SYMPHONIC ENGAGEMENT

A Case Study of Extra-Curricular Engagement in String Orchestras

by

Tony Nam-Hai Leong

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Graduate Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

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Abstract

Symphonic Engagement is a longitudinal study spanning six years, investigating the reasons and benefits for, and the impact on twelve urban public school students who decided to use their free time to participate and be engaged in extra-curricular activities in string orchestras.

Literature and research inform us that the arts can play a significant role in the curriculum, inside and outside school, and this study discusses: the connection of the music curriculum to students’ future lives after secondary school graduation; the place of music education in the curriculum; music in our society; music and the brain; the effect of after-school programs on student engagement; and the pedagogy of arts education.

Case study is the qualitative methodology used in this research. Data comes from interviews, field notes, and questionnaires that explore and interrogate the issues surrounding music education. Twelve young participants, from different gender, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds, were interviewed about their lived experiences and involvement with string orchestras, and on the ways in which these experiences have affected them as students and as members of society.
The analysis of the data reveals connections between the author’s arts experiences in the public school system, and those of the twelve students interviewed.

The teacher-student relationship, equity, family influence, and technology are discussed as factors that can strengthen programs for youth, by deepening engagement in school experiences.

This study explores why some teachers and students choose to participate or become engaged in extra-curricular activities and examines the impact on educational communities, on the future direction of string education, and on the relationship of the teaching/learning experience.
Many people have accompanied me on the wonderful journey on which my thesis has taken me.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Sheong-Seng Eddie Leong and Lai-Chong Ellen Leong who gave up so much to help my brother David and me have the life we have today.
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Symphonic Engagement
Movement I - Introduction

Tony Nam-Hai Leong
(1974 - )

Intrada $J = 80$

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Contrabass

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.
CHAPTER I

Introduction

Intrada

A piece that accompanies the entrance of a character on the stage or of an important personage at an event; also music that introduces or marks the beginning of another work or of a dance (Randel, 2003, p. 416).

As we move towards a society where argument still thrives in determining the value of the arts in education, it is important for me as a music educator to remember that “education in music prepares young people to meet a daunting future, but it must also help them face a terrifying present” (Pitman, 1998, p. 37).

Pitman, an advocate for the arts in Canada, reminds me how important the arts can be in the lives of students I teach. From my own teaching, and from my academic experiences, I must declare my own bias in that I agree so wholeheartedly with his statements. The recent Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum for the Arts 1-8 (2009) says that:

Education in the arts is essential to students’ intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth and well-being. Experiences in the arts – in dance, drama, music, and visual arts – play a valuable role in helping students to achieve their potential as learners and to participate fully in their community and in society as a whole. The arts provide a natural vehicle through which students can explore and express themselves and through which they can discover and interpret the world around them. Participation in the arts contributes in important ways to students’ lives and learning – it involves intense engagement, development of motivation and confidence, and the use of creative and dynamic ways of thinking and knowing. It is well documented that the intellectual and emotional development of children is enhanced through study of the arts. Through the study of dance, drama, music, and visual arts, students develop the ability to think creatively and critically. The arts nourish and stimulate the imagination, and provide students with an expanded range of tools, techniques, and skills to help them gain
insights into the world around them and to represent their understandings in various ways (p. 3).

For me, the arts are a living, breathing entity that, much like life, require nurturing and attention. However, as a doctoral candidate, I wanted to pursue research and inquiry in order to confront my own belief system concerning the effect that an arts education may have on music students who volunteer their free time to participate in extra-curricular activities in string orchestras. But questions arise: how do these students benefit from this experience? What are the reasons for their desire to be part of this voluntary community of music makers? What is my motivation for supporting this voluntary endeavour? How can results from the research affect policy makers and administrators in their support of extra-curricular activities in the arts, of teachers, and of schools? And most important, what can I learn from these students’ voices concerning their six years as a string ensemble?

It seems almost expected that extra-curricular activities in music be available in each school, where the music teacher and certain students come in early before the start of the school day, or stay late after school, to participate in rehearsals, present concerts on special occasions, and obtain extra help during lunch time. According to the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation’s Policy Statements, all these activities are beyond what is expected in the curriculum or in the teacher’s duties or responsibilities:

It is the policy of OSSTF that involvement in extra-curricular activities should be voluntary; that employers should respect the right of any member to refuse extra-curricular activities; that member involvement in extra-curricular activities should not be subject to evaluation and should not be used as a basis for
promotion; that there should be no monetary compensation for supervision of extra-curricular activities as long as the supervision of extra-curricular activities is considered as a voluntary service (OSSTF Policies, March 2008, p. 7).

However, is this the case in every school, or with every teacher? Are there situations where teachers and students are not involved with any events beyond the scope of the school day and curriculum expectations? In Stephanie Pitts’ (2008) research on extra-curricular activities in the United Kingdom secondary schools, she informs us that adults who were given the opportunity to participate in these activities and experiences when they were teenagers were profoundly affected by their participation, and therefore Pitts found that extra-curricular activities in music have “a highly valuable role to play in engaging students with music and securing their long-term interest and confidence in performing” (p. 14). Pitts also reminds us “researchers have a crucial role to play in documenting and analyzing such activities, so that the function of extra-curricular activities in musical learning can be more widely understood” (Ibid, p. 14). These queries have led me to my thesis topic: why do certain students, and course instructors, spend time from their busy schedules to participate in these activities, and what are the effects of these experiences on both students and the school’s philosophy of arts education?

Symphonic Engagement is an examination of these students volunteering in extra-curricular string orchestra during their adolescent years. This study will look at the implications for this music experience within the overall curriculum that includes the extended learning done outside of the school day.
My Libretto

Who I have become as a music educator and researcher is reflected in my past experience, both personal and professional. In this section, I will narrate my journey as a student, a musician, and a teacher, in order to help establish a context for my case study, for so much of my life’s work.

Qualitative Research reflects on who the researcher is and is sensitive to their personal background and how it shapes the study. Statements of personal reflection are included and considered a basic part of the research (Phillips, 2008, p. 84).

I. A Child in the Arts

My life’s journey began in an environment that was void of any formal artistic influence. In the first few years of my formal education, I was groomed to take the examinations set forth by a school in my homeland, which focused heavily on memory skills, such as mathematic sets, language grammar and historical events. No creativity was expected of us at the school I attended, and no music or art lessons were introduced.

The year 1978 proved to be a year that would help initiate the artistic and creative experiences that had been ignored thus far in my life. Our family decided to immigrate to Canada, and I will always remember my first day in a Canadian public school. As I walked into the building, I immediately noticed the vibrant walls, covered with paintings and drawings from students in the school, in strong contrast to the results, grades and numbers to which I was so accustomed on the school walls of the previous school in my birth country. I can see why “people in other countries are very much aware that Canada produces extraordinary artists in virtually every field of artistic endeavour” (Pitman, 1998, p.
It definitely gave me the lasting impression that many Canadian schools foster a curriculum full of aesthetic and creative processes.

As I entered my new classroom, I was immediately presented with an art assignment. The activities were finger painting, poetry and the singing of Canada’s national anthem. It was all still confusing to me, due to the language issue, but I was fortunate enough to have an educational assistant who spoke my language at that time. I asked her what the parameters were with these assignments, and she just smiled at me and told me to create whatever I’d like. It was the first time that I felt the freedom to express myself, to use my imagination and creativity, to be alive as an artist. Eisner (1963) quotes Morris Stein’s definition of a creative product as a “novel work that is considered useful, tenable, or satisfying by some group at some point in time” (p. 371). It gave me great pleasure and satisfaction that I was able to create a product that was personalized, and that reflected my values and my personality. Afterwards, we were able to share our artwork with the rest of the class, by having it displayed around the classroom. I definitely felt at that point that I was truly part of the class and that a part of me belonged to the aesthetics of the classroom.

Several years passed, and each year of schooling became more exciting than the last. I was told that my penmanship was unique, as I had “more curves and neatness” in my writing than did the others in the class. My drawings were also well received and I was beginning to put text alongside my drawings. I became a more visual learner, able to express my feelings and thoughts in shapes and shades. The experiences helped release my creativity and
personality; they helped build the power with which I was starting to become familiar, the power of drawing what I wanted to draw and not what I was told to draw. However, this sense of artistic freedom did not last long.

It was during grade three that I had to have a routine eye exam. It was devastating to find out that I was colour blind. My feelings, emotions and the freedom to express myself slowly began to crumble, and I felt helpless. I wasn’t sure how to continue. Up until this point, I was used to drawing what I wanted. It never occurred to me that the colours I was using were labeled with different names. These issues were not important to me at the time. All I wanted was to draw and create beautiful images. Each time I put pencil to paper, I felt like I was transported to another world; I felt free to colour with any coloured pencil crayon. Jensen (2000) explains this phenomenon of “temporarily in another world” as an altered state and is “sometimes broadly measured by cycles per second of brain-wave activity” (p. 49).

All these emotions and feelings were destroying me from the inside and I decided to immediately share these feelings with my teacher, a figure whom I had learned to trust. Instead of offering me alternatives on how to continue my art making or reassuring me that “all students are artistic and creative in their own ways” (Morin, 2000, p. 11), she said, “You’re colour blind! You’ll never be an artist. It’s simply ridiculous.” I have carried these words with me through life. After this incident, I was hesitant when drawing or colouring. I felt as if the freedom to draw and colour what I wanted had been taken away from me. Drawing was no longer a release; it became a chore. Every time I looked at
colour, I could only see the different shades. I couldn’t distinguish between certain colours. I would always rely on my friends to tell me the colour of things. I felt depressed and upset. The freedom to express my feelings and the creativity that I felt being in a Canadian school, were suddenly taken from me over night. As Pitman (1998) writes, “The arts have always been perceived as a path to deeper understandings about the quality of life on earth” (p. 163). The quality of my life at this stage was diminishing before my colour blind eyes.

A year passed after the comment made about my colour blindness. It was a difficult time, as I had to deal with the loss of the one process that made me feel connected – art. Nevertheless, I felt that there was a higher power within myself, telling me that I wasn’t finished with my artistic experiences.

It was a fall afternoon when my brother David brought home a violin from school. It was the first time that I had seen a violin and when he took it out and played a tune, I knew that it had to be a part of my life. My connection to the arts was once again rekindled. Music was written in black and white; I didn’t have to recognize or use colour at all. Music was going to be my artistic outlet. It was going to be the vehicle that I could use to express my feelings and activate my creativity as I once did with drawing and painting. “Much of the world in which humans live can be regarded for its intrinsically expressive, or aesthetic qualities, whether or not it was intended for that purpose” (Reimer, 1989, p. 56). I was able to be human again through a different kind of art – music. That would prove to be even more fulfilling and influential to my life than the visual arts calling.
My first year of playing the violin became an important part of my journey into the arts. The process of learning how to hold the instrument, playing actual notes, and adding musicality to the notes on paper, were the most memorable moments of my elementary school years. Shively (2002) comments on the beginning orchestra classroom teacher setting the tone for the nature of this journey and that each child not only learns to play an instrument, but more importantly develops the ability to know about and think about music, thereby developing a much greater musical knowledge that can be demonstrated on the instrument (p. 169).

My music teacher provided me with the sense of being on an exciting adventure with endless possibilities. These positive experiences no doubt affected the way I learned the instrument and developed my musicality.

I had found another tool to help relieve my problems and articulate emotions. The process also allowed me to make new friends and be around other students who also enjoyed making music. This was a completely different experience from my visual arts experience. In the class, all the students were beginners and I didn’t feel that I had a disability. We also worked collaboratively rather than individually, which helped showcase our successes and difficulties in learning the violin. In addition, the teacher was encouraging and inspiring, and always allowed mistakes during the music process.

Not only did we learn to play simple tunes on our instruments, but we were also given the opportunity to attend a Toronto Symphony Orchestra performance with this music teacher. “Musical listening, consequently, is first and foremost a matter of attending to the given moment in all of its particularity” (Stubley, 1999,
p. 5), and at this moment, it was the orchestra’s performance that helped me see what possibilities were available for playing the violin and creating music. The Toronto Symphony Orchestra quickly became my idol and gave me the vision of playing someday with an orchestra of such calibre and size. As I reflect back on these experiences, I realize how valuable these opportunities were to me as an emerging artist and student. They provided me with a view of the arts in the real world and helped set realistic goals for myself. It was also very inspiring to meet and talk with the professionals who showed me the career possibilities of an arts-maker through hard work and practice. Their advice and comments would act as words of wisdom throughout my adolescent life. The idea of a partnership between the school and the community was essential to the introduction of the arts into my life. It made me “develop into a musically competent and confident person by being immersed in music experiences of all kinds (listening and music-making) and by receiving many demonstrations of music-making, music-enjoying and music-using” (Cameron & Bartel, 2000, p. 22).

Our first school concert was held in the springtime of that school year. The rehearsals became increasingly intense and exciting as we came closer to the concert date. The performance provided “focused, refined opportunities for musical creation” (Reimer, 1989, p. 187) and helped showcase all the efforts that were put forth that year. It also brought the process and the end result together.

I was nearing the end of my sixth grade when my music teacher at school handed me an application form to go to music camp. The opportunity would allow me to meet other music students from across the city, work with a variety of
talented musicians and teachers, and play my violin for seven whole wonderful days. This sounded like a trip to paradise; an opportunity of a lifetime. It was almost too good to be true. I never would have imagined such a magical place where so many people would congregate to make music all day long. It was at this moment that my music teacher remembered that he had not mentioned the cost that would be involved. When I eventually found out, I was devastated. It was very obvious to my teacher through my expression and reaction that this would not be something that I could afford. He quickly reassured me that he would try and advocate for some funding to help lower the cost.

I initially did not tell my parents about this opportunity because I knew how hard they were already working to provide the basic necessities for my brother and me. The next few weeks of school would be very difficult for me, as the urge and wish to go to music camp became increasingly stronger.

Two weeks before the start of the camp, I received the confirmation to attend camp from my music teacher. I was really confused; I didn’t understand how this could happen. I did not mention a word to my parents about the camp. I later found out that my parents had discovered the music camp application form and had both decided to take on extra jobs to get the needed funds to send me to camp. It was always their intention to provide the very best for their children and would rarely accept recognition for their efforts.

This camp experience provided me with a lifetime of continued involvement with, and an enjoyment of music camps. It helped me forge and continued to foster a wonderful life-long friendship with my friend Daniel Found,
who has supported me with all my musical and life endeavours. It is friendships like this that have played an important role in interesting and motivating me to continue studying music in elementary school, secondary school, university, and eventually, in life.

Grade seven quickly approached. I was still not drawing or painting, but I found balance in my life because I was involved in the school’s string program and choir. While I was in the choir, my music teacher asked me to join the St. James’ Cathedral Boys’ Choir. He was part of the men’s choir and thought that I would be up for the challenge. I was really excited about this invitation for this gave me another opportunity to discover another medium to express my creative and emotional self. I was confident that my parents would approve of this activity since singing in the choir was a paid position, which would indicate that my endeavours were taking on a professional status.

The years spent singing in the boys’ choir helped shape me as a musician and person. I can still remember entering the chapel on the first day of practice; the walls were covered with paintings and the windows were all stained glass, with images of birds, Christ and other symbols of the church. I recall the art of the paintings and stained-glass windows coming to life. The diversity of colours mixed in with the sun shining through it created a symphony of beautifully choreographed lights. Each picture on the stain-glassed windows and the paintings on the walls seemed to tell a story through their clever use of imagery accompanied by the ghostly sounds collected from the singing of choral music through its many decades of existence. “Art opens a door through which we can
see the past. We can view other peoples, other cultures, and find ourselves, with the same dreams and desires, the same humanity that long ago people experienced” (Romero, 1996, p. 2 in Nieviadomy, 2000, p. 53). I was able to feel the history of art making (both visual and musical) within the walls of St. James’ Cathedral at that moment.

When I sang for the first time in the chapel, the experience was electrifying. The artwork on the walls, the music we were singing, and the poetry embedded within the music, became the most beautiful ensemble of freedom, creativity and beauty. I realized that this encounter gave me a new perspective on the arts as an integrated experience, and provided me with a “more horizontal approach to knowledge, allowing me to excel in my other subjects by relating everything to the arts” (Pitman, 1998, pp. 199 – 200).

Even though I was given this revelation, my life was still void of the visual arts aspect of the arts experience. My colour blindness still hindered me. Although I could see the different colours, I was still confused by certain ones; I felt like a musician without sight, unable to see the sheet music to be played. The fact that I could see the beautiful artwork, but not have the opportunity to truly appreciate it to the fullest, made me feel incomplete. However, to overcome this depression, I was fortunate that I had music as a vehicle to help deal with this reality. Music has always been a source of guidance that helps with healing as it brings me to another dimension of life.

The rest of my junior high years were filled with music, but many things remained unchanged, including my phobia about visual art and colour. It was
also a time in my life where I began to see how finances influenced my
development as a musician and artist. I realized that several students in my
class had begun to take private lessons, and this was helping them to make rapid
achievements in their respective instruments. “Studio instructors have an
unequalled opportunity to advise students” (Smith, 2003, p. 85), and this made
me recognize the impact that private lessons would have had on me technically
and on my desire to teach the violin. Even though this was something that I
desperately wanted and needed, I knew that this was not a request that could be
put forth to my parents. They were already trying their best to provide my brother
and me with food and a roof over our heads. Nevertheless, this limitation only
gave me the urge to practice more and to take advantage of extra assistance
offered by my music teacher. Levitin (2006), a psychology professor who runs
the Laboratory for Music Perception, Cognition, and Expertise at McGill
University, informs us through his research that “students who practiced more
had the better performances than students who practiced less despite their talent
label” (p. 192). I didn’t feel that I was particularly talented, but rather that I had a
passion, drive, and love for music, and realized that it was necessary for me to
take the initiative to push myself and to grasp every opportunity that was given to
me in order to gain the skills and strengths to create and express myself
musically and artistically.

The transition from junior high to secondary school gave me new
challenges and struggles in my journey with the arts. The secondary school that
I attended had an excellent reputation for both academics and string education.
Although it wasn’t an arts school, it provided me with the balance I needed. It was at this point in my life that my parents began to encourage me strongly to study any field but music. This effort was based on the environment in which my parents were brought up, where mathematics and sciences are respected and “garnished with riches”. This mentality is similar to Elliot’s (2003) thoughts on the aims of the North American society to provide children with a school system that fails to make a significant place for music because these subjects do not have clear and direct connections to the ‘business world’ to money making, and to their concomitants (p. 33).

I had never thought that I would ever have the opportunity to pursue a career in the arts, because of the strong effect that my parents had on me. I have always regarded my parents as my role models and would never willingly disobey or disappoint them. I knew they worked extremely hard and they deserved to be respected.

The first two years of high school passed quickly and I became heavily involved with the activities offered by the music department. In many ways, the music teacher was like my elementary school music teachers. Her love for teaching and music was evident. She always provided us with a variety of opportunities and challenges that helped shape our musicality, expanded our creativity and deepened our personalities. It was in the middle of my grade 10 year when my music teacher pulled me aside and recommended me for a job as a camp counsellor at a music camp run by the Board of Education. The responsibilities of a music camp counsellor were to assist students in grades 6-8 with their instruments and to supervise them in their cabins and at meal times. I
immediately took the necessary papers home and discussed this with my parents that very night.

“The music camp experience has been and continues to be a significant event in the lives of many students and educators” (Fitzsimmins, 2004, p. 10). I didn’t realize how much enjoyment and accomplishment I could feel teaching something that I loved to others at camp. I also had the opportunity to work with other professionals who were working in the field of music. I learned much about music making, life as a musician, and teaching young people. It was so satisfying to see the students’ performance at the end of the camp session. I was able to see my art being interpreted by these students. I saw myself as the person who was influencing rather than the person being influenced. However, the students also affected me on another level with their performance. I knew from that experience that music camp would become an important aspect of my life, that teaching and making music were things that intrigued and excited me.

I was entering my last year of high school and I was all prepared to apply for the engineering program at the local universities. As I was deciding the direction of my post-secondary education, I turned to the teacher I most respected and trusted – my music teacher, Ann Celhoffer. She immediately suggested that I audition for the music program at the University of Toronto. She shared with me a story about a student who went on to study biochemistry in post-secondary school because of her parents, but four years later, decided to follow her love of music by ending up with a music degree instead. She was actually telling me the story of her life and how she eventually followed her
passion. This story inspired me, and I submitted my application, with music as my first choice. At this point in my life, I knew that I would probably not make it through the rigorous audition process, so I would eventually enter a science program. Nevertheless, I was so excited to do something that I wanted to do that I didn’t really think about the ramifications or impact that my decision would have upon my parents and my family life.

My audition was 10:30 in the morning, but I wanted to arrive a little earlier to walk around the building. As I entered the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto for the first time, my response was completely different from how I had felt in the past. There weren’t pictures or artistic drawings on the walls like the ones I had seen on my first day in a Canadian school or at St. James’ Cathedral. All I experienced was music: music from the corridors, music from every classroom, and music from the foyer. All types of music could be heard: classical, jazz, modern, and so forth. I just closed my eyes for a mere second and envisioned myself transported to heaven. Reimer (1989) describes this type of feeling as “aesthetic sensitivity” (p. 110), the ability to “perceive the art creation, aesthetically and react aesthetically.” Barone and Eisner’s (1997) thoughts on how “good art possesses a capacity to pull the person who experiences it into an alternative reality” (p. 73) described the temporary loss of seeing my present surroundings at that very moment, and admitted me into another portal of the world, a portal full of beauty, hope and creativity.

I proceeded to the classroom assigned to me as a warm-up room. In this room, there were other musicians warming up for their auditions that were either
before or after mine. After watching them play, I felt the tension and seriousness that each of them exhibited. It was obvious that they had been well trained with many years of private lessons and had many more opportunities than I had. I quickly blocked these people from my mind and I decided to just play from the heart. I wasn't as concerned about the audition as the others were, because I knew that if I didn't get into the program, I would still be a good candidate for the Arts and Science program. My audition ended rapidly and I was sent away to wait for the results.

Several weeks passed and the letter finally came. I opened it quickly and found that I had been accepted into the music program at the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto. This was the most fulfilling day in my life. I felt a great accomplishment since I had competed against people who had private training throughout their lives. That night, I told my parents about the audition, with great enthusiasm and excitement at the dinner table. I first revealed that I had been accepted into the University of Toronto. They were ecstatic! Then, I told them I was accepted into the music program, and when they heard this, I saw fear, confusion, and concern in their faces; my father more so than my mother. I felt as if I had disappointed them and that's what affected me the most. After hours of attempting to convince them that I would still continue taking science and math courses, they finally accepted my decision. At that moment, I felt that I made the wrong choice with my brain, but I knew I made the right choice with my heart.

The next four years that I spent at the Faculty of Music were some of the happiest moments of my life. I felt that I truly belonged there. I was accepted for
who I was and I didn't have to pretend to be someone else; I even had my first visual art experience since the disastrous colour blind incident in grade three. It was a couple of months into the second year of my studies at the university, when a fellow student showed me some calligraphy and notation done by hand. I looked at it and tried some on my own. I was later paid to write calligraphy for some degrees distributed by the university, as well as transposing and arranging music for some professors. This was the one art form that was missing in my life - drawing. I had forgotten how much I loved to draw and these opportunities at the university helped ignite the flame that was crushed so many years ago by my grade three teacher.

After my experiences at the university and music camp, I knew that my life had to include two things - the arts and teaching. I wanted to give back the arts experiences that I had received as a child and share my influences and inspirations with others. I didn't feel that my journey with the arts was ending, but that it had just begun.

It was during my last year at the Faculty of Music when my father suddenly passed away with a heart attack. He had always had concerns about my decision of selecting the arts as a career choice, fearing that it would not be financially worthwhile. However, the morning before he died, I heard someone playing the piano on the lower level of the house. I quickly came downstairs and saw my father tinkling away on the keyboard. I don't think that I have ever heard him play the piano until that day. As I reflect back, his piano playing gave me a sense that he finally accepted my career choice in the arts.
I was devastated at the loss of my father and I found that the violin and music helped heal my sadness and depression. A couple of my friends from the music faculty came to the funeral and provided the music during the service. Hodges (2005) informs us that “words will be spoken in the form of a eulogy and there is also likely to be music. The words cannot express what the music does, nor can the music substitute for the words at a funeral” (p. 112). This was definitely a blessing. I was grateful at that point that I had music as part of my life. When I was depressed or sad because of my father’s passing, I would take out my violin and play, and this removed me from the sadness of the loss.

Music is a source of healing. There is no doubt that music can soothe the troubled heart. All of us experience a deficit from time to time in our psychological/spiritual lives that welcomes music’s healing powers (Willingham, 2001, p. 172).

Sacks (2007), a neurologist, wrote in a chapter of his book, *Musicophilia*, that hearing Schubert, a composer that connected him to his mother, helped him recall old memories and made him feel alive once again after feeling much depression after her death. Shortly thereafter, I started my last year at the Faculty of Music and completed my degree.

The following year, I was accepted into the Bachelor of Education at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto right after the completion of my music degree at the Faculty of Music. Since school didn’t start until September, I decided to return to my homeland for a visit. It was the first time I had set foot there since my departure twenty-one years before. I found the experience very enlightening, and I immediately noticed the fast-paced, business-oriented style to which these citizens were accustomed. I also realized,
through talking to my relatives and visiting my old elementary school, that I was extremely fortunate to have been a product of the Canadian school system. It was clear to me then and now that had I not immigrated to Canada, I would not have been introduced to all the arts experiences that have helped shape my personality and soul.

It has been quite a journey for me in my search for balance between the arts, my family, my life and my role as an arts educator. I have noticed that my experiences in the past have helped me realize my mission, and that personal and professional goals blend in an holistic understanding.

The arts facilitate joyful learning as no other process can, simply because they build on the innate, individual and collective desire to express profound ideas and feelings in dance, song, story, or picture (Pitman, 1998, p. 7).

My research involvement with the graduate program at OISE has increased my mandate for strengthening and promoting the arts in our school system, as well as in our community.

The other aspect of my involvement in the arts is within the public school system. I am presently working as an instrumental music educator in an inner city school. I have noticed that these students who are most dear to my heart, remind me of the challenges with which I had to deal as a beginning arts student struggling with little support and funds from home. I have tried to provide as many opportunities for them as my music teachers provided for me in the past. Hopefully, these students will take these opportunities and explore their place in the arts world. Perhaps one day, they will be able to inspire their students or children with the gift to create, express and experience music.
II. A Teacher in Arts Education

The idea of pursuing a career in teaching came from many years of watching and learning from inspiring teachers at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels.

I began my professional teaching career at an elementary school working with students in grades seven and eight. I taught primarily string music, with some history and geography courses to complete my full time status. My position also included the development of an extra-curricular string orchestra that would travel to the United States on a music exchange that same year. Some of these students in the string orchestra would eventually become the participants of this research.

Throughout my years at the Bel Canto school, I found myself exhibiting characteristics of those who had once taught me. In my developing philosophy of teaching, I realized that as a public school music educator, my goal was not to develop and prepare students for a professional position in music; rather, it was to provide opportunities for them to appreciate, learn, create, and evaluate the arts, and its place in our society.

The twelve participants in this research were in the orchestra and music class during my first two years at the Bel Canto school. As they graduated from the school and moved onto the local high school, they returned to the orchestral program, where I had an opportunity to work with them in a different role: a mentor and partner in developing the next generation of string players. As they were approaching the completion of their secondary education, they continued
their interaction with me by coming back to visit me at the Bel Canto school, through music camps, e-mail, and most currently, social networks such as Facebook.

It was my fifth year of teaching full-time strings at the Bel Canto school when I was informed that I would be teaching grade seven and eight history, geography, special education, and French on top of my string classes. At this point, I knew that I would not be able to spend the time or energy to maintain my program. Therefore, when an opportunity to teach at the secondary level came up, I accepted the position to teach strings and French at another urban school.

The secondary school (grades nine to twelve), gave me an opportunity to work with students at a different level: students who have chosen music because they wanted to take music as their elective arts subject in the Ontario secondary curriculum. However, there were other challenges when dealing with secondary school students, such as their part-time jobs, and their parents encouraging them to take math and sciences, which resulted in their not being able to fit music in their timetable.

In addition, the extra-curricular schedule did not make it easy for the students to become involved in both sports and music, as it had at the Bel Canto school. The Bel Canto school structured all sports to be held after school, and the music rehearsals in the mornings. At this secondary school, there were no set schedules; rehearsals and sport practices occurred at the same time, which caused students to choose certain sports that coincided with music practices.
In addition, students at this secondary school received a credit for their rehearsals outside of the school day, which could eventually provide them with a credit to apply to their entrance into university or college, should they stay with the program until their grade twelve year. Initially, I wondered if the students would be as involved or enthusiastic about coming to rehearsals if they weren’t receiving this extra credit as my middle school students had at the Bel Canto school. This year, due to budget cuts and enrolment, we lost the opportunity to offer the repertoire credit to our students. Despite the loss of this incentive, students continued to show up for practices, and this helped confirm that they enjoyed coming to rehearsals, and not necessarily to earn an extra credit.

This is the twelfth year of my teaching career, and I feel that I am slowly moving into the role of mentoring students who wish to pursue a career in music teaching, especially in the area of string education. In the past several years, six of my string students, one of whom was a grade seven student of mine at the Bel Canto school, and is a participant of this study, went into teaching. Currently, I have another six who have shown interest towards moving into a university program.

The experiences I received teaching string students from kindergarten to grade twelve in both the public and private sectors, in different social economic environments, and with the diverse mix of cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds, made me aware of the impact that string education in the public system can have on the students with whom I worked.
III. A Researcher in the Making

At the recent International Sociology of Music Education Symposium held in Limerick, Ireland, July 2009, where I had been invited to present a paper, there were forty researchers, scholars, professors, and doctoral students of music education gathered together to present their current research, and discuss issues surrounding the sociology of music education. During the five-day symposium, a variety of topics and research led to some common themes and issues that I have examined in this thesis: Community, Identity, and Social Justice.

Lucy Green, a sociologist and professor of music education at London University, gave a keynote speech on the sociology of music education, which was extremely informative and relevant to the social aspects of this thesis. In her address, she spoke of the reality that any person is inevitably and automatically a member of several social groups. It is through these opportunities, interactions, and associations that individuals enter the many social groups to which they belong.

The word “Identity” appeared quite extensively throughout the research presented at this symposium. It appeared over 80 times in the submitted abstracts and was a topic often discussed in the presentations. Donna Emmanuel, a coordinator of the PhD and Master’s programs in the Division of Music Education at the University of Texas, explored identity through music and culture. Her paper on Exploring Identity: Knowing Self before Others looked at themes of interconnectedness, and the need to find one’s identity in order to start understanding others’. At a time of an adolescent’s life, where they are “identity
seekers” (Jone & Perkins, 2006, p. 92), I recognize how important it is to provide them with such opportunities.

Social Justice was also a topic explored at the symposium. Lucy Green, John O’Flynn, Alibhe Kenny (Mary Immaculate College, UL, Ireland), Michelle Finnerty (University College Cork, Ireland), and Evelyn Grant (CIT Cork School of Music, Ireland), all mentioned the need to improve musical opportunities for social groups. John O’Flynn referred to the initiatives in Venezuela with the El Sistema, a publicly financed voluntary sector for music education project with the Fesnojv, a state foundation which watches over Venezuela’s youth orchestras and instrumental training programs, where an orchestra was established by an economist and amateur musician, Jose Antonio Abreu in 1975, to deal with social problems. It reached great success in helping and transforming the lives of some of Venezuela’s poorest children. According to a documentary about the program on the CBS program, 60 Minutes that aired July 16th, 2008, “there are nearly 300,000 children in the system with 176 orchestras for children, 216 for young people, and 400 more ensembles and choirs, with over eight hundred thousand children who have passed through the system in thirty-two years”. Stephanie Pitts, with her recent study on Extra-curricular Music in UK Schools: Investigating the Aims, Experiences and Impact of Adolescent Musical Participation, presented a paper on the effects and impact that programs such as extra-curricular music and school music have on active adults in the UK in terms of their continued musical engagement in adult life. With reference to this paper, all of my participants in this research have continued both their music making and/or
appreciation into their adult lives, and I will continue to follow these twelve participants to see if and how these extra-curricular activities in string orchestras will continue to shape their lives. As Gallagher (2007) mentions in her book, *The Theatre of Urban*, “our experiences (our, being the researcher and the students) together will, surely, outlive the scope of this research project” (p. 173).

The active adults, who continue their music engagement in adult life, to which Pitts and the participants refer, were recognized in several other papers and research at the symposium on the topic of community. In Marie McCarthy’s keynote paper, she talked about how teachers are the bridge builders to communities, politics, and schools in arts communities, and that music education can provide a space for different voices to be heard.
Symphonic Engagement
Movement II - Literature Review

Allegro Assai \( \frac{\text{ }}{\text{ }} = 96 \)

Tony Nam-Hai Leong
(1974 - )

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Contrabass

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

28
CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Allegro Assai

Allegro, meaning fast. Although the term has been used since the 17th century to indicate a fast or moderately fast tempo and is the single most widely used term for such a tempo since the 18th century, it continued to be used into the 18th century as an indication of character or mood without respect to tempo (Randel, 2003, p. 33).

Assai, meaning much, very much e.g., allegro assai, very fast. Some 18th century writers, however, use the term to mean rather and thus in a way similar to the French assez (Ibid, p. 60).

This review explores the rationale for extending the recent arts curriculum in Ontario beyond the school day and sustaining the learning opportunities into adulthood. Through a careful examination of scholarly work by theorists and researchers of music education and engagement, I hope to bring some clarity to the importance, the implications, and position of music in the recent arts curriculum in Ontario. This review presents three themes: Student Engagement, Rethinking Adolescence, and Arts Education.

I. Student Engagement

i. The Wider Curriculum

The success of any system of education depends on its ability to effectively translate information into life applications for its students. A curriculum that teaches material or life skills that are irrelevant is doomed to failure, and so in music we strive to present both knowledge and application that students can carry out the door of our classrooms and into their broader spheres of experience.
John Dewey’s study of experience, social integration, and the desire to continue learning, defends the theory that the curriculum extends beyond the school day. Dewey acknowledges that “the most important attitude that can be formed is that of the desire to go on learning” and that we offer “education as a call for service and socialization” (Campbell, 1995, p. 217-218). Miller’s (2007) research echoes this research into “subjects providing a bridge to the community” (p. 144), and Harada, Kirio, and Yamamoto (2008) discuss the importance of connecting the curriculum to real life as a way to keep the students in school - “students who drop out claim that the curriculum is disconnected from real life”, and Rappaport (2006) develops the theme with his work “Learning through Music Creates Learning for Life” (p. 179-193). The Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum for the Arts, 1-8 (1998) confirms that their “arts curriculum promotes lifelong learning not only for students, but also for their parents and all those with an interest in education” (p. 5). Wong’s (2005) article on *Music in Education is Education for Life* informs us that children need every exposure to music, and lack of financial resources or emphasis on examinations in subjects other than music should not be used as an excuse for omitting music education from school curricula (p. 107).

It is not enough for students to simply sit in our classrooms absorbing facts. Dewey (1938) uses the term “learning through experience” and applies this concept specifically to the learning that goes on outside of the curriculum, beyond the school day (p. 5). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) support this by claiming that students are best served by “learning about education from thinking about life, and learning about life from thinking about education. This attention to
experience and thinking about education as experience is part of what educators do in schools” (p. xxiv). Furthermore, Lemkow’s (2005) research tells us “wholeness suggests that one’s life, experience, and learning are coextensive, and that learning is thus life-long” (p. 17). Eisner carries this idea further by exalting “curriculum as consummatory experience, referring to personal purpose and personal integration providing personally satisfying experiences for each individual learner” (Eisner & Vallame, 1974, p. 5). This concept helped build a pedagogy in which the curriculum was organized with the individual as the starting point, and where knowledge became an organized series of active experiences (Lundgren, 1991).

The connection between school life and real life, the subject of Dewey’s (1963) research on the “relationship between school and larger life of the community” (p. 29) is strengthened by Gallagher’s (2007) conclusion that “school is a site of cultural, political, and academic conflict because of its powerful socializing effects” (p. 5). It is therefore, important to “make each one of our schools an embryonic community life, active with types of occupations that reflect life of the larger society and permeated throughout the spirit of art, history, and science” (Dewey, 1963, p. 30). And Lundgren (1991) adds: “The rational curriculum code, on the other hand, was constructed not on the existing school subjects but on the actual knowledge that was needed for social life” (p. 34). We should build curricula on what the individual needs when he or she leaves school. In addition, Miller (2007) reminds us that the “relationship between the individual and community” is part of the holistic curriculum and that “community
refers to the classroom community, the school community, the community of one’s town or city, and the global community” (pp. 89 - 90). This is the curriculum not only reflecting the society in which it is formed; it is the curriculum contributing to the individual for the betterment of that society.

**ii. After-School Programs**

Ely and Rashkin (2005) define after-school programs as “programs typically designed to provide children with adult supervision, additional learning opportunities, and social interactions during after-school hours until parents arrive home from work” (p. 18). They also indicate that the number of after-school programs have increased in the recent years to meet the demands of latchkey children for whom no parent or guardian is home. There has been some recent research done on extra-curricular and community activities that provide insight on their benefits and place in our society.

In Dillon’s (2006) research on assessing the positive influence of music activities in community development programs, he has identified that programs in music in schools and community development increase expressiveness and understanding about how human culture express themselves in sound; promotes self-motivated and autotelic behaviour; is culturally inclusive; interacts dynamically with community; is open to genre, time, culture and style as an opportunity for expanding our knowledge of expressive music making (Dillon, 2006, p. 277).

However, Ward-Steinman’s (2006) research into after-school music programs examines how they are geared towards at-risk children and how these activities benefit them with their social and emotional skills; enhancement of self-esteem; work habits; attendance at school; and report card marks.
White and Gager (2007) look into the social effects of extra-curricular programs and how income and social status affect the participation of school and non-school related activities among youth. Their findings inform us:

- economic status, gender, and race/ethnicity are influential in youth participation in extra-curricular activities. Specifically, low family income and greater financial worry are associated with lower likelihood of participating in school-related and non-school related activities, and that living in an urban area is associated with greater participation (p. 105).

Perkins and Jones’ (2006) research confirms the impact on youth and adult relationships as a result of community-based youth programs. An in-depth look into perceptions of adults of youth and vice-versa makes us aware of the need to break these perceptions by offering more opportunities for youth and adults to work together in community programs. Perkins’ and Jones’ findings indicate the benefits of building adult and youth relationships to help generate social capital by bringing them closer together in order to form closer communities and have a sense of belonging.

Perkins et al. (2007) looked into the involvement of youth who are minorities and live in urban neighbourhoods. Their research tells us that the youth who participated in this study “emphasized the value of youth programs for providing a safe place that keeps them off the streets and away from trouble; the value of being a role model for the younger children in their neighbourhoods” and that the youth who chose not to participate gave reasons of being influenced to “hang out” with their friends elsewhere and, also, obligations to family, especially if they were male and needed to do chores or get a job to help support the family (p. 437-438).
Koopman (2007) talks about how community music benefits people who participate, providing a sense of understanding and “proficiency in all kinds of musical thinking and acting” (p. 161).

iii. Volunteering

The role of volunteering in promoting engagement in school takes many forms in music education: the teacher who volunteers his or her time to start, rehearse, and manage extra-curricular music activities without any mandatory requirement; the student who volunteers his or her time to participate in these extra-curricular music activities in their free time; and lastly, the young adult who volunteers his or her time to coach, mentor, and assist with these extra-curricular music activities. These acts can provide many benefits, yet exact sacrifices. Research tells us that the “development of friendships” (Noam & Fiore, 2004, p. 9; Moore, 1985, p. 3; Ilsley, 1990, p. 20 and 28; and Schram, 1985, p. 18), “career preparations” (Noam, 2004, p. 35; Ilsley, 1990, p. 18; and Schram, 1985, p. 16 and 22), “connecting with the community” (Noam, 2004, p. 1), “social skill development” (Noam, 2004, p. 2; Ilsley, 1990, p. 28; and Campbell, 1993, p. 23 - 24), mandatory community service hours (Radest, 1993, p. 6 and Steele, 2000, p. 168), “self-identity” (McGuckin, 1998, p. 136), “altruism and a sense of giving back” to the organization, are several reasons why so many people volunteer (Schram, 1985, p. 14; Campbell, 1993, p. 23; Moore, 1985, p. 4; McGuckin, 1998, p. 137, Ilsley, 1990, p. 22, and Day, 1997, p. 43).

A recent National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating in Canada reports that “youth between the ages of 15 and 24 also volunteered at a
rate above the national average (6.5 million Canadians aged 15 and older). (See Figure 1.1) Almost one in five youth volunteers (18%) were required to volunteer by their school, their employer, or the government” (National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, Who are Canada’s Volunteers? 2004, p. 1).

However, in an updated survey done in 2007, the findings in terms of the rate of volunteering are “largely unchanged from the 45% reported in 2004” (Highlights from the 2007 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, p. 12). (See Figure 1.1)

![Figure 1.1 Volunteer rate, population aged 15 and older, Canada, 2004 and 2007*](image)

The survey also suggests that in the year, 2007, “107 of the volunteer hours were spent on Arts, Culture, 141 hours on Sports and Recreation, and 79 hours on Education and Research” (National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, Volunteering in Canada, 2007, p. 1). (See Figure 1.2)
The statistics inform us that for Canadians, volunteering in the arts and education continues to play a very important role in our performing arts organizations (Genovese, p. 5, 1993). Statistics also suggest that the prime reasons for volunteering are not obligations to the school, government, or employer, as almost one in five youth were required to do (National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, Volunteering in Canada, 2004, p. 1). Rather, youth volunteer “to make a contribution to the community”, “to explore their own strengths,” “because their friends volunteer,” and “to gain new skills that they could apply to their job” (International Year of Volunteers Research Program – What influences youth to volunteer? 2002, p. 2). (See Figure 1.3)
The social aspect of volunteering motivates youth as they continue to look for opportunities to fit in and be accepted by their peers (Belle, 1999, p. 122 and Pearce, p. 77, 1993). Hirsch (2005) comments on the “relationships built with adults and peers, along with getting the academic support they need” (p. 66).

Volunteers, who are trained and experienced, provide a ready pool of applicants for employment (Young, 2004, p. 5). Can youth who volunteer broaden their career considerations? Does experience in the workforce give prospective employers the security of a knowledgeable individual who has worked or has been trained to do the skills required in carrying out the job description? Will the volunteer experience provide students with the opportunity to explore their strengths and weaknesses when they carry and try out specific tasks for onsite job training (Pearce, 1993)? Often, volunteers are able to apply these strengths and skills to the interviews and résumés that are needed in order for a job to be offered (Friedland & Morimoto, 2005 and Pearce, 1993). Volunteering provides students with opportunities to gain the experience and
Some research indicated, “children who participate in extra-curricular activities generally gain and improve skills, as well as learn how to interact with others” (National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth: Participation in activities, 1998-99, p. 3). The recent Canadian survey on volunteering informs us that there are “connections between early life experiences and volunteering: The likelihood of volunteering in later life appears to be linked to a number of early life experiences during one’s primary or secondary schooling” (Highlights from the 2007 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, p. 43).

By participating in extra-curricular activities in string orchestras at school, the students are able to learn skills to help them function as members of our society (Noam, 2004). Students who volunteer at extra-curricular activities develop interpersonal skills (Pearce, 1993) and leadership (Friedland & Mormoto, 2005). They were able to communicate in a variety of ways as they were often in situations where they needed to demonstrate or teach skills to other members of the organization or to describe what they wanted as an outcome. The volunteers also received many opportunities to work with all types of people: the participants of the organization, other teacher volunteers, and the other student volunteers.

In addition, as part of their role, many were asked to file documents, distribute notices and papers, and complete a variety of organizational tasks in order for the organization to run smoothly. As computer and technological skills are becoming increasingly common, the volunteers prepared documents,
spreadsheets, arranged music and kept accurate attendance to assist with the leader of the organization. I always find that the students who volunteer with organizations where they were once participants can acquire an understanding of the importance of the organization and will advocate for its existence and purpose to family, friends and the community at large.

“Many youth in Wisconsin use the hours they received in volunteering, but a large percentage of them will have done double or more of the required hours of service” (Friedland & Morimoto, 2005, p. 13). I find that once students are involved in an organization, the friends and experience they gain can provide them with the incentive and the desire to continue with their volunteer post, and thus will provide them with an ictus to a life-long pursuit of volunteering in their community, developing “prosocial, personal growth and conviviality” (Pearce, 1993, p. 77).

Csikszentmihalyi (1993) is best known for his use of the word “flow” to sum up a major reason for students becoming involved in activities outside of the school day, such as volunteering: “By creating a temporary world where one can act with total commitment, flow provides an escape from the chaos of the quotidian; it is an escape forward into higher complexity, where one hones one’s potential by confronting new challenges” (p. 184).

II. Rethinking Adolescence

i. Culture and Contemporary Youth

Nakkula and Toshalis (2006) discuss the identities that youth strive for and discover in today’s society, such as gender, racial, and ethnic. Theorists such as
Cornett & Smithrim (2001), Choksy et al. (2001), and Campbell (1998), have agreed that music can develop pride and identity. Huebner (2000) also agrees that music plays an important role in establishing identity and considers this as one of the most important issues in adolescent development.

Toshalis and Nakkula (2006) reference Erik Erikson, a Danish-German American developmental psychologist who was known for his theory on social development of human beings, and famous for coining the phrase “identity crisis”, understands the need for humans to develop identity. “In the social jungle of human existence, there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity” (p. 20).

In addition to the youth finding identity through music and being a part of a musical ensemble, Toshalis and Nokkula talk about how adults “develop and grow through interacting with youth” (p. 17). As a teacher and conductor of many musical groups, and working with youth, I have found that music can be a two-way learning opportunity. As technology becomes more advanced, and the workload of educators becomes more arduous, it is the help of and interaction with the youth that can keep us current, and for example, aware of the type of music that interests the students.

**The Importance of Flow**

Technology and immediate gratification are terms important to our adolescents in today’s fast-paced world. Video games, computers, microwaves, cell phones, have trained our students to expect immediate and quick results. However, with this efficiency, we often compromise quantity with quality. Being a
part of a musical ensemble can teach more than patience; it can foster quality learning, and commitment. In the Bel Canto orchestra, we rehearsed two to three pieces, two to three times a week, for about three months, in order to perform them once or twice at the holiday and/or festival concert. Toshalis and Nakkula (2006) mentions the work of Csikszentmihalyi who describes this term as the “flow” experience. “Flow” is not “the quick high that comes from exciting experiences; rather, it is that contented, deeply gratified feeling that comes from being in the groove, from being deeply focused on a complex task that has taken time and energy to master” (p. 61).

In a research done by the Search Institute in 2006 (40 Development Assets for Adolescents), forty developmental assets have been articulated in order to help youth grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. They are divided into the following categories:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>External Assets</strong></th>
<th><strong>Internal Assets</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Commitment to Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Positive Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundaries &amp; Expectations</td>
<td>Social Competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive Use of Time</td>
<td>Positive Identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Support**

Family (parents, siblings, relatives), adults (teachers, neighbours, friends), caring neighbourhoods, and caring school climates are crucial influences and support systems in order for success to be achieved by adolescents. The extra-curricular activity in string orchestras provides opportunities for their families to become involved in fundraising, or attend concerts, or drive students to rehearsals. Some research suggests that “parents play an important role in
initiating as well as sustaining their children’s interest in playing an instrument”, and that “music participation by siblings is a factor that may encourage children to begin to play an instrument” (Abeles, 2004, p. 250). This is evident through noting the several sets of siblings involved in music as seen in the participants in this research. Can schools help those students without these supportive families? What initiatives can we put in place?

**Empowerment**

It is important to provide empowerment for youth by securing them in a community that accepts them as being productive members of the society. They can increase their involvement through volunteering and being participants in extra-curricular activities such as music and sports. Jones and Perkins (2006) believe that

social contact between groups that are often segregated (i.e. age, gender, and race) can lead to more positive perceptions and reduced prejudices” and that “bringing people together so that they may become engaged in the community can potentially allow residents to develop a feeling of belonging, an established network base, and trust-worthiness among neighbours, thus generating social capital (p. 105).

**Constructive Use of Time**

Creative activities, youth programs, and religious groups are important in terms of engaging youth and getting them involved. Perkins et al. (2007) inform us that “youth programs provide safe places that keep them off the streets and away from trouble” (p. 105).
Commitment to Learning

Youth can feel a sense of commitment to learning through extra-curricular activities, because they have a responsibility to not only themselves, but to the entire group or ensemble in terms of learning their music, attendance, and maintaining a focus throughout the rehearsal and performances.

Positive Values

It can be important to provide youth with opportunities to develop and demonstrate characteristics such as caring, honesty, integrity, and responsibility, in the pursuit of becoming involved members of our society. Hodges (2005) reminds us how music is “intrinsically connected with feelings” and Willingham (2000) adds that “music articulates forms that language cannot set forth”.

Social Competencies

The idea of building social skills through face-to-face contact, as well as through social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, can be important to adolescent development. Extra-curricular activities in string orchestras can provide students with the opportunity to develop and maintain collegiality, and even friendships.

Positive Identity

The development of self-esteem and a sense of purpose can be important factors in fostering healthy youth. Research tells us that music can be a “pathway to self-esteem” (Baker & Cohen, 2007), and “help at-risk children develop overall greater self-esteem” (Ward-Steinman, 2006).
**ii. Adolescents and Music**

Levitin (2008) maintains that music has been a very important part of an adolescent’s social and personal life since the early ages of humans, which brings us to question if rehearsals, performances, and making music with others can provide opportunities for the building of these patterns of social interactions.

_The World in Six Songs_ explains, at least in part, the evolution of music and brains over tens of thousands of years and across the six inhabited continents. Music, I argue, is not simply a distraction or a pastime, but a core element of our identity as species, an activity that paved the way for more complex behaviors such as language, large-scale cooperative undertakings, and the passing down of important information from one generation to the next (p. 3).

Research supports that music can help define adolescents’ identity and help regulate their mood. At a time of physical, emotional, social, and developmental changes in adolescents, music may play an important role in establishing identity, which Huebner (2000) refers to as “being one of the most important tasks of adolescents” (p. 3).

In Saarikallio and Erkkila’s (2007) article on “The Role of Music in Adolescents’ Mood Regulation”, the benefits of music in an adolescent’s complex and emotional states are considered. The study also “acknowledges that music is a mood-regulatory behaviour” (p. 90) and that music can be used to help adolescents manage their emotional challenges. The research also touched on the musical choices that occur to help regulate their moods.

**Youth and Classical Music**

In a discussion on a forum in the popular www.pianoworld.com site, a poll held in March 2009 was given to survey teenagers’ thoughts on their interest in
classical music. The questions asked were: “What percentage of your friends has some reasonable interest in classical music and what percentage almost never listen to classical music?” “How much do you listen to classical music?” “How many hours/week do you practice classical music?” and “Why do you think many teenagers don’t have much or any interest in classical music? How do they view it?” There were seventeen people who responded to these questions, parents, teenagers, and adults up to 50 years of age.

To the first question, “what percentage of friends has some reasonable interest in classical music”, the responses were in the 2 – 20 % range, with an average response of 5%. Kimsie, a parent, comments on how her son who is 13 years-old enjoys watching classical music on *YouTube*, and “considers the other genres of music boring”, and she believes that this is because he was homeschooled, and was not “influenced by his peers in school as classical music isn’t the ‘in’ thing in most schools”. A teacher-in-training, 20 years old, also appreciates classical music and was homeschooled. Akonow, a 17 year-old, and Pianoloverus, a 20 year-old, say that most of their friends will listen to classical music, if they hear it in the movie theatre. 2AMChopin, a 27 year-old Hungarian living in America, laments on her lack of friends when she was young because “people thought I must be boring if I like classical music”. Larry B, a parent of teenagers (16 and 19) used classical music as a punishment in the car if they misbehaved.

The percentages and level of involvement and commitment of the participants were quite high; however, these high numbers were expected, as the
type of student or people to visit this site to comment on this survey could have background in and/or an appreciation of classical music.

The third question involving the thoughts of why many teenagers don’t enjoy classical music, revealed comments such as classical music is “boring”, “for old people”, “not being exposed or given the opportunity to experience”, “not cool”, “too complex”, or “excessive duration”. However, in the case of youth’s perception of classical music being boring, Mekarual, a self-identified 27 year-old American, talks about the complexity, the layering, and variety in classical music, and doesn’t understand why teenagers would be “bored” with this level of critical thinking.

Through all of the postings in this Blog, it was interesting to read the participants’ recounts and comments on the opportunity to engage with classical music. EsotericPianist, a self-identified 17 year-old, said:

I think the lack of music classes in elementary school is one of the problems. If schools would introduce classical music to children at a young age and would get them excited about it, maybe they would like it later. Also in the past families used to gather around a piano during holidays and sing songs, and the average person could play a song on the piano.

EsotericPianist’s comments help us to consider the power of opportunity.

This is a brief glimpse of views of classical music amongst the youth groups in this survey. It reminds us that opportunity and the school curriculum can be effective ways to introduce classical music in the lives of adolescents, in lieu of, or in addition to, the home environment.
iii. Inside the Digital Age

*Grown Up Digital*, a recent book by Tapscott (2009) coins the term: “NetGeners” to describe our new generation of learners and youth who have grown up digitally. Tapscott’s research, the U.S. demographic breakdown according to the different generations, concludes that the Net Generation make up 27% of the population, whereas the categories of Next Generation, Boomer Generation, Generation X, Pre-Boomers, all have fewer in population than the Net Generation with percentages of 13%, 23%, 15%, and 17% respectively.

This research and the demographics remind us of the need to focus on the NetGeners as they will become the citizens of tomorrow, not to mention their growth will be increasing exponentially. According to Tapscott, young people of today have strong values, care about the world, are open, tolerant, happy, confident, positive, and the least prejudiced generation ever. As I open the newspaper or look around on the Internet, there are more and more youth groups engaged in volunteering and community service in promoting and developing causes to help the environment, disease, and human rights. Youth are becoming more and more involved with the help of technology, as they are posting and sharing personal information with a large audience. Social networks such as *Twitter* and *Facebook* are becoming popular not only among youth, but with people of all ages, race, and cultures. In a lecture found on the University of California, Berkley School of Information website, February 2008, Henry Jenkins talks about the recent studies by the Pew Center on the Internet and American Life:
More than half of American teens online have produced media content and about a third have circulated media that they have produced beyond their immediate friends and family.

These statistics remind us that technology is influencing how music is created, shared, and experienced by youth today, and that the ways youth find and create music through this new medium can still be significant to their adolescent development.

Tapscott and other researchers have debated the Internet and its social values and interactions. Interviews with NetGeners conducted by the research company nGenera finds that young people prefer to communicate with one another via instant messaging rather than in person for certain kinds of interactions. Tapscott argues that this generation is increasingly social as they are interacting and communicating with each other more through the technology as well as in person. I believe that the value of face-to-face interaction in extra-curricular string orchestras may help students interact with each other and can promote social skills. When they are playing in orchestra, they are required to put down their electronic devices and focus on the music and non-verbal interactions. Even the recent YouTube Symphony required applicants to audition online, and resulted in a face-to-face collaboration so that it could be broadcast online.

Tapscott presents to us the eight NetGener’s norms in his book: freedom, customization, scrutinizers, integrity and openness, entertainment, collaboration and relationship, and speed. I am hoping these norms apply in face-to-face interactions as well, especially in the arts.
**Freedom**

According to Tapscott, students in their current generation love the freedom to choose. They like the idea of new products and their variety. NetGeners “seek the freedom to change jobs, freedom to take their own path, and to express themselves” (p. 24). Through the involvement of extra-curricular activities in string orchestras, students can be provided with the opportunity to be creative and have the liberty to make musical choices through compositions and performance. This is the freedom I felt when I was given the opportunity to express myself, to use imagination and creativity when I was a student (ibid.).

**Customization**

On the Internet and in the marketplace today, there are so many gadgets that can be manipulated, changed, added to, and modified in order to make them individualized. There may be a need to put a personal stamp or signature onto anything they create or purchase. Extra-curricular activities in string orchestras can help students develop skills where they will take ownership and customize their own learning and experiences through the arts as “all students are artistic and creative in their own ways” (Morin, 2000, p. 11).

**Scrutinizers**

Technology can provide many opportunities for consumers to analyze and compare before they “hit” the retail market. NetGeners will have these skills and expectations in terms of the accessibility to information and how to analyze and make decisions based on this transparency (Tapscott, 2009). The arts naturally
provide a forum for people to analyze, criticize, and, provide and receive feedback.

**Integrity and Openness**

“NetGeners make sure company values align with their own” (Ibid, p. 35).

Many of our students today possess integrity concerning their beliefs and what they want, according to Tapscott. The repertoire chosen by the leader of the extra-curricular activity in the string orchestra can be an important process. Students may inform you about three things: they don’t like the piece; they are uncomfortable with the piece, but see some value; or they absolutely love the piece. They may find the opportunity to develop ways to be open about their likes and dislikes about a musical composition through their dedication to practicing the piece as well as the quality of its execution. Music participants can also be very open about trying new things in terms of repertoire and experiences. In addition, the students can develop a sense of integrity quickly when working and learning in an orchestra, as their desire to do well in performances can become important factors of their lives in order to properly and adequately represent the association to which they belong.

**Entertainment**

Statistics show that in the “United States, video game sales were $8.4 billion in 2005, with worldwide sales expected to hit $46.5 billion by 2010” (Ibid., p. 35). This generation of youth has been brought up with interactive activities and game particularly in the area of technology. They love to play, entertain, and be entertained. The arts can be natural forms of entertainment, both for the
person creating the art, as well as the audience. They can also provide students with the knowledge and music connoisseurship (Eisner, 1991, p. 45, Willingham, 2001) in order to appreciate music at deeper levels.

**Collaboration and Relationship**

In our society today, youth collaborate and create relationships mostly through technology. By using social networks such as *Facebook, YouTube*, and *MSN Messenger*, networking and friendships are important ways for youth to influence each other (Tapscott). Do the arts offer a forum for students to interact and collaborate with one another? They certainly can. Levitin (2008) also speaks of collaboration where youth seek out groups that they feel a sense of belonging and form bonds with people who have similar interests (p. 226).

**Speed**

Immediate gratification and communication can be important needs of our youth today. “Real-time chats with a database of global contacts have made rapid communication the new norm for the Net Generation” (Tapscott, p. 35). The expectation for quick responses to e-mails and actions are growing with the Net Generation youth. In the case of music education, the availability of technology has given the opportunity for students to create musical compositions and receive immediate feedback.

As Tapscott has mentioned, this generation might be the most social in terms of sharing information and staying connected with one another. However, one area that I’m concerned about is that as technology becomes more popular without the need to have face-to-face interaction, certain social skills may be
compromised. Having extra-curricular activities such as string orchestras can be important for students to engage with and interact in a face-to-face forum, so that these understandings may be fostered and maintained.

III. Arts Education

i. The Claims of Arts Educators

Some research suggests that arts education provides students with tools to help them academically, aesthetically (Iwai, 2002, p. 412), and emotionally (Campbell et al., 2004, p. 204-205).

There is not only a need for arts education to be a part of the curriculum, but also as a complement to the student’s overall learning. Gallagher (2002) informs us that “learning through the arts can significantly enhance learning experiences” (p. 27).

It is also important that students receive a well-rounded education that includes the arts so that they can “embrace their non-biased and positive attitude toward society by acquiring appropriate communication skills” (Iwai, 2002, p. 411). Smithrim and Upitis (2004) also realize the need for education to help students become productive members of our society

if the goals of education include the fostering of a peaceful, tolerant, fulfilled, and literate citizenry, then there is no question that an arts education is an essential route to those goals (p. 77).

When speaking of equity and inclusivity of cultures and religions in our arts programs, Harris (2006) reminds us that we are “helping them experience the liberating power, the creative potential and the capacity for self-expression which come with the ability to respond to, or take part in, performing arts” (p. 2).
The arts are intrinsic, unlike extrinsic rewards provided by teachers or parents. Often we don’t see the results of arts education for many years – unlike the instant gratification or immediate conclusions that are sometimes drawn from test scores (Giles, 2002, p. 8).

Eric Jensen (2001) in his book on the arts and the brain informs us that the “arts are for the long term and not quick fixes to shore up other nagging deficits in a district’s educational process” (p. 1). The need for the arts to be a part of the curriculum starts from the beginning of a child’s education, if we believe the research on the relationship of music and brain development.

Furthermore, Gardner’s (1989) Arts Propel research into integrating the arts into the curriculum as well as developing and providing teachers with a set of assessment tools reminds us of the importance of having the arts as part of the curriculum (p. 74). Some arts educators feel that the arts can be tools to help students express themselves. Campbell et al.’s (2004) research tells us that the “arts offer languages for feelings, for some students require other forms of emotional expression“. The arts also are said to help students “access their feelings while simultaneously relieving stress, hurt, or excessive excitement” (pp. 204-205). In a time where the students are developing both physically, mentally, and socially, it can be important to provide them with ways to deal with these issues, and the arts can help channel their emotions in positive and beneficial ways.

Finally, Bartel and Cameron (2004) remind us that “the study and pursuit of art is a fulfilling and delightful manifestation of a fundamental need of the human spirit“. The excitement to which Bartel and Cameron refer, and the
challenges that come from developing the arts both technically and creatively, may provide people with direction and purpose in their lives (p. 39).

ii. Music Education: Questions and Concerns

Is the chief goal for me as a music educator to instill perfect hand position when students switch into third position, or are we trying to teach something greater? It is through Korzenik’s four traditions in art making that we realize the impact an arts education can have on students. These traditions state that art making is a tool for the improved teaching of other school studies (study skills); job skills; the personal benefits students may derive (spiritual); and an understanding of oneself and others (Brown & Korzenik, 1993). It is also “acknowledged that music can be important in young people’s development of skills and experiences” (Baker, Cohen, 2008, p. 316-317).

These traditions are supported further with the emphasis on the study of music education by Cornett & Smithrim’s (2001) work:

Throughout history, music has been used by every culture to share messages of inspiration, to tell stories, to pass on history, to inspire others, to glorify achievements to amuse, relax, educate, express love, anger, despair, and hope. Young adults use music to bond with peers and express individuality (p. 300).

In order to achieve these goals, Cornett & Smithrim (2001) listed the following reasons for the importance of music education in our society: music is a significant part of life outside of school; engages the affective with cognitive and psychomotor domains; solves problems; bonds people; is a vehicle for learning; triggers creative expression and develops discipline; can develop pride and
identity; expresses culture and history; gives enjoyment; and can support learning throughout curricular areas.

Music is a ubiquitous social phenomenon. It is at the centre of many social activities, where people congregate to listen and discuss (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003 & Levitin, 2006). Levitin (2006) informs us that “no known human culture now or anytime in the recorded past lacked music. Some of the oldest physical artifacts found in human and protohuman excavation sites are musical instruments” (p. 6). Walker (2005) claims that the “fact is that there is no known human culture without music, this is sure testimony of the claim that music is a natural and inevitable part of the evolution of humans everywhere”. Walker also notes that humans are not able to survive without our “mental life”, therefore, we “cannot live without music” (p. 135-136).

Throughout history, music has often demonstrated its power to sway human emotion for the positive or the negative. Emily Noble, President of the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, is calling on educators “to start teaching critical literacy, which involves showing kids how to analyze and critique the images they are taking in” (CityNews.ca Staff, 2007). Schools all over the world are being challenged with this problem, as evidenced by the Jamaican journalist Collinder (2008) stating that “schools will have to take a proactive role in reducing the negative effects of dancehall music”.

Guetzkow (2002) recognizes that investigators of the impact of the arts need to acknowledge not only the positive impact, but also the potential negative attributes. However, this criticism is definitely open to interpretation. “Given the
broad definition of the ‘arts’ found in many studies, the negative impact of such events as raves or rock concerts – for example, noise pollution and delinquency, largely goes ignored” (p. 19). Hayden (2007) in an online newspaper column writes “how today’s popular rappers are doing a disservice to the youth of America”, and that they are “broadcasting every negative stereotype about African Americans through their lyrics”. Furthermore, The Media Awareness Network (2009) also warns that “parents should be aware that violent, racist, homophobic or sexist lyrics in much of today’s popular music could have an impact on impressionable young people who are just developing a sense of identity and self-worth”. The Recording Industry Association of America’s (2009) Parental Advisory Label Program is joining up with the Parents Music Resource Centre to address these issues of explicit depictions of violence and sex so that parents can have an informed choice when providing listening opportunities for their children. However, the socio-cultural underpinnings of these art forms are often ignored in these attempts at censorship.

Dworkin and Larson (2006) argue that extra-curricular activities and community-based youth programs could sometimes create negative experiences such as creating “adverse levels of stress”, and that these negative experiences can “interfere with attention to activities, reduce engagement in the relationships through which development occurs, [and] lead to burn out or drop out” (p. 12).

In addition, Whidden’s (2008) research argues for the need to focus on process, and not the product. Her work with adults who were labeled as non-
singers in their school years showed the negative impact that music education had throughout the lives of these adults.

In our job as music educators, can we use the positive powers of music to build up and empower students? The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: The Arts (2009) confirms that “the intellectual and emotional development of children is enhanced through study of the arts, and that students develop the ability to think creatively and critically" which "helps them gain insights into the world around them" (p. 3).

Studies show that “peers may be a contributing factor in a child’s decision to begin and continue instrumental music experiences” (Abeles, 2004, p. 250). Is it the social interaction of students during music rehearsals, concerts, and practices that motivates students to continue with the act of music making in these extra-curricular music groups? Levitin (2006) believes that “whenever humans come together for any reason, music is there…. music is a fabric of everyday life” (p. 6). Can the interactions be facial responses when students become engaged in the music making process, such as exchanges of smiles, connecting with their eyes, or subtle physical movements with the body, allowing them to converse and socialize with each other at a different level? Reimer (1989) believes that it is “beneficial that performance groups offer an opportunity for students to involve themselves with others in a common cause, because doing so can be a very positive life experience” (p. 8). Jones and Perkins (2006) add that

social contact between groups that are often segregated (i.e. age, gender, and race) can lead to more positive perceptions and
reduced prejudices” and that “bringing people together so that they may become engaged in the community can potentially allow residents to develop a feeling of belonging, an established network base, and trust-worthiness among neighbours, thus generating social capital (p. 105).

A related study by Koutz as cited by Abeles in his 1987 dissertation reports that students cited the “social aspects of music, such as time spent with friends, as reasons for participation” (Abeles, 2004, p. 250). The study also suggests that time spent with students who share the same interest and have similar skills allows them to bond in harmonious ways. “Peers played a significant role in shaping students’ values and attitudes toward music” (Sichivitsa, 2006, p. 64).

Do extra-curricular activities in string orchestras fill the need for young students to feel connected and to develop a sense of belonging to a group of peers? Can music groups become significant communities through their rehearsals, performances, and social activities? Willingham (2001) describes the musical community as being a “safe place to be… to express one’s personhood, to take risks. People in this community care and take responsibility for each other’s well-being” (p. 166). The ensemble of students must learn to exercise all these characteristics of a community in order to achieve cohesiveness and unity. Furthermore, students will want to be successful in their community building, because everyone in the ensemble “has to work towards a common goal to achieve that euphoria and it can’t be done without the loving and equal participation of everybody in the ensemble” (Carlisle, 2002, p. 26).
I want to examine how the students feel about reaching this “common goal”, the performance or successful execution of a piece of music. Do the students appreciate the importance of every single person in the group? Is this the reason students seek opportunities to be a part of communities such as extra-curricular activities in string orchestras? Do the students I work with feel that music has the ability to bring together people and make them respect each other with equity and importance for every member of the ensemble?

In music programs where students are required to take music as part of their curriculum (e.g. the Ontario Elementary Curriculum), the extra-curricular activity in string orchestras allows for the teacher to work with committed and diligent students. Why have the students in this research study chosen to be in these extra activities, as opposed to only participating in regular classes during the school day, as do all the elementary level children? Do these opportunities to perform and teach repertoire at an advanced level rather than in the general music class result in “the quality of performance reaching levels of excellence rarely exhibited in the normal classroom” (Pitman, 1998, p. 46)? Since music teachers are often too busy to engage in higher level music making on their own time, can these experiences provide them with the opportunity to practice their music connoisseurship, “the art of appreciation, criticism, the art of disclosure” (Eisner, 1991, p. 45)? How will teachers continue the act of music making at a level of enjoyment that will keep students’ imaginations, creativity and musicianship fresh? Will they continue to challenge the students with a demanding repertoire, so that learning is achieved on many levels: the students’
interest in the subject and their instruments, as well as their technical and musical ability to play at a higher level of proficiency? Also,

music making forces us into delayed gratification, persistence, self-awareness, and eventually, enhanced self-concept. These life skills are absolute gold in today’s global marketplace. In summary, music making enhances the systems that allow us to perceive and respond appropriately to a world rich with emotions and complex social structures (Jensen, 2000, p. 52).

Carey (2006) relates that the arts have been around since the beginning of time, but it was Alexander Baumgarten who coined the term “aesthetics” in 1750 (p. 8). “The arts have traditionally excluded certain kinds of people as well as certain kinds of experience”. He also goes on to say that although the arts are available to all, it can only be appreciated by some” (p. x). To my family, it was always considered that the arts were a privileged and class bound activity, only appreciated and enjoyed by wealthy individuals. However, through my own experiences and according to the twelve students I interviewed, arts education in the public system can help students appreciate the universal arts experience of which Carey speaks, as well as providing them with the tools and opportunities to create art in a variety of different mediums.

“What is considered art and what is not acceptable art?” (p. 4) is queried by Carey. In music, John Cage wrote a piece called Four Minutes and Thirty Three Seconds, a composition that involved Cage going out onto stage and sitting in front of an audience for exactly four minutes and thirty three seconds in complete silence. This “silence” was regarded and accepted by most as a music composition. Carey offered a similar scenario with visual arts by posing the question of absolute empty space as art. This ambiguity and query of what is art
to some people further validates the need to educate our students in exploratory and open-ended ways.

Eisner and Carey both express their views on how the notion of arts at school being beneficial to a child’s character has lessened. However, according to Carey (2006), these students are and will be able to comment on the beauty of objects, both natural and man-made, such as a horizon, or the colours found in a painting, and so forth.

Furthermore, Carey refers to the superiority of “high art” being classical music, “serious literature”, and old-master paintings (p. 32). These concepts of high art being exclusive, and popular art being receptive and accessible (p. 36) remind us of the need for equity in terms of providing what Carey refers to as “high art” and popular art to every child. Moreover Carey cites Karel Capek, an influential Czech writer, agrees with the need to bring all art to the people and to remove barriers between the social classes, along with the idea of art being used for escaping the daily stress of life. Carey suggests that this escaping through the arts of which Capek speaks is a human necessity, and provides youth with adult supervised activities that develop their cognitive and social skills at a time where children are vulnerable to committing crime or being a victim of crime to which Bayran (2008) refers. Carey’s recent study of an ethnographic survey of 488 human societies, found 89% practiced some form of dissociative experience such as alcohol and hallucinogenic activities as the most common means to deal with escaping. As well, William James, a pioneering American psychologist and philosopher trained as a medical doctor supports this by saying that “alcohol is
for the poor and unlettered. It stands in place of symphony concerts and literature” (p. 38). How true are these findings in our high schools?

Consequently, social justice and equity for the arts, or the “high art” to which Carey refers, are in danger. “High art” is difficult to justify as it is supported by public money. Since it can’t be accessible to a large public due to the lack of funds, much of the population will not be able to afford it (p. 46).

The validity of the arts is going from an area of opinion to an area of knowledge, according to Carey (2006, p. 71). The use of science to supply the absolutes that religion used to supply is seen through programs such as SmartMusic Studio, where students play their instrument into a computer to be evaluated, and the computer tells them how many notes they played correctly, going from a traditional qualitative assessment of the music, to a quantitative measurement. One of the supporters of the arts through science is Edward Osborne Wilson, an American biologist, researcher, theorist, naturalist, and author, who is excited that there are innate operations in the sensory system and the brain, and that we can provide a set of rules to evaluate art and beauty, such as his experiment to study optimum female facial beauty. However, Carey (2006) disagrees with these scientists as he “doesn’t see how it could make sense to claim to evaluate the experience or the artwork scientifically or to claim that the experience can be shown to be identical with the experience of some different person” (p. 95).

Carey (2006) says that the arts make us better, and in some instances, worse, by using examples from the work of Aristotle, Plato, and Elliot Eisner.
Aristotle tells us that with the right sort of music, there are affects of character forming, souls undergoing changes, and arousal of moral qualities. However, Plato informs us that the arts make people worse, removing people from the truth. Virtuous music appeals only to the best and the best educated, and vicious music appeals to the majority. Plato’s views the best educated and rich having access to “high art”, and the “vicious” music that is less complex, and easily accessed due to its use of less expensive instruments (such as guitar or drums), and its attractive simple beat and patterns. Elliot Eisner (2002) on the other hand, in his book, “The Arts and the Creation of Mind”, reminds us that “whether work in the arts affects other aspects of a student’s contact with the world cannot be determined with any degree of confidence”; however, Eisner can still be certain that with an education in the arts, students will continue to learn to appreciate and evaluate the arts and aesthetically interact with their peers. Gallagher (2007) also agrees “education is urgently called upon as a social force for good” (p. 4).

There seems to be an assumption that the arts make better people according to Carey (2006, p. 103), but what does “better” mean? He quotes Leo Tolstoy, who wrote “What is Art?” concluding that all “human life is filled with works of art of every kind” (Ibid, p. 104). Howard Gardner, in his study, “the arts and human development”, talks about how a better end-state for humanity is to aim at someone able to appreciate the arts” (ibid, p. 109).
Role of Music Education

Music holds a unique place in schools in that it belongs both in and outside of the school day. The current Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum for the Arts describes the importance of providing and encouraging students to participate in activities outside of the school day:

Students should also pursue opportunities outside the classroom to extend and enrich their understanding of the arts and to explore ways in which the arts are a part of their ordinary daily activities (Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum – The Arts 1-8, 1998, p. 3).

In addition to supporting regular school activities, parents may wish to encourage their children to take an active interest in using the arts for meaningful purposes as a regular part of their activities outside school (Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum – The Arts 1-8, 2009, p. 10).

Eisner (2001) reinforces this importance by stating that by “helping the young learn to experience the joy that music and the other arts engender, we will help enrich human life. Surely that aim deserves pride of place on our educational agenda for all our children” (p. 14). Authorities in music education have advocated strongly for the place of arts in our schools (Bowman, 2005; Lehman, 2005; Reimer, 2005; Mark, 2005; Gruhn, 2005, etc.). I want to examine the findings of these authorities to paint a careful picture of the position of music education and its goals, so that I can overlay them with the voices of my students in order to add a balance to this seemingly biased discussion.

Bennett Reimer’s argument that our system of education must start with the “culture’s values and its answer to the question – why and for what purpose should we educate?” provides us with the idea that if creativity and individuality are aspects of defining who we are in our culture, then the role of music
education in our overall curriculum is crucial (Reimer, 1989, p. 153; Pitman, 1988, p. 188; Cornett & Smithrim, 2001, p. 305). Music and arts education provide opportunities within our schools and communities to develop not only a “sense of culture” (Cornett & Smithrim, 2001, p. 4), but also “leadership” (Sergiovanni, 1996, p. 14) and “community building” (Geahigan, 1990, p. 7). Sergiovanni’s (1996) view that schools function best when leadership theories support the people (parents, teachers, administrators) who have given up their own time for their students, echoes the need for programs such as music to help bring forth this type of leadership in the school community (p. 14). Furthermore, Sergiovanni (1994) comments: “Ontario Ministry of Education’s position is that the major responsibility for planning curriculum should rest with the school; this is the only way schools can respond to the special needs and characteristics of the children in their care” (p. 104). In his book, *Building Community in Schools*, he outlines what he feels to be the goals of the Ontario Ministry of Education, that highlights the Ontario Ministry’s belief that certain “assumptions about children and learning are basic to the curriculum framework and that these assumptions will be embodied in the decisions that teachers and schools make” (Ibid, p. 105).

According to Sergiovanni (1994, p. 105 – 106), the following points apply:

- Children are curious. It is a natural occurrence that we need to allow children to explore and create; music allows them to make certain choices in dynamics, phrasing, articulation, and so forth in a composition.
• Most human activity is a purposeful search for pattern. Music is full of patterns that allow students to use patterns and provide variations so that they are able to take ownership of their creation.

• Learning experiences gain power if they are part of organized and holistic meaning. As musicians, students learn to work with an ensemble of many different people from all walks of life, working toward producing a common goal. In addition, the organization of harmony and different parts provides structure and meaning.

• Children have an intrinsic need for mastery over situations. Music provides students with the discipline to practice and rehearse compositions so that they can successfully execute a musical composition well.

• Children find self-fulfillment in successful learning, and are not motivated merely by external rewards and approval. A well-rehearsed piece provides students with the satisfaction of a well-delivered performance.

• The performance that they play is the result of many months of practicing and preparing. Playing a musical instrument provides students with the opportunity to interact with their peers in a satisfying and educational atmosphere.

• Rehearsing music that interests them and having conversations using their instruments and the music, allow them to experience a different level of “fun”. Children learn through experience with people, symbols, and
artifacts. The physical interaction with a musical instrument and the hands-on experience allow students to learn in a kinesthetic way.

- The symbolic process for children develops through a sequence of representation. Musical compositions allow students to work with symbolic representation through the notation as well as the symbolic meaning of the interpretation of a piece.

String programs, especially in the elementary panel, are rare, according to a survey done by the Coalition for Music Education in Canada (2005). Over 8,000 educators across Canada received the survey, returning an overall positive response rate of 8%, ranging from a provincial high of 16.1%, and to a low of 5.8% (p. 3). The report indicated that there was a significant gap between string and band programs in our country, as there were only 5% of the schools that reported having orchestra/string and 3% that had full orchestra programs, compared to 54% that had band and 62% had choir programs (p. 49).

According to Bray, Green, and Vogan (2008), the first known educators to teach music in Canadian schools were Quebecers: Mother Marie de St-Joseph beginning in 1639 and Martin Boutet beginning in 1651. However, it wasn’t until the beginning of 1918 that music was seen in school music in the form of casual singing. “The main stimulus underlying the acceptance of music as a legitimate subject was the growth and development of extra-curricular activities such as glee clubs, orchestras, and operetta productions” (p. 4). According to Bray, Green, and Vogan’s historical research, extra-curricular activities in orchestra and community programs are the main reasons why music is a part of our
curriculum today, illustrating the importance of the continuing work done in the community and in extra-curricular activities to strengthen, foster, and maintain music programs in the school system. “The music instruction in the secondary school in Canada grew at an unprecedented rate in the postwar period, especially in the field of instrumental music” (p. 6).

Furthermore, the Ontario Educational Association formed a music section in 1919 that immediately began to develop instrumental programs in schools and worked to have them recognized as secondary school subjects. “By 1920, nine elementary schools in Ontario had their own music instructor to run a generalist music program” (p. 13). It was not until after “World War II that instrumental music came to the fore, especially in the collegiate institutes and academic programs of the regular secondary schools” (p. 14). According to an OEA 1950’s report, seventy orchestras and fifty-five bands existed in these schools.

Babineau (2005) investigated the current string teaching and orchestral training in Canada in her paper, *An Overview of the History and Development of String Teaching and Orchestral Training in Canada to 2005*. Her research examines string education, not only in the school system, but also the many opportunities outside the schools for string instruction and orchestral experience. Her study also recognizes the decline in music programs, especially in the areas of string teaching and orchestral training, and comments on parents’ need for quality programs outside the school day. Babineau articulates these issues and describes the current status of string education programs in Canada, outlining them in her paper as “particular challenges for successful school-based strings
programs, and the need to consider for further discussion: school-based, out-of-school, and partnered instrumental programs” (p.15).

**Music and the Brain**

Many scholars have done research on how music can affect the brain, and their studies add to the controversy and complications of determining cause and effect in this field. Rauscher, Schellenberg, Sacks, Doidge, Levitin, and Jensen are musicians, medical doctors, and neurologists who have written material on the benefits of music. Levitin (2008) relates the effects that music has on friendship, joy, comfort, knowledge, religion, and love (p. 7-8) through explanations of cognitive and brain activity, and through the changes, developments, and evolution of human beings in the past, present, and future. Levitin (2006) tells us that “musical activity involves nearly every region of the brain that we know about” (p. 83-84). Doidge (2007) argues that the “right hemisphere processes the musical component of speech, or tone, by which we convey emotion” (p. 226), and Levitin (2006) agrees with Doidge that “artists, dancers, and musicians are right-brain dominant” (p. 122). Doidge (2007) concludes that “music makes extraordinary demands on the brain” (p. 289). We learn from Jensen’s research that musical arts nourish systems such as “our integrated sensory, attentional, cognitive, emotional, and motor capacity processes, and are in fact, the driving force behind all other learning” (Jensen, 2000, p. 3).

Doidge’s (2007) research also comments that “our brains are modified by the cultural activities we do, be they reading, studying music, or learning new
languages” (p. 289). Rauscher and Hinton’s (2006) study “consistently shows that young children provided with instrumental instruction score significantly higher on tasks measuring spatial-temporal cognition, hand-eye coordination, and arithmetic” (p. 234), Schellenberg’s (2004) research done on two groups of students (one with music lessons, the other without lessons) found that “the music group outscored the no-lessons group on a subtest of spatial abilities after the first and second years” (p. 511).
CHAPTER III

Methodology

Andante con Metodo

Andante, meaning moderately slow, and since the late eighteenth century, usually regarded as a tempo lying between adagio and allegro. The term was first used as a performance instruction independent of tempo, particularly with reference to bass lines with a steadily moving or walking character in even note-values. Its position between tempos that are thought of as clearly slow and clearly fast leads to some ambiguity when the term is combined with others, as in phrases molto andante, piu andante, and meno andante (Randel, 2003, p. 43).

con Metodo, meaning with method or methodically (Macchi, 1998, p. 651).

Using a qualitative methodology, with case study as the focus, this thesis explores the role of music education in the lives of twelve adolescents who volunteered to participate in an extra-curricular music ensemble over six years. I frame this study inside an examination of the role of arts (music) in both life experiences and school events, and with an awareness of the characteristics and values of contemporary young people who have grown up in a digital age, along with the complexities of social structures (family, peers, school, culture) in determining how students develop and change as music students.

In Gallagher’s (2008) recent publication, The Methodological Dilemma, she talks about the prominence that case study methodology is gaining in the study of schools and how the relationship and collaboration between school-based educators and university researchers are helping to validate its importance (p. 5). As a school-based educator who is also in the role of a university researcher, I have taken Gallagher’s two roles and have incorporated them into
my study, as educator and researcher, using case study as the qualitative methodology as the basis of my thesis.

“Qualitative researchers recognize a need to accommodate the readers’ pre-existing knowledge” (Stake, 2008, p. 136). I will offer background for the orchestra experience and of the twelve students who have participated in the research in this chapter.

I. A History of the Bel Canto Orchestra

The Bel Canto Senior Public School provides education to around 500 students in grade seven and eight, who range in age between twelve and fifteen years. According to the information taken from the school profiles of the school board’s website, the Bel Canto Senior Public School is:

- dedicated to serving the wide variety of needs exhibited by early adolescent students. They have a strong belief in inclusive education and they support the belief with three pillars of strength – academic, athletic and artistic excellence. The building is over thirty years old and in excellent condition, due to the efforts of our caretaking staff, board maintenance staff, teachers and students. We serve a large, multi-ethnic community living in a wide variety of socioeconomic conditions. Our traditions reflect our three pillars of strength. We have numerous yearly awards to promote academic excellence and leadership. We enter numerous music festivals and competitions yearly and have been received several awards. We are proud of our long tradition of musical excellence. Our students, a delightful mix of cultures from around the world, participate in a wide variety of academic, athletic, artistic and cultural pursuits. As noted earlier, they often distinguish themselves and their community by the excellence of their efforts. The Bel Canto staff is like any successful team whose diverse talents and backgrounds combine for excellent results.

- Every student in the school must learn a musical instrument as part of their curricular study. The scheduled music classes include a variety of beginning and advanced, ESL students, and Special Education students;
therefore, the classes are structured as general music education with the instruments as vehicles for delivering the expectations outlined in the Ontario Ministry curriculum documents. Half of the students in the school play "band" instruments that include the choice of wind, brass or percussion, while the other half of the student body play "stringed" instruments. The students are divided into sixteen classes: eight grade eight classes, and eight grade seven classes. The population of the class is structured around which instruments the students play, resulting in eight string classes, four of which are grade seven and four grade eight. Sixty percent of the students are beginners, while forty percent have had some exposure to the instruments.

The twelve volunteers in this study chose to participate in orchestra, chamber orchestra, and small ensembles. During the period of this study, rehearsals and commitment were very rigorous and required the following schedule: Monday mornings, full orchestra rehearsal; Tuesday mornings, upper string sectional; Wednesday mornings, lower strings sectional; Thursday mornings, extra help; Thursday nights, full orchestra rehearsal; and Friday morning, chamber orchestra rehearsal. All morning rehearsals started at 7:30 and ended at 8:50, when the bell to signal the start of the school day rang; all evening rehearsals began at 6:00 and ended at 8:00.

In order to provide enrichment to the students who showed a deeper interest, an extra-curricular string orchestra was formed. This orchestra rehearsed before and after the school day. Around sixty-five students were involved in this orchestra. There was no audition process, thus providing the
opportunity for all students to participate. However, a level of commitment was expected, as outlined in the contract that was given to students before joining the ensemble. The twelve participants in this research study were part of this orchestra.

“The thrill of a piece that the students perform is the reward for all the hours of planning and rehearsing” (Fitzsimmins, 2004, p. 6). It always gave my students and me great joy to present the fruits of our labour. Rehearsing pieces for so many hours provided us with the incentive to perform at every available opportunity. The Bel Canto orchestra performed two major concerts each year: one in the fall, and the other in the winter. In addition to these, the orchestra also competed in and participated in festivals across the district school board. Receiving many first and best-of-class prizes at these festivals and competitions, the orchestra was frequently asked by the board to play at the board office and eventually at the George Weston Recital Hall.

The latter performance would be my last concert with the orchestra before moving on to teach in the high school division. One parent reflected on how that performance was “magical and transported the students to another world, taking the audience with them on this musical journey.” It was also exciting to see the many eyes that lit up with the recognition that they were playing on the same stage as many famous musicians.

What always affected me was seeing the determination that drives these students before the concert. The level of practice would rise and the number of instruments taken home would increase. It was inspiring to see these students
creating beautiful music at such a young age. It was also rewarding to see the level of decorum, poise and maturity that my students displayed during all their community performances. A number of parents, friends, and even former Bel Canto graduates attended all the concerts and competitions. Their attendance and support would give inspiration to these students to continue making and loving music. I always tell the students to “play from the heart” right before each performance and stress that “it was alright to make mistakes as long as the music is coming from within you.”

The Bel Canto community is a very special one. The history of the musical influence on the community dates back to 1976 when the school had its inaugural opening. A unique cultural music exchange began and lasted for twenty-five years, a record still today. A sister school from the United States joined a partnership with the Bel Canto school to have a bi-annual exchange of the extra-curricular music ensembles from the two schools. The demographics of the students from Bel Canto were very diverse, whereas the students from the tiny town in the United States were uni-cultural. It was meaningful to see the cross-border friendships that developed as well as the different types of music, cultural subtleties, and interests that were shared by the students, parents and teachers from both cities.

“The arts can provide the spark to ignite community spirit” (Suriano, 2003, p. 6). This result was definitely achieved as the music event involved residents of the community to prepare and participate in the fundraisers that were held. Activities such as walk-a-thons and rehearse-a-thons were organized by the
community and teachers to bring in the students and the members of the community on a Saturday morning to raise money to support the exchange excursion. It was a unique experience to see so many people from every part of the community involved in this fundraising, and many of the volunteers had gone on this cultural exchange when they were students.

II. Towards Developing this Case Study

Qualitative Inquiry

Phillips (2008) describes “qualitative research as one of three main forms of behavioural research used in music education and music therapy” (p. 83). Denzin and Lincoln (2008) argue “qualitative researchers stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied” (p. 14). These claims have helped me move forward in my use of qualitative methods in researching music education with students whom I have taught and know on a personal level.

Artists convey ideas and emotions in rehearsals and performances with the aid of their respective instruments (Reimer, 1989); similar ideas and emotions can also be drawn out through the qualitative/artistic approach to which Watrin and Eisner refer. “The information presented from qualitative study can help music teachers and music therapists to think more deeply about how they are using music and how people learn best” (Phillips, 2007, p. 12).

It is in Denzin and Lincoln’s (2008) Handbook of Qualitative Research that the term “bricoleur”, meaning “to learn how to borrow from many different disciplines”, is used to describe the qualitative researcher (p. 5). The need to
have a variety of empirical materials and methods to carry out a qualitative study requires that the researcher balance and piece together the variety of data gathered. It is also important for the researcher to be aware of, and prepared to accept, unexpected data and be able to weave the findings into the research.

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) outline the use and collection of a variety of empirical materials in a qualitative study: “case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, and interactional – describing routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual lives” (p. 4). The events that occur in the lives of the participants of a qualitative study are important resources that provide a sense of self-discovery, identity, and reflection. Vidich and Lyman (1994) view qualitative study as “the observation of the conduct of self and others, to understand the mechanics of social processes” (p. 23). These observations will help in the unveiling of experiences and the historical events of human beings, thus allowing us to understand how their interactions and influences help refine or even create the society in which we live.

Furthermore, Janesick (2000) outlines twelve characteristics of qualitative design. Although not comprehensive, these characteristics provide us with a sense of what qualitative research should reflect. Qualitative design is holistic; looks at relationships within a system or culture; refers to the personal, face-to-face, and is immediate; focuses on understanding a given social setting, not necessarily on making predictions about that setting; demands that the researcher stay in the setting over time; demands time in analysis equal to the time in the field; demands that the researcher develop a model of what occurred in the social setting; requires the researcher to become the research instrument; incorporates informed consent decisions
and is responsive to ethical concerns; incorporates room for
description of the role of the researcher as well as description of the
researcher’s own biases and ideological preference; requires
ongoing analysis of the data (p. 385-386).

Phillips (2008) states that “biases, values, and personal interests must be
addressed up-front because these can affect all or any parts of the study, and
that the views are inevitably disparate and subjected; commonalities are not
value-neutral but are impacted by observer biases” (p. 74 and 86).

The qualitative researcher must honestly probe his or her biases at
the onset of the study, during the study, and at the end of the study
by clearly describing and explaining the precise role of the
researcher in the study (Janesick, 2000, p. 389).

As I had known the participants for at least six years at the time of this
research, they have an understanding of its aims and have been reminded that
they are free to be candid in their responses. The participants are old enough to
speak truthfully with few reservations, and since I am no longer their teacher,
academic grades will not act as a factor.

This characterization of what qualitative design should look like echoes
the idea that qualitative study focuses on looking at the data from different angles
and through different lenses. We should look at the study as a “larger picture,
the whole picture, which begins with the understanding of the whole” (Janesick,
1994, p. 212). However, Phillips (2008) argues that the “main outcome of
qualitative research is not to look at the big picture but, rather, to present a close-
up picture of one participant or a small group of participants in relation to some
criterion” (p. 83).
Merriam (1998) informs us that a “qualitative case study is an intense, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit” (p. xiv). The use of the different empirical materials talked about by Denzin and Lincoln as contributing to a qualitative study allows the researcher to hone in on a specific topic while at the same time receiving a variety of data from the results, thus allowing us to think beyond the intended initial direction, and be creative in our approach and our analysis of the data.

Case Study

Case study is a “generic term for the investigation of an individual” (Sturman, 1994, p. 61); however, Stake (2008) argues that case study can be “a child, a classroom or a classroom of children” (p. 120). A case study can refer to one or more individuals whose intent and focus is on a particular investigation. Ely and Rashkin (2005) also agree with Stake that case studies “may be used individually or collectively to reach general conclusions and principles” (p. 67).

Case studies are both “a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry” (Stake, 2008, p. 121). Through the study, researchers are able to examine past and current experiences from an individual case; however, these experiences have themselves provided the reason why they have become a case of interest for the study in the first place; it is where the “researcher explores in depth a single event, activity, process, or individual using a variety of data-collection procedures over an extended period of time. The case study is bounded by time and activity” (Creswell, 2003, p. 15).
Stake’s (2008) research informs us that there are three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. Intrinsic case study allows the “story to be revealed” (p. 123); it is not reflective of any other cases, but is rather a unique case unto its own. This provides the researcher with the freedom to grow and move in a number of directions. Neither the researcher nor the participants are influenced in any way within the research, thus providing an environment for obtain data in its most naturalistic form. Instrumental case study is a “particular case examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory” (Stake 2008, p. 123). This type of study differs from the intrinsic study in that it has a clear purpose and direction. It provides less room for well-rounded responses, but instead requires directed or limited input. Both the researcher and the participant(s) are influenced and provide answers that would reflect the nature of the study or the issues or theories that are outlined. This collaboration and participation between the researcher and research participants reminds me of Gallagher’s (2008) term “collaborative science”, referring to the “collaboration among the research team and youth research participants” in her research” (p. 68). Collective case study is a “number of cases studied jointly in order to inquire into the phenomenon, population, or general condition” (Stake, 2008, p. 123). They essentially have the same characteristics as an instrumental case study, but they are done in a collective manner. The intent is directed and the purpose is similar. The research then becomes “specific and generic” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 201). As the collective case study involves so many different aspects, it has similar characteristics to the instrumental case study in that the researcher
and participant(s) would be influenced in their responses with regard to certain or generic categories. It limits the feedback for the participants in that it directs them to a set of cases that are similar, but not offering the opportunity to reach out beyond the frame. Consequently, it does not allow the researcher to be holistic in his or her research approach as there is a pre-determined purpose or goal.

In looking at the three types of case studies presented to us by Stake, one sees that intrinsic seems to coincide the most with the work of Denzin and Lincoln, Janesick, and Merriam on viewing qualitative case studies as a holistic experience; that is, providing the opportunity to see the whole picture.

Barone and Eisner (1997) comment on the link between “qualitative inquiry and artistic inquiry” (p. 79). Since the nature of this case study allows the opportunity for the participants to investigate their artistic involvement and the role of the arts in their lives, I would argue that qualitative inquiry is appropriate for this artistically channeled inquiry. This type of inquiry is supported by Eisner’s (2001) research in

the arts addressing the qualitative nuances of situations; contribution to knowledge that has to do with empathic feeling; and about the capacities to experience the affective responses to life that the arts evoke (p. 10-11).

Consequently, Watrin’s (1999) idea that “art seizes the fullness of lived experience by describing, interpreting, creating, reconstituting, and revealing means – the same tasks of qualitative research” (p. 93), reinforces the artistic nature of this study.
Autoethnography

According to Susan Bennett (2004), autoethnography concerns the self/writer as part of a group or culture; in this study, the self, participant/researcher/teacher, and the group, the Bel Canto orchestra, and involve the teacher and the students engaging in extra-curricular activities, whereas, Phillips (2008) describes ethnographic research as a study of “an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time. Data are collected mainly through observation” (p. 13). I took the opportunity to follow the twelve Bel Canto orchestra members in this study as an intact cultural group through six years, gathering information through my observations, through our meetings in rehearsals and concerts, informal meetings, and on occasion when the students return from secondary school to volunteer their time in the roles of mentor and teacher helper.

Stake (2008) claims that “qualitative study is characterized by researchers spending extended time on site, personally in contact with the activities and operations of the case, reflecting descriptions and meanings of what is going on” (p. 128). Gallagher’s (2007) work reminds us that we “see the value and benefits of longitudinal studies in order to observe social life, that it is ongoing, developing, and fluctuating” (pp. 11 & 12).

In addition, Eisenhardt (1995) maintains that “one key to useful field notes is to write down whatever impressions occur; that is, to react rather than to sift out what may seem important, because it is often difficult to sift out what may seem important, because it is often difficult to know what will and will not be
useful in the future” (p. 74). As I followed these twelve students for six years, I kept a journal to record informal notes that occurred through our interactions during orchestra, and in social gatherings. Throughout this six-year longitudinal study, I observed the students’ participation and engagement in the school’s music program as well as their involvement in the orchestra, as both a participant, and volunteer, and recorded and gathered field notes in a log/journal file.

Informal inquiry, as defined by Anderson (2008), is unstructured with no set format or procedure, and was used to gather field and anecdotal notes to provide insights into the lives, personality, characteristics, family life, and student interests, so that I was able to formulate and understand the diversity of this group of participants, and the cohesive group they formed.

Study of Life

Dewey’s view on the “study of education being the study of life; that we learn about education from thinking about life, and we learn about life from thinking about education” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, xxiv), suggests that the reflection on the past experiences of one’s life not only affects that person’s present and future but also provides research to help enrich the life of others. It is when people are able to reflect upon their lives, and start to “understand their own lives in terms of narratives” that “that narrative becomes appropriate for understanding others” (MacIntyre, 1984, pp. 211-212). This understanding is important for enabling narrative researchers to analyze the experiences of their
own lives in order for them to gain new perspectives in researching and viewing the lives of others through their personal narratives.

Dewey’s theory of the “study of education being the study of life” is supported by Ward’s (2003) definition of life history being “the history of an individual’s life given by the person living it and solicited by the researcher” (p. 29). According to Allport, there are several forms of life history that can be studied: the “complete, topical, and edited” (Ibid., p. 30).

The complete life history analyzes the “entire life (from birth) experiences of the participant” (Ibid., p. 30). This type of analysis provides a thorough and complete view on every aspect of an individual’s life experiences, but it should also be noted that the amount of data collected could be large and very time consuming for the researcher to review and analyze. However, the detailed and complete data could provide the researcher with information that might be missed in a less thorough analysis.

The comprehensive topical life “does not try to focus on the full life history, but rather examines a particular issue/subject” (Ibid., p. 31). This type of analysis could be more suited to a researcher looking to hone in on a particular subject or events in a participant’s life. Ward suggests that the topical life shares the same “features of the complete form except that only one phase or aspect of the participant’s life is presented” (Ibid, p. 31).

The edited life history’s key feature is “the continual interspersing of explanations, comments and questions by someone other than the focal participant” (Ibid, p. 31). This is where the researcher takes either the topical life
or complete history of an individual and selects certain phrases or comments and edits them to “ease the work of the reader” (Ibid, p. 32). The process of editing allows the text to flow smoothly without repetition and grammatical error. It also limits the attention needed by the reader so that the topic or subject can be more focused in depth and understanding.

“The purpose of the study should reflect the researcher’s philosophical perspective and how it relates to his or her profession” (Phillips, 2008, p. 70). As a music teacher and musician, I have chosen to develop this study by interviewing music students to examine the reasons why youth volunteer their time to participate in extra-curricular activities in string orchestras, and to determine the effects of their volunteering. More specifically, the aims of the study are to explore what motivates students to begin and to continue their extra-curricular involvement.

III. The Complexities of Data Collection

This study constitutes qualitative research through case study – in particular the anecdotal stories of twelve students reflecting their experiences over six years of study with my music group, along with open-ended interviews, surveys and questionnaires. “Qualitative research, like art, describes and interprets details of lived experience” (Watrin, 1999, p. 94). Participants were queried on their lived experiences and their involvement with music, and on the ways in which these experiences have affected them as students and as productive members of society. Data collection was a very important stage in this
qualitative inquiry as “order and understanding emerges through the patterns of relationships becoming apparent” (Morse, 1994, p. 229).

Creswell (2003) informs us of four types of collection procedures: “Observations, Interviews, Documents, and Audio and Visual materials” (p. 185-188). The major mode of data collection for this research covered three phases. Phase one represented my six years of observations and experiences as a volunteer music educator with this group. Phase two involved the distribution and collection of a questionnaire. Phase three involved face-to-face interviews, after the questionnaires had been collected and reviewed. In order for a research process to run smoothly, a chronological set of procedures needed to be devised and followed, including pre-selecting candidates to participate in this study; the distribution and collection of contracts and questionnaires, and the interview process.

“Interviews, in which the researcher conducts face-to-face interviews with participants, interviews participants by telephone, or engages in focus group interviews” (Creswell, 2003, pp. 185-188), can be “structured, semi-structured, or unstructured” (Fontana and Frey, 1994, p. 361). My research used a semi-structured approach, as I designed a set of questions to ask the participants during the interview process, but had given them the opportunity at the end of the interview to add any additional information that they felt would help the research. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in the participant’s residence or a location that was mutually agreed upon by the participant and the researcher. Questions were guided by an interview schedule. Each interview was one-on-
one, and an hour in duration. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. Interviews that were done face-to-face were recorded with a digital voice recorder. All interviews were done in the English language.

Field notes are “texts created by participants and researchers to represent aspects of field experience” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 419). After each interview, I wrote field notes to capture any interesting occurrence during the interview and to comment on the context of the interview. I wrote these notes to aid in recalling the actual picture of the interview, along with noting unusual circumstances that may have occurred during the course of the interview (e.g. interruptions). The participants viewed interview transcripts during the third phase of the interview; approximately a week after the interview had been conducted.

It is important to provide research and materials for teachers, students, communities, school boards, and governments that examine the value of arts programs in all our schools. Furthermore, such issues as funding for these programs need further study to deal with all levels of government, the private sector, and industry. And lastly, the public needs to be informed about students’ views, perceptions and feelings concerning both curriculum-based and extra-curricular string orchestra programs.
Symphonic Engagement
Movement IV - Analyzing Six Years of Ensemble Music

Presto non Troppo $\downarrow = 100$

Tony Nam-Hai Leong
(1974 - )
CHAPTER IV

Analyzing Six Years of Ensemble Music

Presto non Troppo

Presto meaning prompt, quick, fast; one of the earliest tempo designations in music, but the tradition by which presto became a faster tempo than allegro grew alongside the older tradition, in which it was merely a moderately fast tempo (Sadie, 2001, vol. 20, p. 306).

Troppo indicating too much, a word used to qualify tempo directions. Examples include presto, ma non troppo, fast, but not too much so (Sadie, 2001, vol. 25, p. 795).

Through the interviews, “data were collected based on asking descriptive questions, making general observations, and recording the interview (field) notes” (Phillips, 2008, p. 93). As Stake (2008) reminds us that the qualitative researcher must “choose between telling lots and telling little” (p. 137), I have reviewed the data taken from the interviews and questionnaires of twelve students, and have categorized my findings in the following emerging schema of themes:

I. Community/Belonging
II. Identity
III. Friendship
IV. Emotional Intelligence
V. Expressing Feelings
VI. Self-Esteem
VII. Creativity
VIII. Skill Development
“As part of our praxis we are constantly attuned to what students are doing and saying. It is nothing new in our field to interpret observational data; methods of qualitative research have been helpful in these endeavours” (Coan, 2002, p. 96).

I. Meet the Participants

As the researcher who has followed twelve students for six years, I will provide a brief glimpse of each student through using “open-ended data and asking general questions, developing an analysis from the information supplied by participants” through formal and informal interactions (Creswell, 2003, p. 190-191). This study is composed of twelve students, eight females and four males with a mixture of cultures, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, and religions. In order to preserve their identities, I have given each student pseudonyms by matching their personalities and characteristics to Italian musical terms traditionally used to describe the different moods in music: Maestoso, Affettuoso, Comodo, Cantabile, Vivace, Agitato, Brillante, Grazioso, Dolce, Animato, Misterioso, and Scherzando.

Maestoso

Maestoso: meaning “majestic” (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2007, p. 462, Randel, 2003, p. 482, & Sadie, 2001, vol. 15, p. 576) in Italian, represents the commanding presence of this student through the leadership skills that she developed as a musician.

Maestoso is a Caucasian female violist who entered my seventh grade class without being able to read music.
When I came into Bel Canto in grade seven, the only notes I knew were, D0, D1, D2, and so forth. Two strings! I didn’t even know I liked the viola. You have helped me discover my passion for music. I found passion and talent I didn’t know I had.

Her father is a lawyer, and a very accomplished and talented artist. As a child, he was encouraged to pursue another career other than the arts in order for him to make a comfortable living, but continued to paint and draw as a hobby. Maestoso’s mother is in advertising and is currently the executive director of an important music organization in which she became involved because of her twin daughters’ interest in music. Maestoso’s twin sister is a trombone player who played in the band instead of the orchestra at Bel Canto. She presently attends the same school of music as Maestoso in a post-secondary institution. She was also an artist herself, involved with dance and ballet during her youth.

Presently completing a music education degree in university on viola, Maestoso was initially enrolled in the performance degree program, but chose to switch to music education because of her positive experiences in public school music programs. She also knew that her strengths were in teaching and she would have more success in applying in this profession. She recently returned to do her teaching practicum with me at my school.

Maestoso is most remembered as the grade eight viola student who became so involved in the music that in the middle of an orchestra practice, that she stopped the sixty-five piece orchestra and shared a story that she dreamed up while she was playing the music, about pirates and ships. The way she told the story and the attention she commanded from the class was mature beyond her years. She took this confidence to auditions and was accepted for the city’s
symphony youth orchestra, as well as attending quartet camps in the summer with private lessons only starting in grade nine. In addition to her music making, including playing the guitar and singing, Maestoso was an all-round student who was involved in swimming as well.

Maestoso’s valued making music through its camaraderie. It gave her connections for sharing her passion and created memories with other students in her musical world. “My chamber group shared so many memories and inside jokes from all of our experiences together that we would just hate to catch each other’s eye to start laughing” (Maestoso).

**Affettuoso**

Affettuoso: is the Italian term for affectionate and tenderness (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2007, Randel, 2003, & Sadie, 2001). I have chosen this term for this student because of the passion shown in her performances.

Affettuoso is a female of Macedonian descent, born to immigrant parents and is the youngest of three children. She is a violinist, and a well-rounded student who was involved in volleyball and music, and achieved high academic standards. A very devoted music student, Affettuoso always practiced with intensity and passion, which later gained her the role of Concert Mistress of the orchestra, a leadership position that required Affettuoso to play at a high level and be confident in leading her peers in the orchestra.

Affettuoso is a well-rounded student having been a part of the student council, volleyball team, orchestra, and appeared on the honour roll. Extremely high achieving and conscientious, Affettuoso was well respected by her peers.
and teachers, and would often assist other students in orchestra with their parts or play her part with them to help them with their practice regiment.

Affettuoso recounts how the orchestra has given her the tools to appreciate music at another level and how music was a vehicle for her to be united with others.

Looking back I greatly appreciate having had music in my life because it gives me the satisfaction that nothing else can because it allows me to appreciate music beyond just being something to listen to. Having gone to a music exchange, having heard that the Bel Canto Orchestra has discontinued the program, I felt disheartened because it was such a unique experience that music once allowed people to join as one.

**Comodo**

Comodo: a term to represent someone who is leisurely, comfortable, and easy-going (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2007, p. 159, Randel, 2003, p. 194, & Sadie, 2001, vol. 6, p. 177). This description accurately represents this student as he was at ease performing and working with others. He is able to connect with individuals of all ages, and small to large groups.

Comodo is a male violist of Caucasian descent who held the position of assistant principal viola in the orchestra and won the “Golden Strad” award when he was in grade seven, an award presented to a student showing leadership and contributing to the music program. He is extremely witty with a great sense of humour as shown in a speech he made in grade seven where he had to introduce a piece titled “Pizzicato Popcorn” which lasted about five minutes, in which he was able to find enough words that began with a “p” for his intended “short” paragraph.
Comodo was also very creative, having written several musical compositions for the viola in grade seven even though he was only asked to do one, and was always very proud of his instrument, defending its importance in the orchestra and giving it more voice in his compositions.

The following describes Comodo’s fulfilling experience in the orchestra program.

I enjoyed the opportunity to participate in an exchange program with a middle school in Indiana. I billeted two students for a week in Toronto and was also billeted myself in Indiana for a week. The program was amazing and opened my eyes to the broadness of music and to many new cultures. I thoroughly enjoyed my time in it and would do it all over again in an instant (Comodo).

Comodo is presently studying engineering and continues to play music in a band.

**Cantabile**

“Cantabile” represents playing in a “singing” and “songlike” style (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2007, Randel, 2003, & Sadie, 2001). This student always played and spoke very lyrically, and had a passion for both music and life.

Cantabile is a female Caucasian violist. I first encountered her when she was in grade 6, when she asked to borrow a viola for the summer so she could prepare for her senior public school, demonstrating how dedicated to and excited she was about the viola and music. Living in a household with her brother as a violist, affected her choice in choosing the viola. Chen and Howard’s (2004) research into why students choose a particular instrument, finds “siblings who have played it” as one of the factors (p. 218). (Coincidentally, this is why I initially chose to play the violin, because my brother David brought home the violin one
day, thus giving me the opportunity to be introduced to this instrument. In hindsight, had my brother not have brought home the violin, I may have chosen a different instrument or not have realized my passion for music at all).

Equally at home with sports, Cantabile also played hockey, piano, and later, the saxophone.

I now play three different instruments since grade seven, when I only played the viola and I don’t think I gave up anything because of my involvement with the music program. It gave me plenty of time to keep playing hockey because of the time schedule.

Cantabile also had the opportunity to experience music camp as both a violist and a saxophonist. She became a role model after this experience and convinced others in the orchestra to join her at the music camp so that they could share and be given this opportunity of combining music and outdoor activities in a week of intense music training. In addition, she also participated in the school board’s all-city orchestra, which is open to students who have been accepted based on an audition, and requires them to attend several rehearsals on Saturdays and Thursday afternoons in preparation for the final concert held at Massey Hall in Toronto. It’s interesting that my students like Cantabile would experience extra-curricular activities such as music camp, school orchestra, and all city orchestra, as these activities were ones that I experienced in the public school system.

Vivace

Vivace: meaning vivacious, full of life, and brisk (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2007, Randel, 2003, & Sadie, 2001). This term represents this student’s enthusiasm, positive outlook, and lively personality when playing music.
Vivace is a bass player whose mother is Caucasian and whose father is of Indian descent. She lost her father at an early age and lives with her mother and grandmother. It was extremely convenient for her to live five minutes walking distance from the school as she often stayed after school to practice her instrument, the double bass.

Vivace has always been enthusiastic about music, involved in every ensemble and staying after school to practice. She also knew at an early age that she wanted to play the bass, even though she was presented with different instruments in her junior school. She made it quite clear to me on our first meeting that she was going to be a bass player, despite research findings that “flute and violin are typically perceived as more feminine, whilst others, such as the tuba and trumpet, are seen as more masculine” (Chen and Howard, 2004, p. 218).

In addition to the music ensembles, in which she participated at school, she was also a part of the school board's youth orchestra and music camp ensembles. Her appreciation for music and her involvement with different genres of music have helped shape her passion for the arts and have given her the tools to become a critical listener.

I've grown in the ability to appreciate and love the music in the world around me so much. In movies, the subway stations, I'd be humming along with the music or just listening for things. I'm seeing as I walk through the halls, I hum a tune, or randomly I will sing a sentence rather than saying it. And when I go to the movies and hear the music going into a minor key, I can predict a scary, suspicious part coming up. It changed my look on society (Vivace).
This can be explained by “music is experience, and musical understanding is the means by which we grasp that experiencing” (Coan, 2002, p. 98). The expectations in our current Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum for the Arts for grades 9-10 reflect this goal:

The arts nourish the imagination and develop a sense of beauty, while providing unique ways for students to gain insights into the world around them (Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum for the Arts, 9-10, 1999, p. 3).

Sacks’ (2007) researched music and the brain, finding that “music forms a significant and, on the whole, pleasant part of life for most of us – not only external music, music we hear with our ears, but internal music, music that plays in our heads” (p. 30).

**Agitato**

Agitato: the musical Italian term representing agitation and restless (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2007, Randel, 2003, & Sadie, 2001), represents this student because of his energy and inability to stay in one spot, except for when he is playing his musical instrument.

Agitato, is a male violist who was born to a Caucasian mother and Muslim father. An extremely loud and talkative student who is intelligent, amusing, and very sociable, he was able to channel this energy into musical conversations. It was fascinating to see how focused he was when the music started, how involved he was in practice and performances, and all the time and energy he spent practicing his instrument; it was as if he turned into a different person. “A lot of time spent engrossed in music is not something a normal kid does” (Agitato). He spoke of the negative experience he had in high school when
easier and repetitive pieces were presented that weren’t challenging. Levitin (2006) talks about this in his research on the brain:

when a musical piece is too simple we tend not to like it, finding it trivial. When it is too complex, we tend not to like it, finding it unpredictable – we don’t perceive it to be grounded in anything familiar (p. 229).

Agitato initially took piano lessons, but became disinterested due to the isolation of the experience. He didn’t actually start taking private lessons on the viola until grade ten, and subsequently joined the Royal Conservatory of Music Chamber Orchestra, as well as attending music camps in the summer. The music camp and conservatory experiences allowed him to develop friendships with other musicians, and he has chosen to return to music camp as a counsellor so that he could share his skills and experiences with other campers. “These experiences gave me an opportunity to grow up with certain comrades who are musically bound and share the same love of music and instrumentation”. Levitin (2006) explains this phenomenon through this research on music and the brain: “Particularly when we are young, and in search of our identity, we form bonds or social groups with people whom we want to be like, or with whom we believe we have something in common” (p. 226).

Although not studying music in post-secondary school, he has found opportunities to continue playing the viola in community orchestras.

**Brillante**

Brillante: meaning glitter, sparkle, and brilliant (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2007, Randel, 2003, Sadie, 2001). Such a definition describes this student well in terms of his intelligence and positive attitude towards everything that he does.
He is always willing to take risks and subsequently became involved in the Chamber Orchestra as well as attending music camps.

Brillante, a male of Polish descent born to immigrant parents, is a violinist. His parents are committed parents who continue to work hard to ensure that their children receive all the advantages of their education. Although Brillante was not initially excited about playing the violin, encouragement from his parents and the fun and friends that he received from his participation, made him realize the value of music in his life.

Many students drop musical study altogether and factors found to influence continuation include socio-economic status, peer pressure, student-teacher relationships, conflicts with other social/school activities, or family considerations (Chen and Howard, 2004, p. 218).

Brillante asked in grade 8 to join the chamber orchestra, a group that would rehearse an additional hour per week, where he would be challenged with difficult repertoire. Although I was initially concerned with the level of music for Brillante, he assured me that he would practice and that I should give him a chance. He turned out to be a very important part of the chamber orchestra that year by leading the second violin section.

It was unfortunate that Brillante’s experience with his high school orchestra program was not as successful as his time in the orchestra in middle school. “Seeing really bad teaching techniques and seeing people who make music so boring discourages any musical appreciation”. However, he was able to take this negative experience and turn it into an opportunity to continue playing violin at other places such as music camp, a place where he returned as a
counsellor, assisting me in the string orchestra and taking care of twelve campers, inspiring them to appreciate music.

While studying business in university, Brillante continues to play his violin in a community orchestra. “Orchestra got me thinking about taking other extra-curricular activities at school. I’m still in the Hamilton Symphony”.

**Grazioso**

Grazioso: meaning graceful (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2007 & Randel, 2003), describes this student’s quiet and selfless personality.

Grazioso is a female, born in Korea, who joined my grade seven string class in the middle of the school year without the knowledge of the English language or of playing a musical instrument. Although language was a barrier at first for Grazioso, she felt extremely welcomed and comfortable in the orchestra. Levitin (2008) talks about the “overwhelming variety of ways we express ourselves that one can come to understand best what it means to be a musical human” (p. 7). It wasn’t long before she caught up with the rest of the class technically and musically. Her brother subsequently took up the viola because of his sister’s playing the violin with such passion.

Grazioso’s lack of English proficiency when she first arrived in Canada did not stop her from learning the violin and wanting to be involved in the extra-curricular string orchestra group. It was a place where she developed strong friendships and was accepted because she was able to communicate with the others through music, and eventually, with English. Jim Giles (2002) reminds us
that “Canada’s early indigenous people used the arts to communicate. The arts share our history, our stories and our dreams” (p. 6).

Honestly, I was proud about the fact that I get to participate with extra-curricular music activities. I got to learn new techniques and knowledge. In addition, I had opportunities to meet many new people in orchestras (Grazioso).

Perkins et al. (2007) also found that “the foreign-born youth in my study mentioned how the youth programs offered assistance in learning English to help them fit in with United States’ culture” (p. 436).

In addition to becoming principal second violin, a leadership role she gained after only seven months of playing the violin, (a position she earned due to the hours she put into practicing and developing her technical abilities on the violin), she was also part of the school board’s honour strings and youth orchestra, as well as the orchestra at her church.

Grazioso recounts her best experience in the music exchange in which she participated.

My best experience in participating in the extra-curricular activity in music was having a trip to a city in U.S., for school concert. I made a lot of new friends from a different country (Grazioso).

Dolce

Dolce: a terminology to represent sweet, gentle, or dainty (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2007, Randel, 2003, & Sadie, 2001), describes this student. She is parent-like in her nature, in her caring ways, and in the attention she pays to detail.

Dolce is a female violinist who has three siblings, two of whom are fraternal twins. The twin girls both play the violin as well, and her brother is a
trumpet player. Born to immigrant parents of Serbian descent, her parents are extremely supportive in providing their children with programs in the arts. Dolce’s father is an engineer and mother a chef.

I actually met Dolce before she became my student in the Bel Canto orchestra, when she was involved in the All City Orchestra group which I conducted. I still remember sitting beside her and seeing the frustration in her eyes because she was not able to read the musical notes on the page at that stage of her musical development. However, after her first couple of weeks in the Bel Canto orchestra, she definitely rose to the challenge and began reading music, which eventually provided her with enough confidence and leadership to assume the role of Concert Mistress of the orchestra.

One inspiring moment for me was watching her share a stand with Tafelmusik Concert Mistress, Jeanne Lamon. The look of pride, excitement, and joy that was on Dolce’s face while she played her violin, demonstrated the influence and importance of music in her life at that very moment. Dolce shares this experience playing with Tafelmusik in this story of how overcoming a musical challenge became a life changing experience and how these experiences inspired her to continue music throughout high school.

Having been so involved in music, I truly consider it a life changing experience. One memory that I will never forget was in my grade eight year. It was after school, when four music students, including myself, were in the music room rehearsing our solo parts for an upcoming performance with Tafelmusik. At that time, my particular solo part was quite a challenge. I remember there were so many eighth notes that it reminded me of spaghetti. My music teacher said to fill my mind with the smells and tastes of home and before you know it, I got the part. A few weeks later, Ms. Jeanne Lamon, the first violinist for Tafelmusik, sat beside me as I played that exact
same part. Looking back four years later, I’ve come to truly realize why I’ve taken music for all my years in high school.

**Animato**

Animato: animated (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2007 & Randel, 2003). This student had the ability to make anyone feel comfortable and at ease. She was a well-rounded student who was artistic, athletic, and academic.

Animato is a female violinist born to Caucasian parents, an honour roll student involved in soccer and basketball. Her mother is an elementary school teacher and she has a brother who is a cellist (he also was a student of mine).

Animato’s musicianship and love of the violin began to show through her dedication and involvement in both the orchestra and chamber groups in grades 7 and 8, and continued into high school through her participation in her high school’s orchestra, music leadership council, and musical theatre groups, in addition to the school board’s all-city orchestra and music camp, where she credits “meeting my best friends in high school, music camp, and music department events”.

She continues to appreciate music in post-secondary study and reports to me the concerts that she attends. Animato’s favourite memory was “staying after school to hang around with instruments, friends, and my music teacher, and sitting on a rock at music camp in the dark, listening to a couple of guitars and bonding”.
Misterioso

Misterioso: a term meaning mysterious, enigmatical, secret, or covert (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2007 & Macchi, 1998) represents this student because of her reserved and hidden talents.

Misterioso is a female violinist born to immigrant parents. Her Tamil heritage provided her the opportunity to be introduced to the Tamil violin, an instrument that is similar to the violin, but is played with its scroll touching the floor. Misterioso is someone who sits very quietly and appears to have a shy personality. Although not belonging to sports teams, perhaps due to her quiet nature, she reflects on how orchestra made her feel as if she were on a sports team. “In my free time participating in the school orchestra, I felt as if I was part of sports team and performance night was just as exciting as a final match”.

Orchestra often provided some of these students, who were not particularly athletic, an opportunity to be part of the school and be involved in community opportunities and be proud of their school and of their successes with a school team.

One of my favourite memories is when our orchestra went for a competition and we were playing against a school with all professional musicians. We still managed to outplay them.

Orchestra has helped Misterioso appreciate western music in addition to her Tamil violin repertoire.

During my experience in symphony/orchestra, I gained appreciation for new types of music. And four years after I was involved in extra-curricular music activities; I still refer back to the times when I was part of the Bel Canto Symphony Orchestra.
Scherzando

Scherzando: a term meaning playful, describes the youthful, energetic, and easy-going nature of this student. He is a male violist born to Korean Immigrant parents. He wanted to take music, but his parents didn’t think it was practical. Scherzando wrote, “In my family, I was forced to accept the burden of becoming a doctor or lawyer. A career path that is not in my interest, music was my dream”. Coming from a similar background of parents perceiving success as financial success, one sees how influential culture and parents can be in causing students to choose certain career paths or interests. In Harris’ (2006) book on Music Education and Muslims, she talks about the difficulty of Muslim female students telling their parents of their participation in extra-curricular string orchestras at school, and playing a musical instrument for enjoyment and pleasure was not something promoted in their religion, not as part of the school curriculum.

Although Scherzando had issues of low self-esteem at first, he became more confident with his abilities, as he became more involved in music and performances. He also played guitar and used music extensively when working as a counsellor at summer camps. Scherzando is extremely religious and hard working, very involved in all aspects of music both in school and church; he “soaked up” every bit of music in these institutions because he knew that music was not an option for him to study as a career. He wanted to learn everything quickly because he knew he didn’t have a great deal of time left for this vocation.
A very caring individual who also portrayed a parenting role towards the other students, he has decided to be a teacher and have music as one of his subjects. One of Scherzando’s favourite memories of being in the Bel Canto orchestra was having an opportunity to play a piece of music that the students requested:

Personally, out of all my favourite memories, was when my music teacher in grade eight, arranged a very contemporary piece. A lot of us young students wanted to play more “fun” pieces rather than the earlier classical, baroque or romantic composers. So our teacher went through the hard work of arranging the pop song “I want it that way” by the Backstreet Boys for the string orchestra to play. It was definitely unexpected, yet the students appreciated the simple fact that our teacher went through that time to arrange a piece for us (Scherzando).

This attraction to popular music is supported by the research done by Baker and Cohen (2007), where they believe that “the potential of popular music to promote cultural cohesion and community development through offering such music-related pathways to youth people” (p. 317), and by Green (2002) in her book How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way Ahead for Music Education. It may also explains how my students were starting to bring music in from their cultures outside of the school and orchestra. Michael Fullan (2000) coins this term as the “outside-in” story, where external material is brought into the school to try and accomplish a “large-scale reform” (p. 2). Bartel and Cameron (2004) also talk about “the alternative choice of repertoire, music selected for its cultural familiarity to students, perhaps even selected by students, and not constrained to teacher choices of repertoire” (p. 46).
II. An Emerging Schema

Community and Belonging

“Communities are essential to our survival, and music gives us the one beautifying language that crosses the bridges that divide us” (Rauscher, 2002, p. 11). Music often provides a reason for students to gather and commune. Countless times in the interviews, participants offered their views on how being a part of the Bel Canto orchestra helped them build community and also created a sense of belonging within the school, even establishing life-long friendships.

Scherzando stated that “music is often one of the tools that gather people to build a community. It can be a tool to strengthen a community. Music has many roles in a community and in the processes of building a community”. He continued this community building through establishing an after-school music group even after they graduated called “TYME – The Young Musicians’ Ensemble”. Levitin (2006) uses the term “social bonding and societal cohesion” to explain the impact that music can have on a community (p. 226).

Dillon’s (2006) research on assessing the positive influence of music activities in community development programs informs us that “music programs interact dynamically with community” (p. 277). Cantabile talks about her “community as a group of people brought together, all for the same reason to play music and learn”. Maestoso echoes this claim on how “community to me is a sense of camaraderie among several individuals. A group of people having the same kind of direction, the same hopes and dreams”.

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“Youth most frequently identified ‘fun’ as the motivation for their participation” (Perkins, and al., 2007, p. 422). Students can learn life-long skills, musicianship, develop friendships, and still have “fun”. “Orchestra rehearsal was satisfying because you’re around people who you would never talk to or see” (Misteriosso). Cantabile talks about the ‘fun’ she had at music camp with students from different cultures and geographical locations, “Learning at music camp, and making music with people from all over the world was so much fun for me”.

Ward-Steinman and Perkins et al. (2006) discuss youth programs and volunteering as opportunities for students to “give back to the community” (p. 93) and a “chance to do something positive both for themselves and for the community” (Perkins et al., 2007, p. 437). This speaks clearly in the responses of my participants. “By volunteering, I was able to assist those younger than me to gain the love and appreciation for music, and open them up to something new and exciting” (Dolce). “I decided to go back and volunteer to help out with orchestra because I loved being in that environment of 50 people all joining together for one mere reason – music” (Misterioso). “By volunteering, I was able to assist those younger than me to gain the love and appreciation for music, and open them up to something new and exciting” (Affettuoso).

Higgins (2007) speaks of playing in a band to “advocate a sense of belonging for those who participate. It is this welcoming, this sense of community, that has fertilized a network of friendships that have their seeds embedded within the band’s identity” (p. 290).
Through the many interviews, the students reminded me of how important orchestra was to them in terms of feeling part of a group, making friends, and finding a place where they felt needed and accepted.

The best thing about being in an extra-curricular music program was the sense of belonging and friendship. It (musical community) is the feeling of acceptance and belonging amongst others. I felt like I belonged there (music ensemble) and I was so proud and happy with myself whenever I was there. You definitely feel a sense of belonging at your school – if you were never good at sports, you usually feel left out. However you never had to try out for music. Whether you were good or bad, you could always come to orchestra rehearsals and feel as if you’re part of a team (Misterioso).

For students like Misterioso, who may have artistic interests rather than athletic goals, it is important to provide opportunities for them to feel a part of the school community, and contributing to its life.

I feel that my sense of belonging, at my elementary school was most affected by my musical experience. I felt like an important part of the school because of my contributions to its orchestra” (Comodo).

I feel that the combination of having a sense of belonging at your school and the willingness to participate in other school activities were most influential in my musical experience (Dolce).

Sense of belonging at school were the musical groups allowing for a safe haven where I met some of my best friends and found good role models (Animato).

Extra-curricular activities in string orchestras can provide students like Animato with a place where she can feel safe in a school environment, and generate and foster friendships with others who share similar interests.
Identity

“As youth enter their middle-adolescent (ages 14-17) years, they become identity seekers” (Jone & Perkins, 2006, p. 92). “Community music helps people develop their artistic abilities and identity” (Koopman, 2007, p. 153). Research by Perkins et al. (2007) finds that “many studies have documented that youth participation in out-of-school programs can contribute to a variety of positive developmental outcomes such as life skill development and identity development” (p.421).

Identity can describe a person’s personality, characteristic, physical appearance, likes and dislikes, gender, and so forth. The following comments present us with a small glimpse of the attributes of identity that have been affected by music for these students:

I found myself through those music programs. I developed into who I am now. I found what I want to do with my life: be a music teacher. Every sense of direction and orientation I have about myself and my life came from those music programs (Maestoso).

I wish to become a teacher; therefore, the leadership skills and the inspiration I’ve obtained from these teachers would be something I’d like to carry onto my employment. I know that without the experiences that I’ve had in music, I wouldn’t have the same opinions, beliefs, and lifestyle as I do now. My teacher truly inspired me to take music not just as an extra-curricular activity, however, as a way to learn more about myself through music (Scherzando).

Both Maestoso and Scherzando showed interest in a career of music education. Their words and testimonials remind me of the modeling a teacher can make, as well as the value of the quality of programming provided to students.
I believe that my time spent in music has allowed me to grow more as a person and has been a large part in shaping who I am today. Music has been an important piece of what has made me who I am today. I definitely believe that I would be a different person today without it. Perhaps I would not be quite as hard working as I am today and definitely not as artistic (Comodo).

Without music, I think I would be spending my time less appropriately, rather than taking chances, and learning new things, whether it be with an instrument, or in the classroom (Cantabile).

Friendship

Higgins’ (2007) research informs us that for a number of participants, community music was initially seen as a way to make new friends. As well as the creation of new friends, the community music nurtured deeper relationships between old acquaintances (p. 288).

Cameron and Carlisle (2004) also remind us that students “experience music-making as a social activity, where open interaction with other people is integral with interaction with sound” (p. 35).

These students have formed strong friendships and may be linked in memory because of their experiences of making music together.

I had a smaller and tightly bound community. It would reflect outside of the ensemble because certain people are friendly to you and therefore a cultish feeling. A group or clique that you can relate to; kind of like family. Turning after school musical activities into a community of friends that lasts to this day (Brillante).

In the music community, everyone knows each other and I like having that advantage (Vivace).

Staying after school to hang around with instruments, friends, and my music teacher (Animato).

Performing in Indiana, United States through a student music exchange allowed me the experience of travelling to U.S. and making new friends (Scherzando).
I also enjoyed it (orchestra) because I made new friends who were interested in the same things as me (music) (Cantabile).

**Emotional Strength**

Sacks (2007), a neurologist researcher, tells us that “music, uniquely among the arts, is both completely abstract and profoundly emotional. It has no power to represent anything external, but it has a unique power to express inner states or feelings” (p. 300-301). Levitin (2006) agrees that “musical expertise takes many forms, sometimes technical, and sometimes emotional” (p. 207). According to Jensen’s (2000) research, “early music exposure may help children identify and manage their emotional states” (p. 47) and “the powerful medium of music can assist us in the creation, identification, and use of emotional states to regulate our lives” (Ibid, p. 51).

Perkins et al.’s (2007) research tells us that “young people expressed how much they valued being a role model for the younger children in their neighbourhoods” (p. 437).

Many of the students whom I interviewed, expressed their joy, fulfillment, and satisfaction that they felt volunteering in the orchestra. “Our students express themselves through their music” (Lashbrook and Willingham, 2002, p. 32).

I was helping out the orchestra at my old school for community service hours and I remember all the kids saying how good I was at viola. I still remember when I was in the orchestra telling the volunteers how good they were. The volunteering made me appreciate music way more (Agitato).

I absolutely loved helping with the strings ensemble and junior band. Helping kids realize that music and the ability to play music is a fun and exciting experience. Being a musician is the best
feeling in the world. Playing for people and playing for you gives a great amount of satisfaction (Vivace).

The thing I remember most about the extra-curricular music programs I did was all the laughter, I constantly felt good in my fellow musician’s presence. The thing that does stick out in my mind is our string orchestra performances in middle school. I always remember beaming at the end when we’d all stand up and our conductor would look at us and smile and give us two thumbs up or mumble an inside joke. That feeling of such closeness within the ensemble and to what you’re doing even though all these people are obliviously clapping. It was always my favourite feeling. Such a sense of joy and pride, friendship, and closeness, I always felt like the luckiest kid at school (Maestoso).

“Music lets us get in touch with our feelings, our intuition, and our hopes and fears. It activates our dreams and moves us through troubled waters” (Jensen, 2000, p. 51). Hodges (2005) supports this:

Central to any discussion of music as a knowledge system must be the idea of feeling. From one end of the continuum dealing with vague, unspecified moods to the other end dealing with crystallized emotions such as grief or joy. Music is intrinsically connected with feelings (p. 112).

This outcome is reflected in Willingham’s (2000) research into how “music invariably stimulates our emotional life and that the music and the kinaesthetic connections with the instrument allow the healing process to begin. Music articulates forms that language cannot set forth” (p. 6). However, music can also be the voice that helps convey feelings of joy or sorrow, thus often associated with the “language of emotions” (Landry, 2004, p. 28). Program music is an example of story telling through music. It “attempts to express or depict one or more non-musical ideas, images, or events” (Randel, 1986, p. 656) by using different timbres and effects executed on a music instrument. Eisner (2001) describes this level of communication best in his comment that “music, like the
other arts, is a form of communication that conveys meanings that we have no
words to describe” (p. 12).

It was clear that the emotions and feelings were experienced deeply by
the participants in regards to their experiences with music making:

I started to love music more and found peace mentally (Grazioso).

My music teacher made me laugh and made me feel like I was
worthwhile. It was a great and fun way to spend mornings, but
more than that being in the music room, playing in an ensemble,
making jokes with my section just made me feel good about myself
(Maestoso).

Although music is not all about winning, it does make one feel good
when they consider how much time and effort they have put
towards orchestra/symphony (Misterioso).

It made me proud to be in a school activity, other than a sport. My
parents were also proud of me (Cantabile).

It (music) was a great stress reliever; it was a great way to loosen
up and relax from the daily tensions of schoolwork; it was a great
way to let release all the stress and worries by expressing them
through music. Music is food to my soul and has inspired me to
take this food and make it taste better (Scherzando).

Self-Esteem

Baker and Cohen (2007) speak of how music can be a “pathway to self-
esteeom” (p. 318) and Ward-Steinman (2006) strengthens this claim by saying
that “after-school outreach activities help at-risk children develop overall greater
self-esteem” (p. 85), with Koopman (2007) confirming that community music
“helps people develop their self-esteem and confidence as significant outcomes”
(p. 153).

Throughout the years, I have seen the growth in these students in terms of
their self-esteem and confidence.
Being involved in the orchestra gave me the self-esteem to continue my involvement in extra-curricular activities in high school by giving me the confidence to expand my wings into leadership roles because I learned my capabilities of handling multiple activities (Affettuoso).

Since my artistic skills improved, I became more confident with my talents. Also, I started to participate with many activities those are related to arts and music. I gained more things such as musical skills, confidence in Arts, and more friends (Grazioso).

Orchestra gave me self-respect – a positive environment with friends telling me that I could do it and belonging is a great self-esteem boost (Brillante).

Music is a seed that is planted in all my years in high school and has helped me blossom into the proud and confident person that I’ve become (Dolce).

Every time I approach something new and different, I employ the sense of confidence I get from music (Maestoso).

**Creativity**

Education in the arts is meant to do more than develop a set of technical skills within a given discipline. Rather, the arts experienced as our own involvement in creation or received as the work of others; seek to reunite us with our depth as human beings and to open the field of possibilities, which is our embodied experience of imagination (Walsh, 1999).

Vigotsky (1993) informs us that “children’s inventions cause elements of creative imagination to ripen and are given practice and into how this will facilitate future artistic and scientific activities” (p. 81). “We do not want to educate all children in factory-like settings” (Elliot, 2003, p. 33). In Koopman’s (2007) research on community music, he finds that these activities “provide opportunities for creativity and self-expression” (p. 153).
The arts and music allowed my students to think outside the box:

By my musical experience, artistic development was most influenced. Also, I started to participate with many activities those are related to arts and music. I feel that I would be a shy person who does not participate in any school activities, if I had not had these experiences (Grazioso).

In some ways, I feel I wouldn’t be able to find different ways of expressing myself. Music has opened doors in my imagination and I do feel somewhat smarter because of it (Vivace).

Music gave me the change to become more open to different things. It allowed me to become more creative (Scherzando).

Skill Development

The current Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum for grades 9-10 acknowledges that the “participation in arts courses helps students develop their ability to listen and observe, and enables them to become more self-aware and self-confident” (Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum for the Arts, 9-10, 1999, p. 4). Research continues to inform us that learning music can have a considerable effect on the intellect of children as well as their skill development. “Compared with children in the control groups, children in the music groups exhibited greater increases in full-scale IQ” (Schellenberg, 2004, p. 511 and 2006, 458). Studies have shown that music lessons can provide “significant verbal memory improvement” (Ho, Cheung, & Chan, 2003, p. 439); “spatial ability”; “reading ability”; “selective attention”; and “mathematics achievement” (Schellenberg, 2004, p. 511). “The playing and practise of musical instruments likely strengthens this co-ordination of visual and auditory sensory input and motor input. Similarly, children also learn how different motor movements result in different auditory and visual outputs as they play the instrument” (Orsmond &
Miller, 1999, p. 35). Perkins et al.'s (2007) study showed that “the types of skills that could be learned through youth programs are conflict resolution, career skills, self-confidence, cultural skills, and so forth” (p. 436). This is supported by Jensen’s (2000) research on “self-confidence, another factor in the emotional-intelligence schema, may also be impacted by the musical arts” (p. 49).

I am reminded of the variety of skills available to be learned through the music learning and music making processes through the successes of my students.

Music allows me to be more patient in learning new things in my daily life. I allow myself more time to understand new tasks and it allowed me to organize my time more effectively so I can become more well-rounded. The music program offered me discipline, patience, relaxation, and most of all fun, all in one. Music helps me concentrate better. I thoroughly enjoyed all the time I spent in the music program and wanted to spend an extra year to enlighten my skills (Cantabile).

Music adds a certain sense of discipline which helped me get through school (Brillante).

I learned how to manage my time and how to manage school work with extra-curricular music programs (Scherzando).

Music taught me very important principles like perseverance, teamwork, and the importance of community. The study habits that I picked up from music and the intelligence that I built has probably allowed me to become the well-rounded person I consider myself to be (Comodo).

As soon as I entered my year as a grade nine student, I was elected secretary of the music council. And now in my last year as a grade twelve student, I have accomplished so much, in terms of leadership involvement. Overall, these aspects have positively strengthened my personality (Dolce).

I employ skill I learned from being in orchestra every day. Every time I talk to someone I employ those ease of social skills I learned through music programs (Maestoso).
Jensen (2000) refers to this in his study of music and the brain in regards to social skills where “music may also aid the social skills of youngsters who are developmentally delayed or suffer from syndromes such as autism” (p. 48).

Character Education

One of the Ontario Ministry of Education’s current initiatives is Character Education. “Parents, schools and communities share the responsibility for and the benefits of developing our young people as caring, empathetic and involved citizens” (Finding Common Ground Document, June 2008, p. 8). Through volunteering and being involved in extra-curricular string orchestras, students can gain opportunities to feel “connected to their school and community as well as stay in touch with other members of the organization long after middle and high school graduation” (Maestoso and Scherzando). The arts also allow students to “feel good about helping others learn to play their instrument through volunteering” (Agitato). Rappaport (2006) talks about the importance of music education, and its impact on the full human development of the children of the world, in his research: “learning through music creates learning for life” (p. 179). Students not only need to develop the academic side of learning, but also how to become productive members of our society through character education.

My social skills were the most influenced by my musical experience. I was very shy before I got into music but once I got involved in ensembles at school, I blossomed and became a leader, out-going, friendly, and connected. I finally really like myself (Maestoso).
Where are they now?

The participants in this study continue to be a part of my life, as well as of those of other members in the musical community. After they graduated from the extra-curricular string orchestra in middle school, they continued to communicate with me through volunteering in the orchestra as mentors. In addition, technology such as e-mail and Facebook has given them opportunities to keep me familiar with their successes and challenges, in addition to reminding me of how much the extra-curricular string orchestra has helped them with many trials and tribulations in their lives.

Maestoso has just graduated from the concurrent bachelor of music education and education program on viola at a university in Quebec; Scherzando graduated from university with a Bachelor of Arts degree and now uses music to help students in his new role as youth pastor in a Toronto based church. I was recently invited to Scherzando’s wedding. In addition, Scherzando’s parents confided in me that they regretted not supporting Scherzando’s desires to do an undergraduate degree in music, as they saw so much stress and unhappiness with his post-secondary studies in the general arts and science program. However, they are happy to see that music still remains a big part of Scherzando’s life through his starting a choir and playing his guitar as he works with the youth at his church; Brillante graduated with a business degree from McMaster University and continues to play violin with the Symphony Hamilton Orchestra; Agitato is currently at the University of Guelph, working towards a Bachelor of Arts and continues to play viola with the Guelph Symphony.
Orchestra and bass guitar in a band; Grazioso is studying Fashion Design at Ryerson University and continues to play bass guitar at her church for Sunday services; Dolce is currently studying engineering at Ryerson University and continues to play the violin in her leisure time with her twin sisters, who are both violinists as well; Vivace is currently studying fashion and is still actively playing the double bass at school and music camp; Comodo is completing a degree in engineering at Queen’s university and has started his own band, playing bass guitar; Cantabile is preparing for university and continues to play saxophone in her school band. Animato is currently at McGill University in Quebec completing a Bachelor of Arts degree and continues to support the arts by attending concerts; Affectuoso is currently completing her Bachelor of Science at the University of Toronto and also continues to support the arts through attending concerts in the community.

All of the participants continue their involvement with the arts through making music and attending concerts. Scherzando said that “even though we didn’t have a positive experience in our high school music program, we were able to continue making and loving music because of our experiences in the extra-curricular music activities”.
Symphonic Engagement

Movement V - Music as a Force for Engagement in Schools

Tony Nam-Hai Leong
(1974 - )

Finale e Coda \( \frac{\ddot{\text{c}}}{\overline{\text{c}}\text{.}} = 120 \)
CHAPTER V

Music as a Force for Engagement in Schools

Finale e Coda

Finale meaning the end, the last movement of a work in several movements, i.e. symphony, concerto, suite, sonata, and so forth (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2007, p. 258).

Coda, the term to indicate tail, originally a section of a movement added at the end to clinch matters rather than to develop the music further. However, in the symphonies of Mozart, Haydn, and especially Beethoven, the coda came to have integral formal significance, becoming at times second development section and sometimes containing new material. Later composers have increased and extended this tendency (Ibid, p. 156).

Throughout this study, I have had to confront and analyze the importance of music, volunteering, and engagement in our schools by looking at current research, models of best practice, and the stories of these twelve students. These data have raised questions and opened issues for me in reconsidering the implications for music education both in and out of school.

Some of the data presented by the participants of this research mirrors much of my personal life journey with the arts as illustrated in the introduction of this thesis. They have commented on the benefits of, struggles, and reasons why extra-curricular activities in the arts have changed their lives. Topics such as school engagement, community connections, issues of equity, and family influences have emerged from the study.

I. Engagement through Arts and Education

School engagement is an important part, perhaps the heart and soul, of the overall school experience. Brady’s (2005) article on Inclusionary and Exclusionary Secondary Schools informs us that “student success at the
secondary level can no longer be measured exclusively in terms of academic achievement” (p. 307). His study found that there are two types of curricula: formal and hidden, the latter referring to the interactions with other members of the school community. Since engagement in the wider school life is equally important according to Brady’s 2005 research, I would argue that programs such as extra-curricular activities in music are vital to developing and fulfilling the “hidden” curriculum to which Brady refers. As school boards grapple with the turmoil of credit recovery and student success, it is important to recognize the range of activities that can be provided for students so that they will be motivated to attend school, and participate in the academic curriculum with a sense of ownership.

However, Canadian students have lower levels of participation in school activities than do students in the other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries, according to the report “Towards a Multidimensional Framework for Student Engagement”, prepared by the Centre for Urban Schooling, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto in 2008. Does this statistic reflect the reported Toronto District School Board’s youth drop-out rate at 21%, and 25% for the province of Ontario as reported in Riviere et al.’s report? Can improving the level of engagement, and increasing opportunities for students to become more involved in school activities and school life, help improve student success and decrease the drop out rate in Toronto, and the province of Ontario? Is the need for engagement at the center
of implementing a mandatory 40 hours of community service for high school students as a requirement for their graduation?

Why are students not engaged? Vibert and Shields (2003) concluded in their report that “students and teachers are engaged in schools when schools are engaging places to be” (p. 236). Therefore, it must be the environment that the whole school community creates that will provide opportunities for students to become involved in a variety of activities. Extra-curricular, clubs, interactions with teachers, administration, and other school staff, can also support students in becoming engaged with the school culture. Portelli & Vibert (2002) refer to this engagement as a “curriculum of life”, where “curriculum is a dynamic relationship among teachers, students, and contexts” (p. 36).

II. Community Connections

Interviews with the twelve students along with my own journey of the arts in my life document the importance of the teacher-student relationship. Music teachers may play a very important part in a student’s life. They are often considered celebrities in the school community: “Communities are essential to our survival, and music gives us the one beautifying language that crosses the bridges that divide us” (Rauscher, 2002, p. 11). Music teachers can have opportunities to interact and cross these bridges with parents and the community members towards improving the aesthetic experiences of the community at large. The community can benefit by having the students involved in educational activities through the performances and activities put on by the school. “The school community looks to the music program in their school more than to any
other area to provide entertainment and connections to community groups” (Norfolk Area Elementary Music Teachers Association, 1999, p. 39). As the music teacher in the school, it is important for me to provide these musical experiences not only for the students, but also for the community, which will support and benefit from it. Musical performances in the school often enrich the other teachers and administrators by letting them see the students whom they teach or with whom they interact perform in a different environment revealing new dimensions to their students.

It is the teachers who tend to start or maintain extra-curricular string orchestras in the school community, because of the lack of other community groups available for the students. As cut-backs and budget shrinkages continue to loom over the existing music programs, teachers may find it important to provide students with further enrichment through extra-curricular activities. The time that the students spend on music instruction during the normal school day is not sufficient and may be unfocused, whereas the extra-curricular groups allow for further development of skills and the creation of a stronger connection with the community.

“Music is the binding stuff of community” (Black, 2002, p. 13). It can help bring the members of the community together through concerts and fundraising opportunities. These opportunities allow the teacher to know the members of the community at a different level. “The public needs to understand what students are learning and the kind of experience they are having” (Eisner, 2001, p. 13);
the teachers may find out what the needs of the community are, and apply this knowledge when choosing repertoire and/or performing opportunities.

As music teachers, “we perform, create, listen and teach music because it touches our hearts, it brings deep meaning to our lives, it makes us feel! It involves us in a much bigger community --- the human race” (Fratia, 2001, p. 4).

In response to a need to understand the school’s surroundings and the community in which we work and call our second home, teachers may find it necessary to continue to volunteer their free time to ensure that musical groups are available to support the needs of their school community.

III. Relationship of Student and Teacher

In my experience, the relationship between student and teacher in an instrumental music class requires interaction on many levels. In order for teachers to choose the right repertoire and create analogies for assimilating the material being taught to inspire, motivate and catch the interest of their students, “they need to have knowledge of the students' interests in different subject areas” (Marjoribanks & Mboya, 2004, p. 156). The type of music that students listen to and their interests can be revealed through social interactions with the teacher, such as in-class discussions, where the teacher and students negotiate their significant curriculum.

In addition, teachers need to connect with the parents or guardians of their students, as “an understanding of family background is incorporated into children’s learning experiences” (Marjoribanks & Mboya, 2004, p. 156). In classes where there is a diverse multicultural mix of students, teachers can have
students “bring in examples of their music. The nonverbal nature of music may allow these students to experience music in the new culture through movement and activities in which they can perform well” (Welsbacher and Bernstrof, 2002, p. 166). Having an understanding of the different types of music to which their culture exposes them can enrich the choice of repertoire being played in the music ensemble and can benefit the scope of the lessons for the other students and the teacher.

Furthermore, “in teaching instrumental music, our interactions with our students – our verbal and gestural instructions – support our students’ performance like a scaffold” (Kennell, 2002, p. 191). Teaching and learning through the use of musical instruments in a classroom can provide students and teachers with the opportunity to work together in a capacity different from what occurs in most other academic subject areas. Students are required to use their instruments as a vehicle for learning the music as well as interacting with the other students, providing the harmony or melody of a selected piece of music. The teacher can also interact with the students in the role of conductor, teacher, and facilitator. “Youth need the positive ongoing relationships with adults to nurture their leadership potential” (Jones and Perkins, 2006, p. 106).

As I read through my introduction, I recognized the impact my high school music teacher had on me in terms of encouraging and supporting me in making music a career choice. Similarly, Maestoso said,

my music teacher in grade seven and eight was a huge factor. He inspired and motivated me to be involved. He was also so much fun to be around. He made me laugh and made me feel like I was worthwhile.
Scherzando wrote “my teacher truly inspired me to take music not just as an extra-curricular activity, however, as a way to learn more about myself through music”. Halpern (2006) confirms this through his research on how “youth benefit from exposure to adults who are good at, passionate about, and have a strong identity in a discipline, craft, or art form” (p. 219), and Cameron and Carlisle’s (2004) research echoes the need for teacher-student relationships to be positive so that students can be motivated and engaged academically.

In light of this need for students to be inspired and motivated to become involved in extra-curricular activities offered by qualified, knowledgeable, and experienced teachers, Ward-Steinman (2006) talked about the need to do “continued research in partnerships between urban university music education departments and local schools are needed to provide models for teaching music during after-school hours when at-risk children need a safe, supervised, and structured environment” (p. 93).

IV. Equity: Who Will Play the Violins?

Students such as Maestoso and Scherzando have commented on the importance of having extra-curricular string orchestras in the public schools, as it gave them opportunities to be introduced to a musical instrument and foster music growth in their lives through practices and performances. Maestoso said that the experiences that she had in grade seven and eight increased her love and passion for music and had these opportunities not been available, she would never have explored her artistic side to its full potential.
Scherzando spoke of not getting the opportunity to develop his musical skills outside of school and wanted to soak up all his musical experiences at school. These experiences mirror the ones I had in public school, where I do not think I could have tapped into my musical understanding without these opportunities, due to the lack of financial support. I could never have afforded private lessons, and public school music introduced me to a world of music. White and Gager (2007) inform us of the daunting reality of “youth in families who express financial worries are less likely to be involved in school and/or non-school related activities” (p. 86). The controversial American act of the “No Child Left Behind of 2001 intended to create equitable educational opportunities for all students and close achievement gaps among different groups of students, particularly minorities and whites” (Spohn, 2008, p. 3), but caused discrepancies which Gallagher (2007) recognizes: “Despite an unrelenting era of ‘reform’, many scholars argue that the gap in educational achievement between rich and poor children is still widening” (p. 74).

However, is the attention focused on literacy and numeracy going to affect the support needed to maintain quality “after-four” programs that would benefit all students? Can volunteer programs help with the need, and how will teachers’ unions react to “free help”? Will this affect future students from finding their musical selves and not having opportunities that my students and I have experienced? White and Gager (2007) seem to think that “community-based intervention programs can offer a bridge between those who are less fortunate and the resources they may need to overcome their disadvantaged situations” (p.
We have already seen the friendships and communities that have been repeatedly mentioned in my students’ reflections of their involvement in extracurricular string orchestras and in volunteering. It should also be noted that although the twelve students come from different cultures and backgrounds, music was the reason they had become friends and formed a community.

My first experience coming to Canada as an immigrant was with the arts. As someone who didn’t speak a word of English arriving in a school that spoke a different language than what I was used to, the arts gave me great comfort. Gregoire and Lupinetti (2005) remind us that “the arts are the great equalizer in education. Regardless of native language, ability, or disability, music, art, and drama are accessible to all. Because the arts are largely nonverbal and focus on creativity, students in any classroom can participate in various satisfying ways” (p. 159). Grazioso had similar experiences in her participation with music activities in her first year as an immigrant to Canada from Korea. I noticed her comfort with the experience every time she came to music and the happiness and belonging that she felt inside the school activity.

V. Family Influences

Some research suggests, “parents play an important role in initiating as well as sustaining their children’s interest in playing an instrument” (Abeles, 2004, p. 250). The encouragement and support from the parents can take many forms. The children who continue with their musical studies in life often come from “families that provided a stimulating music environment” (Ibid).
In many families, the children tend to model or choose interests or subjects in school which reflect their parents’ interest or line of work. “Research on vocational choice suggests that students at this age (primary) are interested in vocations with which they are familiar” (Abeles, 2004, p. 249). However, Sichivitsa (2007) argues that “children’s interest in music may inspire parents to support their children’s musical endeavours, gradually get more involved in music, and begin to appreciate music” (p. 62). This research would suggest that if their parents appreciated and valued the arts, then they would be likely to take an interest in the arts at school; and on the same line, if their parents were interested in sports, their interests may lean towards an athletic extra-curricular activity. This can also be referred to “parent endorsement” (Perkins et al., 2007, p. 422). Parental influence, as Sichivitsa (2007) tells us, “has been identified as an important external factor affecting student motivation and persistence” (p. 56). Again, if a student’s parents were doctors, they may want to become part of the medical world. These concepts are built on the notion of exposure and opportunities. If parents provide students with an environment where they can be exposed to musical instruments, the likelihood that they may want to play one is higher.

Furthermore, parents can nurture an interest in music education by providing students with an environment that is conducive to learning. The development of skills required to play a musical instrument well demands time for practicing and learning new pieces, which may not be pleasant to the ears in a child’s primary stage of learning. In addition, resources such as a music stand,
extra exercises, and other tools to assist in effective practicing would enhance
the child’s level of interest in the musical instrument.

The level of support from a sibling can also be factor in the developing
interest of playing a musical instrument. “Music participation by siblings is a
factor that may encourage children to begin to play an instrument” (Abeles, 2004,
p. 250). For some students, their first exposure to musical instruments may be
the instrument that is brought home by their older sibling. As they are able to see
the instrument in its physical form, have it played for them by their sibling, and
possibly try it themselves, the level of interest to invest future time in learning and
playing a musical instrument is raised.

Some research tells us that “families in which there are parents or siblings
who play instruments, as well as families who attend concerts, are likely to foster
children’s interest in playing an instrument” (Abeles, 2004, p. 250). The
opportunities provided to them by their parents and siblings can introduce them
to the variety of instruments available. They can make their own choice of which
instrument appeals to them when introduced to the sounds and the aesthetic
qualities of the different musical instruments. The students are often drawn into
the music making process due to the interest and knowledge of the instruments
played by their parents and/or siblings.

Lugaila’s (2003) research tells us that “relative to children living with a
single parent, children living with married parents tended to have more daily
interaction with their parents, such as sharing meals and talking with one
another” (p. 19). This would explain Vivace’s desire to stay extremely late to
practice her instrument as she lives only with her mother and grandmother.

Willingham (2000) also relates these phenomena by saying

we have all experienced this ineffable quality in music that speaks deeply to the human heart in powerful tones. Music also gives us a sense of the world outside of ourselves, uniquely touching the timelessness of history, and the limitless of the universe (p. 6).

Often students like Vivace would practice their instruments until six p.m. on a school night at my school. The music classroom and their musical instrument become tools to help them resolve emotional issues. McIntyre (2007) also found that the “non-verbal aspect of music makes it an excellent resource for reaching people and facilitating self-expression through an alternative means of communication” (p. 6). These two channels can become outlets for students to express themselves emotionally, but at the same time provide an assurance that music will always be a supportive influence.

Lugaila (2003) also found that “children of married parents were also more likely to participate in extra-curricular activities and to progress more steadily in school by keeping academically on-track” (p.19). This reflects heavily on my research as twelve out of my participants came from families with two parents. However, I also came from a family with two parents who worked quite late, and therefore, I became involved in extra-curricular activities to make better use of my time.

VI. Why Students Participate: Extra-Curricular Activities

Research tells us that “many of today’s students volunteer in part because high schools and colleges have facilitated such efforts and provided reinforcing classroom support” (Andolina et al., 2003, p. 278). A study done by Lugaila
(2003) also shows that 59% of children 6-17 years-old (28.4 million) participated in at least one of the three (sports, clubs, lessons) extra-curricular activities in 2000” (p. 11). These reports, coupled with this current research, inform us that extra-curricular and volunteer experiences are important to our students. However, it is also telling us that we need to provide opportunities and resources for these students as educators, parents, community members, so that students can take more away from their elementary and secondary school experiences that can allow them to grow both musically, socially and personally.

Furthermore, in a similar study done by the National Center for Education Statistics (1995), extra-curricular activities such as string orchestras can offer opportunities for students to develop “the values of teamwork, individual and group responsibility, physical strength and endurance, a sense of community, and enjoyment of leisure time” (p. 1). Some of these characteristics and benefits were revealed and validated by the participants in Symphonic Engagement through their involvement in the Bel Canto orchestra. It seems natural that extra-curricular activities such as string orchestras can bring together many people to work and achieve common goals. The skills learned from these activities may be applied to one’s ability to function well and be a productive member of the society.

This research also concluded that “participation and success are strongly associated as evidenced by participants’ better attendance, higher level of achievement, and aspirations to higher levels of education” (p. 2). Everyone of the twelve participants in Symphonic Engagement is currently pursuing further
education in the post-secondary sector, including two who are studying to become music teachers. Being a part of an extra-curricular group outside of the school day may require the students to accept certain responsibilities and develop habits that include punctuality, setting high achieving goals, and coping with multi-tasking, therefore supporting other academic subject areas.

Volunteering gives us choice; school often doesn’t. It can free us from being the “forced” learner, as volunteers have chosen to participate in an activity, where expectations, evaluation tools, and marks are relegated to the formal school day. It can give both the educator and students the opportunity to work with each other in a different environment, perhaps providing them with the chance to engage with a learning area that motivates them. They may feel a sense of freedom to take risks, as evaluation and expectations in these activities may differ from classroom and school work.

I have also noticed that volunteering happens on different levels. At the different stages in one’s career, education, opportunity, and interests will change. I am presently not involved in the Bel Canto orchestra, but I am excited to see the students in this study continue our work through beginning their own extra-curricular string orchestras, as well as staying in touch with the friends they have made through this musical experience. Through my own personal journey, I have been a participant, helper, and leader of extra-curricular string orchestras. I have seen these roles mirrored in the lives of my students, and realize that volunteering is an evolving process where individuals move from role to role in their volunteer journey.
VII. Rethinking Music Education

Music education continues to evolve with the advances in technology, alongside the culture in which our youth are growing up today. We require further inquiry into what teachers need to teach, how our students are learning in the digital age, what programming our schools can and should provide in the public system (strings, band, vocal), and the importance of character education as we look towards fostering the development of caring, empathetic, and concerned citizens through the arts.

Further research on volunteering, music education, and extra-curricular activities would help strengthen the understanding of the benefits and outcomes of these programs. As I reflect back on all the students who have participated in extra-curricular activities, I am concerned about students who don’t participate, who are not engaged, and what it says about their role in the school community. Does the value of schooling and learning differ for them than for those who have participated in activities, other than the academic subjects prescribed to them during the school day? How are these students spending their time when others are busy volunteering and participating in extra-curricular activities? In a study done by Bayran (2008) from the George Washington University, she talks about the “vulnerability of children committing crime or being a victim of crime between the hours 2:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.” and that “activities that are adult supervised and oriented towards the development of cognitive and social skills have been shown to reduce an adolescent’s likelihood of engaging in delinquent activities” (p.1). In
a time where adolescents are given so many choices in terms of activities and technology, it can be important to provide them with opportunities that will be educational, interesting, and social. Extra-curricular opportunities can provide the social interactions needed for students to be kept engaged and interested so that they are not tempted into alternate life styles.

Why do some teachers and community members choose not be involved in extra-curricular activities? How does that affect their relationship with their students and their role in the school and overall community?

As I re-read my thesis and re-evaluate my goals, there are many questions I am left with that may direct my further inquiries and research as a professional educator. These twelve individuals in my study have shown great interest, devotion, and passion for the arts, but what about students who have shown little interest? Who will volunteer with these students, and what other extra-curricular activities could be available for them to access? Should I be giving my time to young people who are not in the same position as those in my study?

Consequently, how do we handle the inequities of teacher duties, from those who give their volunteer time and those who don’t? Is it because of their subject disciplines that teachers give in different ways, or through volunteering as for example, helping out at the local food bank in lieu of supporting their school? How does this choice affect their relationship with their students at school and within its community? Is the union a dominant force in saying who may
volunteer? In my school, the administration is extremely concerned about teacher involvement in extra-curricular activities.

In addition, how do I handle the challenge of string music as an elitist art form that’s open and available to a few individuals with appropriate backgrounds? Is string music in the public school systems being replaced by private conservatories and private schools? For example, according to the Royal Conservatory of Music website, www.rcmusic.ca, the tuition cost for their Young Artist Performance Program is $8,000 to $8,600 a year.

All is not without hope. In a recent newspaper article on *Instruments of Change*, a former gang member turned PhD social worker, has credited music lessons in high school as helping him turn his life around. He has partnered up with the Brampton Symphony Orchestra to give free violin lessons to at-risk children in Brampton. There are other programs and initiatives like the one in Brampton throughout the Greater Toronto Area that help “cross age barriers and overlook racial difference” (Terauds, 2009, p. 1). These programs help give youngsters the “tools to overcome the risks and temptations of life at the poverty line” (ibid.). At-risk students are also supported by private music lessons, group classes, concerts, access to a musical instrument, funded by “private donors, foundations, corporations and government arts councils” (ibid.). The demographics in this article remind us that in 2008, half of the Toronto District School Board students from junior kindergarten to grade six came from lower-income families. One quarter of all those kids were not being offered any after-school activities at all, and between three to six p.m., unsupervised children are more likely to engage in gang-related or delinquent behaviour, or become victims of crime (Ibid.)
In an article titled *The More Fun and Games, the Better*, researchers inform us that “teens who put in more hours on structured after-school activities see more benefits” (Pearce and Andreatta, 2007, p. 1). Programs such as the “Beyond 3:30 Program” have been put into place to help provide “programming for middle school children between the hours of 3:30 – 8:00 p.m., in one of the places they trust the most, their local schools” (*Beyond 3:30* website). In Toronto, students are able to receive music lessons despite their financial situation through non-profit organizations such as the Regent Park School of Music. Therefore, it is extremely encouraging to see that there are patrons and organizations who are making an effort to support at-risk students, and students from low income families, with opportunities to learn music, and strings in particular. Building partnerships with communities and the industry, as well as developing awareness, can be powerful tools in providing opportunities for all students to have a chance to play an instrument.

Furthermore, readers of this thesis may think that these twelve students are from financially-secure families, that they are musically gifted, or that they represent one type of socio-economic milieu, while in truth, they are from a suburban, multi-ethnic, and varied socio-economic classes. They are students whose parents had different and complex backgrounds in their musical knowledge, interests, and beliefs, in addition to their personal educational goals for their children. As a collective group, they form the case study of my thesis – individuals with different backgrounds, with common goals, met by an after-four program.
There are so many levels to this discussion. My case is particular; I cannot generalize. But perhaps it represents the issues inherent in music education, from string orchestras to drumming corps; young people participating in volunteer activities, engaged and socialized by the “other” curriculum, and, as teachers, we hope they are better connected to the “official” curriculum.

Moreover, while I mention the use of popular music in my repertoire, and reference the work of Green (2002) on using popular music in the school system, how do I select culturally suitable or appropriate music for the different groups that make up my ensemble? Am I perpetrating a cultural myth, or exploring a historical approach to music in which I believe? And what of Canadian composers?

Also, why do I seem to value the students’ need to continue music after they graduate from the public school system, as either a career or leisure activity, when my profession says that they experience music in school as a subject, as part of their growth and development, without the necessity of continuing this art form into their adult lives? Am I valuing those who continue in music more than those who saw music as part of their growth as well-rounded students? Was I, their teacher, the reason for the music, or should the music be the reason for their continuing? Is the teacher’s charismatic ability as a music leader and conductor dominating the impact of the students’ self-determination?

While I present music as an alternative to the technological world, I reference technology as a support for music making. Will individual listening through digital means such as iPods, MP3 Players, and headphones, replace
social listening in terms of attending live concerts, and developing the patience to appreciate the aesthetics of the visual components of a musical performance?

Is my own history re-creating itself in the lives of my students? Or am I simply drawing parallels between my past and their future? How will my case study help me to develop insights and understanding about my own future, and those of my students and colleagues in music education?

The students in my field study have completed their work with me. While I recognize that this case study is not a template for all music education, how will I place it in my professional baggage, and my personal life album? How will I learn not to replicate, and not to dwell on the past, but use my learning towards educating young people in effective and affective ways in a new generation seemingly dominated by technology and immediate gratification?

I have listed and reflected on these queries, not to find answers or quick fixes, but to find direction, insight, and even other questions, so that I can continue my work with youth, music, and technology, and provide topics and questions for others to investigate through other lenses.

My journey through the arts has taken me through the stages as participant, educator, and researcher of music. I have come to respect and appreciate the blend of all three roles. I have drawn upon, in this work, the researchers who have supported my ideas such as Barone, Eisner, Green, Bartel, Bresler, Gallagher, Denzin, Levitin, Noam, Rauscher, Stake, Walker, Willingham, Upitis, Smithrim; advocates such as Pitman, Cornett, Willingham, and Barel; theorists such as Dewey, Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, Reimer,
Sergiovanni; and lastly, my students, who are my authorities, as they have forced me to challenge and reconsider my own beliefs and understandings of music education and volunteering with our youth today.
1. Interview Protocol

**Instruction**

The following questions are part of my doctoral research study. The purpose of the research is to explore the reasons why students and teachers volunteer their free time to participate in extra-curricular string orchestras in school. The main focus of the research will be on their reasons and the benefits received. Your responses will enable us to see the benefits of music education and volunteering and thus will help in the advocacy of both activities for other youth and educators. It will also allow us to examine what motivates teens and teachers to volunteer.

**Background Information**

**Area 1: Reasons why students and teachers volunteer their time**

1.1 Why, when you were in grade ___ did you get out of bed at ___ a.m. when many of your classmates were asleep to go to an early-morning rehearsal at your school? Try to list the various factors. (Friends, teacher, parents made me, etc.)

1.2 You invested a great deal of time in a music program. Do you feel that time was a positive or negative use of your time? Why?

1.3 What out-of-school activities do you feel you missed out on because of your heavy involvement in music?

**Area 2: Benefits received through the involvement of extra-curricular string orchestras.**

2.1 Do you feel that you would be a different person if you had not had these experiences?

2.2 People sometimes describe music or other artistic endeavours as “community building.” Could you describe your definition of your “community?”

2.3 Do you believe that your musical experience helped you get into your chosen post-secondary path?
2.4 Do you see yourself employing skills or character traits you learned in music in your daily life?

2.5 What were you best and/or worst experience in participating in the extra-curricular string orchestras?

2. Field Notes

A field notes will be written to capture any interesting occurrence during the interview and to comment on the context of the interview. These notes will be written in order to aid in recalling the actual picture of the interview. Reference to length of the interview, along with unusual circumstances that may have occurred during the course of the interview (example interruptions) will be made. It is also intended to record details related to interviews and to chronicle the researcher's own thinking, feelings, experiences and perceptions throughout the research process.
Recruitment Letter

(On OISE/UT letterhead)

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Student(s),

I hope all is well with you. I am looking forward to forming a research group of people who have given up their free time to participate in extra-curricular string orchestras in the public school system. These participants will have also volunteered their time to help out in extra-curricular activities as a helper.

Attached to this letter are the Informed Consent Letter and Form; a three-page questionnaire; and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Please read the attached Informed Consent Letter and Form carefully. If you wish to participate in the study, please contact Tony Leong at 416-XXX-XXXX or by e-mail at tony.leong@tel.tdsb.on.ca, complete the Informed Consent Form by including the appropriate signatures. A self-addressed envelope is provided for your convenience in returning the completed Informed Consent Form and Questionnaire to the Researcher. Upon receiving the consent form and questionnaire, you will be contacted by the researcher to set up an interview that will last approximately one hour. These interviews will be conducted at a mutually convenient place, either your home or a mutually agreed upon location. Face-to-face interviews will be audiotaped using a digital recording device. These recordings will ensure that accurate information is used.

I look forward to hearing from you soon,

Best Regards,

Tony Leong.
INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Student(s),

This letter is to formally invite your child to participate with me in a research study, *Symphonic Engagement*, which will be submitted as my thesis requirement for my Doctor of Philosophy degree within the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. The purpose of this study is to find out why students in the public school system volunteer their free time to participate and/or assist in extra-curricular string orchestras at school. Further questions involving the benefits and enrichments received through these activities will be queried.

In order for me to gather the necessary information needed for my analysis, I will be providing you with a survey that will include multiple choice, fill in the blanks, and open ended questions. In addition to the survey, I will be conducting an interview session with you where questions separate than those asked in the survey will be asked. **Face-to-face interviews will be conducted in an environment without distractions, such as the participant’s residence or a location that is mutually agreed upon by the participant and the researcher.** The interview will be audio recorded with each participant’s permission and will be transcribed in order to create data for analysis. The collected audio recording data will not have a participant’s name, or any other identifying link information on them. Only my thesis advisor and I will have access to the tapes and transcripts. During the course of my dissertation, I will quote participants’ dialogue and responses by using a code to remove any identifying features from the data to reduce the chance of a reader being able to identify him or her. At the end of the study, all questionnaires, tapes and/or audio recorded files will be destroyed after transcription is complete, and the transcripts will be stored in a locked compartment and shredded after two years of the thesis completion date.

I wish to invite your son or daughter to participate in this research because he or she has been involved in several extra-curricular string orchestras with me, both as a student and a helper. Your child’s participation is completely voluntary. Your child has the right to refuse to answer any question at any time, to choose what will be taped, to re-enter the interview when she or he wishes, to decide how long the interview will last, and to withdraw at any time. I assure that you and your child are free to decline from participating and are free to withdraw at anytime throughout the project without explanation. No evaluative judgment will
be made based on your decisions to participate or withdraw. If you agree to participate, the anonymity and confidentiality will be observed very strictly, and the report, and any possible further publication or presentation, will not identify the board, the school, or individual, in order to protect the identity of the interviewees. I will only be discussing the data collected in this school with my thesis advisor and no one else. Every effort will be made to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the school, board and participants at all times.

All the students under eighteen years of age require their parent(s) and/or guardian(s) consent to their child’s participation, and that the participants themselves consent to being a part of any study. Students who are over eighteen years of age and over may decide for themselves.

If, after you have discussed this research with your child, you mutually decide to participate, would you kindly complete the attached Informed Consent Form and contact me at the below phone number and/or e-mail address and I will gladly come and pick up the letter. After the contract has been signed and dated, please proceed in filling out the questionnaire attached. Upon receipt of the completed questionnaire, please contact me either by phone or e-mail to arrange for me to pick up the questionnaire at a time of your convenience. After I have reviewed the questionnaire, I will contact you either by phone or e-mail to arrange either a face-to-face interview. During the interview, questions different than those answered on the questionnaire will be asked.

It is my hope that I have clearly stated that you and your child are under no obligation or pressure to participate in this study. If you chose to decline from this study, I will completely understand. If you choose to participate, minimal risk to the student exists due to the methodology being used.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at tony.leong@tel.tdsb.on.ca or 416-XXX-XXXX, or my thesis supervisors Professor David Booth at 416-923-6641 ext. 7545 (dbooth@oise.utoronto.ca) or Professor Kathleen Gallagher at 416-923-6641 ext. 2015 (kgallagher@oise.utoronto.ca)

Sincerely,

Tony Leong
Doctor of Philosophy, Candidate
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

Tel: 416-XXX-XXXX
E-mail: tony.leong@tel.tdsb.on.ca
Informed Consent Form
For "Symphonic Engagement"

I, ___________________________________________________ (student’s name) have read the Informed Consent Letter. I understand the conditions under which the research will be conducted. I agree to take part in an educational study of why students volunteer their free time to participate in extra-curricular string orchestras.

I understand that, as a participant in the study, I will be asked by the principal investigator, Tony Nam-Hai Leong, to respond to interview questions as well as fill out a questionnaire. I understand that participation in the study may involve answering questions about:

1. Why I chose to participate in the extra-curricular string orchestras at school.
2. How I have benefited by participating in these extra-curricular groups.

I understand that I am under no obligation to agree to participate in this interview or questionnaire. I understand that I may refuse to answer any questions, to stop the interview at any time or withdraw from the study. I understand that my specific answers and comments will be kept confidential and that neither my name nor school will be identified in any report, presentation, or publication that may arise from this study. I also understand that only the researcher and his supervisors (Professor David Booth and Professor Kathleen Gallagher) will have access to the data of this study and no one else.

Please sign below to indicate your permission to participate in the study, Symphonic Engagement by Tony Nam-Hai Leong.

I have read and understood the conditions under which my child will participate in this study and give permission for my child to participate in the above research. I also understand what this study involves and agree to be recorded during the interview process. Please note that students who are eighteen years of age or over do not require a parental or guardian signature.

Parent/Guardian:

Signature of Parent or Guardian __________________________ Date

Student:

Signature of Student __________________________ Date
Questionnaire Rationale and Instructions:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to invite you to reflect on your experiences in being a member of extra-curricular string orchestras. The core of this study is to find out why you spent your free time to participate in these ensembles and how did your participation benefit you.

Please answer the following questions as accurately as possible. Please note that your identity will not appear in the report, nor will any other indicator that might reveal such information.

**Question:**

“Why do students volunteer their free time to participate in extra-curricular string orchestras and how does their involvement benefit them?

**Part A: Bubble in the response(s)**

- Male  
- Female

My high school average was/is

- 0 – 49%  
- 50 – 59%  
- 60 – 69%  
- 70 – 79%  
- 80 – 89%  
- 90 – 100%

Courses you have taken in high school.

- The Arts:  
  - Music  
  - Visual Arts  
  - Drama  
  - Dance

- Science:  
  - Biology  
  - Chemistry  
  - Physics

- Languages:  
  - French  
  - Spanish  
  - Italian

- Math:  
  - Math  
  - Calculus  
  - Algebra & Geometry

- English:  

- Social Science:  
  - History  
  - Geography

- Business:  
  - Computers  
  - Economics  
  - Accounting

- Physical Health & Education:  
  - Physical Health and Education

- Other:  

The skills you got by participating in the music extra-curricular programs at school.

- Advocacy: (i.e. pride of playing a musical instrument, speaking out on an issue, writing a letter to the government)

- Organizational/managerial skills: (i.e. how to organize resources, to manage the work of others, to be a leader, to plan, to run an organization, etc.)

- Fundraising skills: (i.e. tallying money raised, keeping a spreadsheet of sponsors, collecting money)

- Communication skills: (i.e. performing in front of an audience, public speaking, writing, public relations, conducting meetings, etc.)

- Technical or office skills: (i.e. filing music according to title and/or composer, coaching techniques, how to use a word processor, etc.)

- Interpersonal skills: (i.e. to make friends easily at orchestra rehearsals, to understand people better, to motivate them, to deal with difficult situations, etc.)

- Increased knowledge: (i.e. higher grades in all subject areas, appreciation of cultures and languages, musical ability, etc.)

- Some other skill or knowledge, please specify: ________________________________
**Part B: Fill in the blanks**

I participated in __________ hours or __________ years in extra-curricular string orchestras at school.

I volunteered ________________ hours of community service to receive my Ontario Secondary School Diploma. I only needed ________________ hours according to the requirements of the school.

List the musical activities in which you participated from grade 6-12. (i.e. chamber and/or symphony orchestra, choir, small ensembles, etc.)

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
__________________________

List the out-of-school activities you feel you missed out on because of your heavy involvement in music? (i.e. sleep, sports, being with friends and/or family members, going to the mall)

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

**Part C: Open-ended or quotes**

Please share some quotes, anecdotes, stories and/or memories (both positive and/or negative) through your experience in volunteering your free time participating and helping out with extra-curricular string orchestras:
### Part D: Checklist

Please check and/or comment in the box you feel accurately describes the effect your musical experience had on these aspects of your personality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artistic development</th>
<th>My musical experience negatively impacted me on this aspect of my character.</th>
<th>My musical experience had no effect on this aspect of my character.</th>
<th>My musical experience positively impacted me on this aspect of my character.</th>
<th>My musical experience changed my life on this aspect of my character.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging at your school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for your own accomplishments</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for the accomplishments of others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-respect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of your imagination</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of Creativity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to recognize a spiritual experience in yourself or others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to complete a task as a team</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to complete a task on your own.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to appreciate music in the world around you (Movies, the mall, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willingness to participate in other school activities.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks in other courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>General enjoyment of school.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conversational social skills</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Of all these categories, which single one do you think was most influenced by your musical experience? How did that aspect of your personality change?

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why, when you were in grade ___ did you get out of bed at ___ a.m. when many of your classmates were asleep to go to an early-morning rehearsal at your school? Try to list the various factors. (Friends, teacher, parents made me, etc.)

2. You invested a great deal of time in a music program. Do you feel that time was a positive or negative use of your time? Why?

3. What out-of-school activities do you feel you missed out on because of your heavy involvement in music?

4. Do you feel that you would be a different person if you had not had these experiences?

5. People sometimes describe music or other artistic endeavors as “community building.” Could you describe your definition of your “community?”

6. Do you believe that your musical experience helped you get into your chosen post-secondary path?

7. Do you see yourself employing skills or character traits you learned in music in your daily life?

8. What were you best and/or worst experience in participating in the extra-curricular string orchestras?
Appendix F: Student Compositions

The Untold Story

"Dolce"
Gr. 8 Composition

Violin

Fine

Da Capo
Appendix F: Student Compositions

Thinkin' about lovin' you

"Vivace"
Gr. 8 Composition
Appendix F: Student Compositions

Thinkin' about lovin' you
Appendix F: Student Compositions

A Happy Tune

"Misterioso"
Gr. 8 Composition

Violin
Appendix F: Student Compositions

Shhh

"Animato"
Gr. 8 Composition

Violin

pp
Allegro

fff

f

fff

Fine

pp

B

p

fff

mp

C

p

D.C. Al Fine

f
Appendix F: Student Compositions

Scottish Pine

"Comodo"
Gr. 7 Composition

Viola
Appendix F: Student Compositions

Maurader

"Comodo"
Gr. 7 Composition

Viola 1

Viola 2

Vla. 1

Vla. 2
Persian Participle

"Comodo"
Gr. 8 Composition
Safety in a Rubber Glove

"Comodo"
Gr. 8 Composition
References


Norfolk Area Elementary Music Teachers Association (1999). The Importance of Music in the Elementary Curriculum: A Presentation to the Grand Erie


