they may face acute financial challenges and live without income for a substantial period for the sake of their projects and career. The findings suggest that having a strong sense of calling, when underpinned by religious or spiritual faith, can lead to career resilience. The musicians fully believe in their cause and thus endure any adverse circumstances.

World views also play an essential part in musicians' adaptability. The findings suggest that both *intra-disciplinary* and *extra-disciplinary world views* are necessary for musicians to navigate their career life successfully. Being able to switch between the two is hugely beneficial. Developing agility to traverse between two world views is highly congruent with the prevalent literature arguing for a more enterprising and entrepreneurial mindset (e.g. Bartleet et al., 2019).

Also, a non-linear career progression is expected for musicians. The gig economy and hybrid careers (Dolber et al., 2021; Galagan, 2013)—also understood as precarious work (Kalleberg, 2009) and portfolio career (Bartleet et al., 2012)—have become more pervasive. As a result, it would be unrealistic for musicians to expect a predictable career ladder exemplified by monolithic institutions. The participants have shown that when they switched careers, they experienced a beginning stage for the new one and an established stage for the existing one simultaneously.

The findings point to areas of attention that can make career education successful for musicians, such as market dynamics, support systems and the gift economy. A comprehensive scope of strategic knowledge would significantly enhance their chance of survival and sustainability. It is suggested that musicians be aware of the latest market trend, e.g. International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2021; Recorded Music NZ, 2018, of recorded and live music. They should also read the job market situation on the music education front. This way, they can assess their strengths and position themselves strategically. Also, they can keep themselves abreast of support systems available, such as governmental or philanthropic organisations for the arts. They should also equip themselves with fundraising skills, such as crowdfunding in

the digital world and traditional means for the business realm. They would want to be able to tap into the gift economy for sustaining their art. It helps them to be resourceful and enterprising. The practicality of a career should work in tandem with and in proportion to the aspiration of calling.

Furthermore, the dichotomous understandings of career and professionality represent a quagmire for musicians that they need to anticipate. The findings have unravelled three dichotomies: generic–specific, performer–educator, and professional–non-professional, each with its own difficulties. As musicians live out a portfolio career, the career designation may be unfitting, i.e. too generic or specific for their purpose. The linguistic dilemma is presented in Brian's case. He was neither a 'concert pianist' in the specific sense, nor a mere 'pianist' in a generic sense, which might demean his expertise to the equivalent of an amateur. On the other hand, neither a performer identity nor an educator identity could represent some musicians in a satisfactory way. Such a performer–educator dilemma may force one to 'take a side', especially when they want to be distinctive and articulate who they are and what they do. Furthermore, despite the highly technical and thus professional nature of musicians' work, they may still be seen as non-professional or not 'professional proper'. For many musicians, no career designation or professional status can really express who they are. There could be tension and disconnect between their multifaceted identity and the outward images projected by their career designations. This is perhaps the price of being a portfolio musician.

However, there are some positive notes in light of all this that are nicely demonstrated by the participants. A performer–educator can manage two profiles simultaneously for the advancement of each front. This breaks away from 'either/or' thinking and embraces an enterprising spirit. On the other hand, while some musicians have a less celebrated career and professional status, they can take courage from the fact that a mere label cannot undermine the professional nature of the work. The result is a strengthened self-image for musicians despite the muddled career perception.

9.2.3 Rethinking music professions

The thesis calls for further research on the professionality of musicians, i.e. what it means to be professional in music. The stakes are high. There are millions of working musicians around the world. They need to know where they stand in relation to the professional field and society at large. Three considerations have been suggested in the findings: establishments, income and specialities. However, more factors are waiting to be discovered through further qualitative research. More ambitiously, quantitative research could be set up to gauge how musicians perceive the importance of each consideration.

I posit that a research agenda for professionality might contribute to enhancing musicians' sustainability. First, the nature of musicians' work could be further examined to distinguish which extent or parts deserve professional status. In the same vein as this thesis, further research could discover and discuss more facets and criteria of professionality, leading to a more manifest concept. Then, the discourse would enable the musician community and its academic counterpart to better articulate why their work is unique and valuable in an evolving society. Next, an enhanced concept about their work would lead to growing confidence among musicians. In this way, more musicians would be emboldened to command a professional fee commensurate with their expertise, rather than be coaxed or coerced into discounting or volunteering their effort. Ultimately, it could result in more deservedly earned income and better sustainability for musicians.

Furthermore, comparative studies can be set up to investigate professionality between disciplines such as other arts, professions, careers and trades of all kinds. It may lead to a greater understanding of how society interprets and appreciates what it means to be professional in various disciplines.

9.2.4 Bolstering music education

The implications of this thesis have relevance for the education of professional musicians. The research could inform specific courses on career development for music students. For example, the themes of *looking inward*, e.g. clarifying one's calling, and *looking outward*, e.g. projecting one's career, could be explored. Delving into the cause and formation of calling could serve as a metacognition exercise,

strengthening one's reflexivity. It could also lead to the awareness of the 'bedrock' of calling, i.e. why musicians passionately pursue music in the first place, offering an anchor despite changing circumstances.

The research findings of this thesis have potential to be used as case studies to assist discussions about music vocationalism. Concern for professionality and sustainability would help musicians understand where they stand in the evolving music industry and wider society. The topics raised in the thesis are relevant to music industry courses and perhaps music education courses. As many musicians work across the creative and education fields, they face the question of their performer identity and teacher identity, which are intertwined and closely tied to the sense of calling.

9.2.5 Advancing calling research

The thesis points to a new area of calling research: how people frame their callings. This research has followed through the steps of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: descriptive, linguistic and conceptual commenting. In particular, the linguistic examination has yielded interesting results previously not anticipated at the beginning of the research. The findings suggest that people talk about their calling differently: they express it with conviction, limitation, reservation, or equivocation. This can serve as a sidelight for people's usage of the word calling. There is abundant room for further research. For example, what is the correlation between the sense of calling and the different ways people articulate their calling?

9.3 Limitations of this research

Chapter One has outlined the parameters or limitations of this research. Incidentally, those limitations spell out what can be researched in the future. The cohort of musicians invited, though with a design to be somewhat diverse in genre, expertise and cultural background, cannot represent the full gamut of New Zealand musicians. Future research could consider a more multicultural and multi-genre approach.

First, it would be of great interest to include Māori and Pasifika musicians in further research. Music is an enormous part of their identity

that is intricately joined to the notion of a higher calling, very often in the context of faith. The research could explore the link between their cultural roots, spirituality, calling, and career in music. Such research will be unique to Aotearoa New Zealand and beneficial to the development of multicultural society.

Second, including musicians from a broader range of genres would be of interest for further research. In this research, the participants mainly work in more traditional genres connected to Higher Music Education, such as classical, pop/rock and jazz. Musicians working in other genres such as folk, ethnic, hip-hop, heavy metal are under-represented in this study. They are usually associated with non-formal pathways to music careers which is worth investigating.

However, these limitations do not undermine the impact of this study. The study on the current musician cohort has revealed some findings that are not culture- or genre-specific but universal, such as the origin, formation and interpretation of a calling and sustainability awareness in a music career.

Another limitation of this research is that it only provides a snapshot of musicians' views at a particular time of their lives. Although they knew about my research topic beforehand, it would be likely their first time reflecting and articulating their calling and career in a meaningful way. This research captures those moments of articulation, be it assertive or hesitant, and offers a glimpse into how musicians think about their calling and career instinctively. However, it would be interesting to study the musicians longitudinally, especially across an extended period, and observe how their sense of calling and approach towards career change over time. Moreover, additional insights may be revealed in subsequent interviews and dialogues.

9.4 Conclusion

A musical calling arises from aesthetic experience and social relationships within music, regardless of religious faith. It calls for single-mindedness in music pursuit. However, having 'one true calling' may backfire on musicians. It engenders an intra-disciplinary world view that potentially blindsides them. On the other hand, having multiple callings and careers can be beneficial, allowing alternative outlets for passion and avenues for

income. At times, the other callings may even feed into the musical calling.

In a career, musicians may experience a wavering sense of calling, disruptive career change and acute career challenges, resulting in muddled identity and professionality. However, having a strong sense of calling and awareness for sustainability gives them the necessary resilience and competence to negotiate their career paths.

Overall, this thesis has worked towards a nuanced understanding of what it means to have a calling and career in music. It has rejected the one-dimensionality of calling and career and embraced the complexity and ambivalence grounded in the participants' experiences. For my participants, passion and bread coexist for the sake of each other: they do what they love to make a living, and in turn, make a living for what they love. This is a life well worth living.

Appendices

Appendix A

Participant information sheet

Faculty of Education and Social Work
(Epsom Campus)
Private Bag 92601, Symonds Street,
Auckland 1150, New Zealand.
mlee683@aucklanduni.ac.nz

Participant Information Sheet (Individual Interviews)

Please retain this sheet for your information

Research title: "Passion and bread: the calling and career of musicians"

Dear_____,

My name is Barry Lee and I am completing my Doctor of Philosophy at Auckland University under the supervision of Dr Trevor Thwaites and Dr David Lines.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research project which investigates the phenomenon of vocational calling, career trajectories, and sustainability issues in musicians. As the current world we live in is economically and technologically driven, working musicians need to adapt in order to survive and thrive in such environment. How do musicians 'listen' and nurture their calling, plan/act out a non-traditional career, make a living while persisting in their artistic endeavours? The project aims to provide valuable insights for:

1) any individual who intends to pursue a music career or study
2) working musicians and their partners
3) institutions who train career musicians, such as conservatories and music departments in universities and polytechnical institutes.

The research will occur during 2016 and 2017.

The research process will involve me asking you about your experiences and views working as a musician, as well as your reflections on how you develop your sense of vocational calling. As part of this study you will be asked to participate in a focus group discussion of up to ten people. The group meeting will last approximately 90 minutes. They will only be conducted during the days which you have nominated and which suit all group members. The interview will take place at the University of Auckland (Epsom Campus). The focus group will be audio recorded, transcribed and analysed by myself. Confidentiality issues for all members mean that the transcription of the focus group discussion cannot be sent to you personally for editing. However, you are encouraged to make clarification known to the Researcher should you recall any discrepancy. Should the Researcher wishes to investigate aspects of your career in more depth, you may be invited for a separate one-hour individual interview afterwards at a place convenient to you. If relevant to you, this interview will be audio recorded, transcribed and analysed by myself. Should you request it, the transcription of the individual interview will be sent to you for verification; two weeks will be given for you to respond.

The data I collect does not contain any personal information about you. However because of the nature of the research there is a small risk that it may be possible to identify me from some of the information shared. You will be asked to agree that all information shared in the focus groups will be kept confidential to the group. You will also be asked not to disclose to anyone outside the group any information about the members of the group. You may or may not benefit from the ideas and insights regarding music career exchanged in the discussion.

You have been asked to sign a Participation Consent Form (attached) for the focus group interview. Your participation is entirely voluntary. Your Programme Leader (if in a university) has given assurance that your participation or non-participation will not affect your relationship and employment with the organisation. If you decide to withdraw from the project you will be free to do so before the focus group discussion. In case you need to withdraw while the discussion is on-going, the contribution you already put in cannot be withdrawn. You do not need to give a reason for your withdrawal. You may choose not to answer some of the questions during the focus group interviews if you so prefer.

Should you be invited for an individual interview, a separate consent form will be sent to you. You have the opportunity to check the transcript of your personal interview for accuracy.

All of the collected data and consent forms will be securely stored at the Faculty of Education of Social Work, University of Auckland for a period of six years after the publication of thesis, before being destroyed. You can receive a written summary on the findings of this study upon request. The data may be used for my thesis, future publications and conference presentations; however individual participants will not be clearly identifiable.

If you have any queries regarding this project you may contact:

Principal Investigator:	**Co-Investigator**
Dr Trevor Thwaites Principal Lecturer School of Curriculum and Pedagogy Faculty of Education and Social Work The University of Auckland Private Bag 92603 Symonds Street. Auckland. 09 6238899 ext. 48702 t.thwaites@auckland.ac.nz	Dr David Lines Associate Professor National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries The University of Auckland Private Bag 92603 Symonds Street. Auckland. 09 923 4881 d.lines.@auckland.ac.nz

Researcher:	**Head of School:**
Barry M.K. Lee PhD Candidate School of Curriculum and Pedagogy Faculty of Education and Social Work The University of Auckland Private Bag 92603 Symonds Street. Auckland. Mobile: 021 1336233 mlee683@aucklanduni.ac.nz	Associate Professor Helen Hedges Head of School A– Block Epsom 74 Epsom Ave, Epsom Auckland 1023 09 373 7599 h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz

Yours sincerely
Barry Lee

For queries regarding any ethical concerns, please contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142, Telephone 09 373599 ext. 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS COMMITTEE
on May 27, 2016 REFERENCE: 016756

Appendix B

Consent form for participants

Faculty of Education and Social Work
(Epsom Campus)
Private Bag 92601,
Symonds Street,
Auckland 1150,
Phone (09) 623 8899
mlee683@aucklanduni.ac.nz

Consent Form for Participants (Individual Interview)
(This form will be kept for a period of six years)

Project title: "Passion and bread: the calling and career of musicians"

Name of Researcher: Barry Lee

I have read the Participant Information Sheet; have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research.
- I agree to participate in a focus group interview for a maximum of 90 minutes.
- I understand that I have the right to not answer any specific questions in the focus group.
- I have the right to leave the group sessions at any time.
- I can withdraw participation at any time prior to the interview discussion taking place
- I understand that I should respect the privacy of the other focus group members and keep any information shared in the focus group confidential.
- I understand that my participation or non-participation will not affect my relationship and employment with the School of Music, the Faculty of Education and the University of Auckland at large; also that my academic results in the University will not be affected.
- I understand that any data that I contribute will not be used in any way which could prejudice my employment or relationship with the above institution.
- I understand and agree that I will be recorded and that data will be stored in a digital format and transcribed by the researcher.
- I understand and agree that I will not be able to edit the transcription of the focus group discussion.
- I understand that the data may be used for the researcher's doctoral thesis, future publications and conference presentations.
- I understand that I will not be named in the study and the researcher will make every effort to preserve confidentiality. However I understand that because of the nature of the research there is a small risk that it may be possible to identify me from some of the information shared.
- I understand that data will be kept secure for six years after which the digital recordings will be erased and the transcriptions shredded. The Consent Forms will be stored separately from data.
- I wish/ do not wish to receive a summary of the findings.

Contact details Name……

Email/ phone no. ……

The Consent Form will be restricted to the Principal Investigator and the researcher and will be stored on University premises.

Name…… Signature…….

Date……..

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on May 27, 2016

For three years Reference Number 016756

Appendix C

Interview schedule

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND
Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau

Faculty of Education and Social Work
(Epsom Campus)
Private Bag 92601, Symonds Street,
Auckland 1150, New Zealand.
mlee683@aucklanduni.ac.nz

List of Interview Questions

Research title: "*Passion and bread: the calling and career of musicians* "

Researcher: Barry Lee

1. How did you get started in music?
2. When did you realise that music was going to be a big part of your life – your calling?
3. What has been your most satisfying musical experience so far?
4. How has the music industry changed since you became a musician?
5. Would you consider your calling in music career strengthened or weakened? What are the factors?
6. What is like to have a career change, within music and/or beyond music?
7. How do you sustain and adapt your music career in the 21st century? What are the challenges faced?
8. Would you recommend a career in music to your children?

Example questions for further probe

1. How was the sense of calling developed at the beginning? Was it initiated by external/internal/both sources?
2. How does the perceived sense of calling change over time?
3. How does such sense of calling propel one in advancing a music career?
4. How was this sense of calling nurtured, internally and externally?
5. What specific steps do you take to live out your calling, or to maintain or enhance your sense of calling?
6. How does self-reflection, meditation, or other religious practices cultivate the sense of calling?
7. How does the sense of calling guide one in making a major career decision (such as a career switch)?
8. How does the sense of calling sustain your endeavour in music, whether for paid/unpaid work or hobby?
9. Do careers in and outside music cause conflict? How do you resolve it?
10. Do you ever feel overworked and exploited by clients/superiors in a music career? How did you resolve the situation?
11. Does the sense of calling limit or broaden the boundary in your music career? How?
12. To what extent do you think you have lived out your calling? What are the positive and negative outcomes by living out the calling?
13. How's it like to live as a portfolio musician? (if applicable) How are the life and work patterns like, in terms of time and financial

management?

14. What do you think of career progression? (e.g. obtaining a higher degree, owning a business, working in academia)
15. If you have someone close (such as children/sibling) who have had a strong calling in a music career, would you recommend them he/she to pursue the career? What advice would you offer?
16. What recommendation would you make for the benefits of higher music education, in terms of preparing music graduates for a portfolio career?
17. What practical advice would you offer for the benefits of the next generation musicians in terms of career development and cultivation of calling?
18. How do you sustain and adapt your music career and livelihood financially?
19. How do you sustain your music career by keeping up with the physical demand required?
20. How do you sustain and adapt your music career and livelihood strategically?
21. What are the challenges faced within the dynamics of a changing global economic, technological and cultural environment?

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