

“I FELT A COMPULSION TO WRITE”:
A QUALITATIVE EXAMINATION OF THE LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF
THREE FEMALE COMPOSERS

By

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ABSTRACT

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With the goal of understanding what experiences and musical identities of women who choose to compose, the purpose of this research was to examine the experience and musical identity of women who choose to compose music.

This study was guided by the following Grand Tour question and sub-questions:

Why do these women choose to compose?

1. What experiences and relationships have played a formative role in shaping these women as composers?
2. What experiences and relationships allowed these women to self-identify as a composer?
3. What influences, if any, do these women perceive that their gender has had upon their approach to composing?

This investigation was a multiple case study of the learning experiences of three female graduate composition majors enrolled at State University, a large, state university in the midwest. The primary data collection involved four or five interviews between the participants and myself, email communications, one focus group interview with all participants, and field observations at composition studio classes and composition recitals.

Two stages of musician-composer identity were observed: the foundational musician-composer identity and the emerging composer-musician identity. There were four main components at play in the foundational musician-composer identity: family support, positive mentors, multiple experiences, and perseverance/independence. Differing from the foundational musician-composer identity, the emerging composer-musician identity and themes that supported this identity allowed the women the confidence to self-identify as a composer. These three themes—arranging as a creative introduction, interest in music theory, and a need for an alternative to music performance—established a scenario in which all the women felt confident to call themselves a composer, though in some cases the label was fragile. I was unable to identify influences confidently that gender had upon their approach to composing. I was unable to answer this question not because I did not ask it, but because the women themselves were relatively unaware of any influences they faced related to gender in their field.

These women compose because they must. This compulsion happened independently and in conjunction with many of the experiences that allowed for a foundational musician-composer identity and later an emerging composer-musician identity. Implications for music education include the inclusion of more creative experiences in K-8 music education, a need for arranging as a scaffolding device in creative pedagogy, and the inclusion of alternative music classes for which public performance is not the main objective. Implications for composers include collaborating with researchers and practitioners in music education to help nurture future music composers in K-12 music education.

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For my students – past, present, and future.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2009, I was preparing to teach an eighth grade music composition elective course. This was to be my fourth year teaching this twelve-week arts elective, and I was particularly excited, because I had taken a summer course the previous summer specifically focused on music composition in the classroom taught by Maud Hickey, a national leader on the topic. In that course, we had discussed pedagogy, methodology, and, most important, I had gathered a wide variety of practical composition activities that I could immediately implement in the music composition course. In addition, my principal recently had informed me that enough students had enrolled so that I could run two sections of music composition. I felt truly on top of my game.

When I looked at my class list for the music composition class, I remember being bothered by the male to female ratio. Of the forty-three students registered for the class, only fifteen were girls. This seemed to be a recurring theme for this course. The class the previous year also had only seven girls in the class of twenty-one. I had been working hard to build up enthusiasm for music composition in the compulsory music courses. Although overall enrollment in the course was increasing, the enrollment proportion between the sexes stayed the same.

For six years I taught middle school general music at a school in the Chicago suburbs. During the time I spent there, I made a consistent effort to incorporate composition into every class that I taught. The previous teacher had integrated a few compositional activities throughout the curriculum, but they were sporadic. It occurred to me early in the process of teaching that the best compositional pedagogy was one that occurred often. Early in the six years, I had worked to find and develop a variety of

methods to teach musical concepts by incorporating composition and other creative tasks. When teaching many of these activities, I would witness how the young men would jump into the projects with eagerness while the young women expressed trepidation and apathy.

Often, when I saw potential in a young woman, I would encourage her to participate in the elective music composition course. While they displayed obvious talent for creative musicianship, often these women exhibited low interest in music composition. This was then reflected in my course enrollments.

After my time in the Chicago suburbs, I began to work with younger elementary children alongside middle school-aged students. I noticed that the gendered difference of interest in creative musicianship does not seem to occur in the younger grades. Specifically, while working with students in grades 2 through 4, both boys and girls possessed the ability to jump in and “play” with musical concepts. Somewhere between grades 4 and 6, young women gradually shifted their interests away from musical creativity.

These young middle school women had a strong identity, and being a composer was not something they were ready to acknowledge could be part of that identity. During these early adolescent years, they were unable to find connections between the concept of composer and their concept of self. The enrollment numbers that I witnessed in the middle school music composition classes are mirrored in young composer competitions across the country. In four competitions for which data was accessible, most students were in high school, though some competitions took place throughout secondary school (grades 6-12). In these competitions, the percentages of female entries were always lower

than those of their male counterparts. In three of the four competitions (Maine, Illinois, and New Jersey), female entries accounted for less than 30% of all works submitted for consideration. New York had the highest percentage of female entries with 40% of all submissions from young women (Deutsch, 2012; Frampton, 2012; Kaschub, 2011; Teague, 2012).

To understand the concepts that might contribute to issues with composition and gender in music education, I will explore three related topics in this chapter: the role of composition in education; gender issues in music education; and, gender issues in music composition.

An Introduction to Composition

Composition, like all creative activity, begins with imaginative play (Gromko, 2003; Harris & Hawksley, 1990; Upitis, 1992). Gardner (1993) suggests that the ideal time for exploration and play is in childhood. “Creative capital” is the byproduct for those who are given opportunities to explore, discover, and play when they are children. He asserts that those without these experiences of exploration will be less likely in later life to investigate problems and discover new ways of thinking and learning. However, while the importance of play and exploration during these early years cannot be overstated, the ability to be creative lasts throughout one’s lifetime (Csikszentmihalyi, 1995).

Formal music education does not necessarily prepare students to think creatively in music. For many older music students, music composition projects in a college or high school course are a matter of learning to follow “rules” rather than a means for genuinely expressing themselves musically. Greher notes, “In my own experience, a required

college composition class was less about the *act of creation* and experimentation than it was about seeing how well we absorbed *the rules*. The idea of creating music to express one's feelings and thought through sound, was a concept that was never discussed" (Greher, 2012, p. 435).

Yet, music composition can be authentic in schools for students in every grade level and in every music class. Bosch (2008), a composer, states that music composition in the classroom is supported by helping students learn to listen to their own music and the music that is all around them. Greher (2012) believes that, to be most effective, teachers should encourage students to sketch their compositional ideas, listen to a variety of musical genres, and compose alongside other students and in settings outside of school.

Reimer (2003) makes the case for a comprehensive general music classroom. He believes that achieving this concept lies within the 1994 National Content Standards for Music Education (Reimer, 2003). These standards cover the range of potential possibilities for the music classroom including: (1) singing, (2) playing instruments, (3) improvising, (4) composing and arranging, (5) reading and notating music, (6) listening and analyzing (7) evaluating, (8) connecting the arts to one another, and (9) connecting music to history and culture (National Association for Music Education, 1994). Elliot (1995) also stresses the importance of composition for a complete musical education and the importance of encouraging students to take risks and evaluate their choices within the creative realm. Compositional activities involve time and dedication to the process of composition much in the same way that ensemble teachers dedicate themselves to the re-creation of musical material in performance.

For the purposes of this research, I have decided to focus my study of music creativity specifically on music composition. Music composition can take many forms, but my plan was to delimit the study to those persons who would label themselves as “composers,” rather than “songwriters” or “arrangers” or “improvisers,” although there is a great deal to be learned from these other forms of musical creativity as well.

Gender Issues in Music Education

Perceptions of gender differences affect student learning. The American Association of University Women observed in a poll that girls appear to have low self-esteem regarding their accomplishments in school. The report stated that girls in K-12 schools were unable to see themselves as “good at a lot of things,” while boys were much more likely to feel they were accomplished in a variety of areas. The authors noted that those who lack confidence in their performance often are overlooked in school by their teachers and peers (American Association of University Women, 1991).

Feminist theory aims to illuminate the nature of gender discrimination. It concerns itself with the oppression of groups of people, especially women (hooks, 2000). Gender is a social construct, whereas sex is a biological construct (Green, 1997). Concerning education and feminism, Gould states, “A historically feminized profession, education in North America remains remarkably unaffected by feminism” (Gould, 2011, p. 130). While there are issues of gender inside the discipline of music, the field has issues of being feminized as a whole. According to Morton (1994), music is praised as a counterpart to the academic rigor of math, reading, and science and is viewed as feminine and submissive in education, whereas math, reading, and science are masculine and dominant. While classroom music is considered by many to be of great importance in the

school music curriculum, many educational entities are diluting music programs to be subsumed as part of an integrated curricula. Rather focusing broadly on developing musical growth and understanding, music education routinely is put on display solely through performance. Morton highlights how music education has been subjugated to a feminine role in the school curriculum, or “one that complements the intellectual importance of the core curriculum” (Morton, 1994, p 116). Morton argues that this kind of display makes music subservient to education rather than being an integral part of the educational system (1994). McClary criticizes musicologists who have tried to give music academic rigor through analysis. She states:

Music itself is treated much like Carmen: that which is alluring and seductive about it also threatens a world of rational order and control. It can be enjoyed and even adored in private, but in the public realm it must be knocked down and pinned to the Schenkerian graph so as to show who's boss. And once pinned to the graph, it yields up the radiant image of transcendental significance - that which is perfectly ordered without apparent social intervention (McClary, 1999, p xv).

Morton (1994) adds, “A legitimate integrated curriculum is one where each subject holds equal status within a holistic educational context that encompasses all aspects of being human” (p. 109). Morton argues that by feminizing something like music education, it can be put aside and forgotten and therefore is in danger in certain political environments. (Morton, 1994).

Roulston and Misawa (2011) interviewed six elementary music teachers to study perceptions in gender in the elementary music classroom. The authors found that, while these teachers conceived of gender roles differently, they reinforced certain stereotypes.

Specifically, there was a general reference toward a female music teacher as ‘motherly’ and ‘supportive,’ while the male music teacher was viewed as ‘competitive’ and ‘powerful.’ These teachers’ ideas about gender roles supported the concept that males choose and are successful in ensembles because of the competitive nature and demanding schedule. These teachers thought that women are most successful in elementary music classrooms because of the need to nurture and develop young children and because the work-life balance was more suitable for raising a family (Roulston & Misawa, 2011).

Gender issues appear in the music education research in specific music learning settings, such as conducting, choral ensembles, and instrument selection in instrumental music classrooms. In the choral literature, there is a heavy focus on recruitment of male singers in school choirs (Freer, 2010; Gates, 1989; Harrison, 2007; Roulston & Misawa, 2011; Sweet, 2010). Freer, Sweet, and Gates observed that male participation dwindles over the years. Gates (1989) suggests that without higher male involvement, choirs will be at a loss for choral achievement.

O’Toole (1998) has a different view of choral enrollments. She states that, instead of focusing on the lack of male participation, music teachers should celebrate the strong participation of girls in choir. She discusses the failure of choral method textbooks to consider the engagement of girls who are present in the choral ensemble and instead focus on the engagement and recruitment of more males. The hierarchy of choral programs subliminally indicates that female voices are less desirable than male voices. Often in university or high school settings, the top ensemble is comprised of SATB voicing; next in rank is a male ensemble, followed by a children’s ensemble, and falling at the bottom of the hierarchy is the adult female ensemble.

O'Toole goes on to describe how female repertoire fails to encourage female empowerment. The text is often written from a male perspective or discusses the need for love and support from a man. Little of the repertoire is concerned with women's issues outside of love and romance. Finally, O'Toole (1998) describes how emphasis is placed on girls singing in higher ranges rather than exploring the range that is personally appropriate. It is considered acceptable for a male to perform in a treble range (e.g., Chanticleer, King Singers' or countertenors), but it is considered taboo and even vocally damaging for women to have a low range. Yet, as many church choirs show, female tenors have long musical careers (O'Toole, 2000).

But choir is not the only music ensemble that has issues of gender. The research that investigates instrumental music and gender shows that gender issues play a role, especially when considering instrument selection. Abeles and Porter (1978) observed that certain instruments are perceived as masculine and others as feminine by both adults and children. At the masculine end of the spectrum are drums, trumpet, and trombone. Viewed as more feminine are flute and violin (Abeles, 2009). This gendered perception of instruments has been supported in other studies (Delzell & Leppla, 1992; Hallam, Rogers, & Creech, 2008; O'Neill & Boultona, 1996). Gender affects the instruments that students select to play (Delzell & Leppla, 1992; Harrison & O'Neill, 2000; O'Neill & Boultona, 1996). Peer and family influence also affect which instrument a student chooses to play (Harrison & O'Neill, 2000). In a study in which they were given an instrument of opposite gender association, students knew these instruments were not associated with their gender (Hallam et al., 2008).

Moving into more specific instrumental settings, jazz is another area in which

gender issues play a role. Given the dominance of male jazz instrumentalists, the jazz world has struggled to admit young women into this musical world. Penno (2013) interviewed four young female jazz musicians to gain insights to their formative experiences. These women identified as musicians rather than female musicians. They noted that, in their very early development as a jazz musician, they were aware of the gender stereotypes for jazz musicians, but did not feel that these stereotypes affected them negatively. Despite this association, the women remarked how they felt an increased pressure to prove themselves through their performance. Even once they played well for others, this desire to prove themselves remained.

Finally, music technology is an area of music education that is beginning to grapple with gender issues. Wright (2001) observed that girls seemed less interested in working with technology than boys. While this may be partially true, gender issues in technology likely are deeper than simple interest levels. In her book, *Technology and the Gendering of Music Education*, Armstrong outlined reasons why technology seems to be associated with boys instead of girls. She noted that boys are more likely to explore the possibilities of technology, while girls are more likely to engage in technology in ways that are known. She writes that girls are not averse to technology, but that they simply tend to engage in “low-tech” applications rather than searching for new and different ways of approaching technological possibilities (Armstrong, 2011).

Gender Issues in Music Composition

In a British study, girls achieved at higher levels than boys on the GSCE test (the national test for music achievement in secondary school). These results, collected after key stage four (ages 15-18), conflicted with the teacher reported data at the end of key

stage three (ages 11-14), which revealed that boys achieve more than girls, especially in the areas of composition and performance. At key stage three, girls performed higher in analysis, the final part of the testing (Wright, 2001).

Elliot (1995) contends that, in order to truly understand music, learners need to be active music makers. This is the foundation of his praxial philosophy in music education. O'Toole argues that "doing music," like "doing gender," has issues and needs to be contextualized and considered with great care. She later argues that praxial music education philosophy fails to consider the issues of gender and culture and that "doing" music is not as simple and straightforward as Elliott contends. She contends that Western music education is taught from the perspective of "dead white male" composers. In order to be more inclusive, music educators should reflect upon what "doing music" or "musicing" means for our students (O'Toole, 2000).

Throughout music history, there have been few notable female composers to serve as role models for today's generation of young female composers. While it is known that women did compose popular music in antiquity, their prominence all but disappears in the Middle Ages. The few examples for female composers during this time were primarily nuns, including the mystic Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179). Nuns were the only women who were allowed to read or learn to play music in a formal setting. Throughout the 16th and 17th century, few women were allowed to perform music in public. If an exception was allowed, it was so that the woman could perform as a singer in a large work of music (i.e., opera, oratorio). In the 18th and 19th centuries, women did begin to compose, but few found much success, as publishers were disinterested in publishing music written by women. Few women during this time would characterize

themselves as composers, since they did not find success financially through composition. Often their compositions were uncovered only after the women composers had died (Green, 1997).

Even in the 21st century, women have struggled to make composition a viable occupation. While several women have been able to get their works performed and published, these women have found it difficult to achieve mainstream success (Green, 1997), though many have received high critical success, such as Libby Larsen and Ellen Zwilich (Palmer, 2011; Strand & Larsen, 2011; The Choral Journal, 2003). The exceptions to this have been women who write popular music (e.g., Carole King, Ellie Greenwich). The implication is that women are unable to write music that meets the same level of impact as Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart (Green, 1997). Music education research has done little to showcase female composers as examples for young women. In one research article that discussed the lessons to be learned from “the greats” of music composition, not one of the composers was female (Lapidaki, 2007). “The success of a female composer is deemed by her ability to compose like a man” (Green, 1997, p. 100).

Hinkle-Turner (2003) echoes the concern surrounding the lack of mentors and role-models for women composers. She further elaborates by discussing her personal concerns for role-models in electronic composition. She cites some of the issues for female electronic composers as a desire to “follow rules”, discouragement from others, inability to find peers, and lack of mentorship.

Considering the strong preponderance of male composers in the music profession, one might suspect that there is something biological about males and their predisposition to be creative inside and outside of music. However, in 2008, Baer and Kaufman

reviewed the literature on creativity testing as it relates to gender and found that gender does not typically play a role in creativity achievement. In the cases in which gender did seem to affect creativity, it usually favored girls. The Amusement Park Theoretical (APT) is a model for creativity that can be applied in all fields, including music. This model of creativity explores four stages: Initial requirements (intelligence, motivation, and suitable environments), general thematic areas (skills that help creativity across areas), domains (factors for creativity in specific domain), and micro-domains (specialized knowledge in specific domain). The metaphor of the amusement park is used because it transcends content domains and can also be domain specific (Baer & Kaufman, 2005). In their APT model of creativity, the authors described how the “Initial Requirements” part of the model, particularly environment, can be difficult for girls:

The relative lack of supporting environments — including the failure to nurture early talent, the demands and expectations of society (and especially of motherhood), and the control of entry into many fields and their resources by men — has hindered women’s accomplishments in virtually all domains. (Baer & Kaufman, 2008, p. 4)

While girls intellectually are able to achieve creative results, social factors restrict their ability to make progress with creative endeavors (Baer & Kaufman, 2008).

In *The Music That Sings* (McCutchan, 1999), 25 composers spoke about their compositional process. Four of these 25 were women. All four seem to come to music composition as an organic outgrowth from music performance, often on the piano. Two of the four discuss how music composition grew out of their musical experiences as a child. For Shulamit Ran, composing music was as natural as walking or talking. “I

thought melodies were just part of the words (that I read). I was really stunned to discover that my mother didn't hear those same melodies I did, that in fact, *no* one else did” (Ran, in McCutchan, 1999, p. 116). For Lois V. Vierk, composition came later as a natural extension of intense undergraduate study in music. The process of composition seems to be a different task for each woman. Libby Larsen favors a holistic approach and is able to work through music in its entirety once an idea strikes, Joan Tower works from a small detail and expands, Ran works from thematic concepts, and Vierk has developed a sequential manner of music creation called “Exponential Structure” from her knowledge of math and physics.

Not only are there relatively few professional female composers to serve as role models for young women, there are also few female composition teachers at the collegiate level to prepare the next generation of composers. To determine the percentage of female composition professors employed at major music schools, I collected data from the websites of the 10 top-rated music schools (US News and World Report, 2004) and the Big Ten institutions. In 2012 in the Big Ten schools, 11 of the 12 schools employed music composition faculty. (Purdue was the only school without a composition faculty member). In those institutions, only 18% of the composition faculty members were women. Only one school had a female composition department head. Among the top-rated music schools, 10% of the composition faculty members were women.

My Personal Connection to Musical Creativity

Beyond my own classroom and involving my students in musically creative activities, I long have engaged in composing, arranging, and improvising. I am not sure if

it was laziness or simply an interest in different ideas, but as a piano student I was rarely interested in playing repertoire exactly as it had been dictated on the sheet music. Often, I would read the beginning of the phrase and find an alternative way to reach the conclusion. I seemed to know what would sound appropriate, as I aurally understood the context of the music. This often frustrated my private instructor, but before long she gave me strophic hymns that I learned specifically for creating variations. With this supportive mentor at my side, I learned how to elaborate and arrange musical ideas, not just play with accuracy and style.

For years, I utilized these skills as a piano accompanist both in churches and as a music director for musical theatre. These improvising skills allowed me to create extensions and adaptations. In church, I was able to play instrumental versions of standard hymns without letting the music get stale either for the congregation or myself. As a musical theatre music director, I was able to rearrange music that was either unapproachable for the actors or extend the music for exceptionally gifted casts of actors. Recently, I performed as the solo musician in a parody show. When no interludes were provided for transitions between scenes, I created and stylized music to match the intention of the music that would soon be presented on stage.

Since my adolescence I have always written in journals. In high school, I began to write lyrics for songs that were in my head. I even drafted a few of the melodies and harmonic structures that would accompany these tunes. During the summer after my sophomore year of high school, I participated as a cast member in a play that was reimagined by a friend. He used music from a previously written musical and wrote a better script. During this re-write, he realized there was a musical hole. My friend turned

to me and asked me to write a song to accompany the lyrics that he created. This was the backwards version of how I traditionally created songs, but I took on the challenge. I completed the music (<https://soundcloud.com/robinglebes/vampires-waltz>), and my music was performed on stage for an audience for the first time.

In high school, I began a fascination with mallet percussion, starting with marimba and eventually finding a home with vibraphone. In particular, I was fascinated with jazz vibraphone. I auditioned and won the top seat position with the all-district jazz band playing vibes. After this, my band teacher encouraged me to join the school jazz band, where I truly learned to “comp” chords and improvise. By the time I played in the all-district jazz band, I had learned how to improvise with ease. I practiced at school during my lunch hour, but I practiced at home by improvising vocally to music from various genres.

Prior to my becoming a music major, my parents gave me a music notation program as a high school graduation present. The summer before college I became obsessed with creating music, both original compositions and arrangements. I notated previously hand-written projects, I wrote a vocal arrangement that was performed at a friend’s wedding, and I wrote the first movement to a symphony that eventually would be lost to cyber space. I was never one to read the manual for new technologies. I still am not. I would rather play around and then “Google” for information when I am unsure.

This fascination with notation evolved into an interest in recording as I moved to college and beyond. Early sound wave editing programs helped me to understand software applications such as *GarageBand*, *Audacity*, and *Logic* as I continued to play with the real manipulation of sound. I enjoyed this ability to work with sound in its final

form. Now, I prefer to create, compose, and arrange in this medium rather than dictating into a notation program. Despite this preference, I have utilized my ability to arrange music for various vocal ensembles that I have conducted. In these situations, it was necessary first to communicate the music and then hear it performed.

I always have loved to create and be recognized as a creative person. This interest transcends beyond music. As a child, I loved to create visual art and write plays. As an adult, this has translated to graphic arts and video blogging. As a teenager, I loved to improvise dance. As an adult, this has not changed. There is one level of accomplishment in the creation itself and a secondary level of accomplishment when that creation is shared with others. As a teacher, I thrill in teaching an original lesson plan more than teaching a lesson plan that I borrowed from a fellow colleague. There is an extreme satisfaction for me in creating something that is original. I do not think that will ever go away.

Summary

Music composition has a prominent place in music education. It continues to be studied within the music education community and is promoted as an important activity in the music classroom by practitioners, researchers, and educational philosophers. Although gender issues in music education have been studied with regard to music ensembles, instrument choice, and technology, the role of gender in music composition appears to be an area in which little research has been done.

Purpose and Problems

With the goal of understanding what experiences and musical identities of women who choose to compose, the purpose of this research was to examine the experience and musical identity of women who choose to compose music.

This study was guided by the following Grand Tour question and sub-questions:

Why do these women choose to compose?

1. What experiences and relationships have played a formative role in shaping these women as composers?
2. What experiences and relationships allowed these women to self-identify as a composer?
3. What influences, if any, do these women perceive that their gender has had upon their approach to composing?

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter investigates the related research that is pertinent to the study of music composition and gender. It begins with a description of the use of composition in the music classroom and then reviews some of the creativity pedagogy for classroom music. Following these sections is a discussion of mentorship in composition and related research on informal music making and gender. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of musical identity and a discussion of a study that focused on four undergraduate composition students and their identities as composers.

Music Creativity in Schools

The 1994 National Standards that focus on composing and improvising are perceived by teachers to be the most difficult standards to implement in the music classroom (Byo, 1999). While composition has been studied extensively in music education in the last two decades, music composition infrequently is taught in the classroom (Abril & Gault, 2008; Orman, 2002; Schopp, 2006; Strand, 2006; Zitek, 2008). In Indiana, 88% of music teachers reported teaching composition, but only 5% reported teaching it with any consistency (Strand, 2006). According to Orman (2002), elementary teachers utilize composition or improvisation only four percent of the time in their elementary music classroom. Fairfield (2010) noted that 71.7% of elementary general music teachers experienced difficulty implementing activities that focus on creating. The participants in this study identified time constraints, lack of resources, and challenges in their environment as roadblocks to including creative activities in the classroom.

According to teacher-reported data, music teachers generally feel that boys are more interested in music composition than girls. In addition, teachers feel that males

achieve more highly in music composition than their female counterparts (Green, 1993; Hanley, 1998). As discussed earlier, teacher-reported data often contradict the results of music achievement tests that utilize composition as a part of data collection (Wright, 2001).

Music Creativity Pedagogy in Schools

General music pedagogues and creativity

The major pedagogues in elementary music education place various levels of importance on creative play in a music curriculum. Émile Jaques-Dalcroze places a high value on the piano improvisation skills of the teacher, but less value on the student's creative skills. Rather, the student's role in Dalcroze is to respond to the improvisations offered by the teacher. Though composition and arrangement are stated to be important in Dalcroze, there is little development of these concepts in Dalcroze teacher education (Mead, 1996).

The philosophy of Zoltán Kodály places high value on singing and literacy in music education, but makes few suggestions regarding composing, arranging, or improvising. Like Dalcroze, the emphasis is on the teacher's ability to improvise in order to push students to further develop their music performance skills (Choksy, 1981; Houlahan & Tacka, 2008) There are educators who utilize the philosophy of Kodály and integrate improvisation and compositional tasks, but they are usually a blending of other methodologies incorporated into the work of Kodály (Whitcomb, 2003).

Edwin Gordon's Music Learning Theory places a high value on vocal improvisation. Music Learning Theory (MLT) mostly is concerned with the development of audiation or inner musical hearing. By focusing on improvisation in the elementary

curriculum, Gordon believes that students will be more adept at music performance and music reading, because the sequence of learning music mirrors the way language is learned as a young child. He equates improvisation in music to improvisation in language; a child learns to experiment and create their own sentences before they learn to read it. Similarly, Gordon believes that by experimenting with music before they read it, young children will have a greater understanding of music (Gordon, 2007). MLT teachers execute high levels of musical improvisation and are encouraged to create music to use in their music classroom (Bolton, Taggart, Gordon, Valerio, & Reynolds, 1998).

Gordon believed that creativity itself cannot be taught but, through various activities in class, a music teacher can provide readiness for creativity. He also believed that music aptitude affects one's ability to create music. Readiness for creativity in music is provided by the teacher through the teaching of rhythmic and tonal patterns (Gordon, 1989).

Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman are the most well known for their incorporation of creative musical tasks inside the music curriculum. These pedagogues suggested ideas in the Orff-Keetman philosophy for pentatonic improvisation and arrangements based on form. They also provided suggestions for free-form composing based on established text. Orff-Schulwerk teacher training often incorporates composition tasks for the teachers as well as arranging and improvising tasks (Frazee, 2007; Keetman, 1984; Shamrock, 1995).

Improvisation

Kratus outlined several stages of improvisation development with children. He began with exploration, during which the focus is on discovering sounds but not necessarily on musically accomplished output. Next he discussed process-oriented

improvisation. In this stage, the students become aware of their sounds as they connect to the activity being taught. This is different than exploration, when all sound is acceptable no matter the context. Product-oriented improvisation follows process-oriented. In the initial stages, students concern themselves with the musical output as it connects to tonality and meter. Product-oriented improvisation can still sound mechanical, as the students are only relating their sounds to the overall musical output. Fluid, structural, and stylistic improvisation comes after product-oriented improvisation is achieved. In each of these stages—fluid, structural, and stylistic—the student becomes more connected with the music in the moment and the output becomes more sophisticated (Kratus, 1995).

When studying the improvisation teaching techniques of several elementary general music teachers, Reese (2006) identified the need to engage students in exploration exercises prior to asking them to improvise. Like Kratus, Reese discussed exploration as readiness activities that allow for improvisation activities later. Improvisation differs from exploration in that improvisation utilizes purposeful choice in music making decisions. Reese also noted how the teachers discussed the need for students to be able to audiate their musical choices in order to have success with improvisation activities (Reese, 2006).

Azzara also believed that audiation is an important readiness for instrumental students when engaging in improvisation. In his study, he explored how audiation-based improvisation techniques could help students' music achievement in performance. His conclusions were that audiation-based improvisation allowed students greater overall understanding of tonal, rhythmic, and expressive elements of music, and thus, improved their overall music performance. Like Gordon, Azzara believed that improvisation

instruction in music should mirror the process through which a language is learned: first by imitating sounds, then by improvising groups of sounds, finally by reading and writing the sounds (Azzara, 1993).

Performance may not be the only skill that is facilitated through improvisation activities in the music classroom. Beegle (2010) suggested that with small group improvisation, students gain skills in listening, communicating, problem solving, decision-making, and performing. Beegle suggested that one of the difficulties in planning improvisation activities in the music classroom lies in the balance between freedom of choice and useful constraints to inspire students' musical growth and keep them engaged. She also suggested the need for a variety of prompts to keep student interest strong over time.

Koutsoupidou & Hargreaves (2009) concluded that improvisation activities could have a positive impact on a child's overall development in creative thinking. Lewis (2013), meanwhile, contends that through solo improvisation, a musician begins to know his or her inner voice as a musician or an "epistemology of self."

Regarding jazz improvisation, Madura (1996) suggested that the ability to imitate may be the best indicator of one's ability to improvise with confidence; therefore, listening to other improvisers, both through recordings and in class, would help a student's improvising ability (Madura, 1996). Penno (2013) echoed these findings adding that students would benefit from both an aural understanding as well as a theoretical one. She also suggested that frequent opportunities to perform improvisations would further benefit the students.

Stringham (2010) advocated that all students in an instrumental setting would

benefit from improvisation and compositional activities and warned that we should not reserve these activities for students that are more advanced. In Schopp's study, teachers who were successful in the incorporation of composition and improvisation in band programs credited their success to a simple approach (small explorations rather than large ones), a non-threatening environment, flexible delivery, and a commitment to performing student compositions and improvisations (Schopp, 2006).

Burnard (2000a, 2000b) suggested how closely connected composition and improvising could be in the minds of young children. She explored how some children have difficulty identifying the differences between the two activities and found that, in order to help them understand, these two ideas must be explored and discussed with children. In addition, Burnard discussed the need to do both kinds of activities frequently in order to solidify the difference between improvising and composing in the minds of children.

Composition

Lehmann, Slobada, and Woody (2007) described how nearly all composers of Western art music take music theory lessons. They also discuss the role of learning and playing instruments as well as music listening in music creation. Hickey suggested that the ideal environment for creating compositions would be one in which extrinsic rewards are low and the parameters of assignments are relatively open. This kind of setting allows for intrinsic motivation for composition, enabling the students to continue with composition because they enjoy it rather than because there is a grade or reward attached (Hickey, 1997).

Kaschub (1999) also saw the benefit of tasks that were open-ended, but suggested

that some students are musically frustrated with open-ended tasks and need structure, either initially or occasionally. She went on to discuss the need for balance between group composition and individual composition because of the variance in preference among students. Some students needed the group to feel successful while other students wished they had more opportunity to work on their own. Later, Kaschub discouraged teachers from thinking about engaging in composition activities as units, rather connecting them across grade levels and embedding them more deeply into the curriculum. In doing so, students will potentially see a personal connection to the creative activity.

Composition is not an extension of theoretical study, but an exploration of self through the creation of another—music. An approach which focuses on principle relationships encourages the development of thinking in sound where theoretical rules are often revealed post-creation rather than as serving as the starting point for creation. (Kaschub, 2009)

As previously mentioned, elementary teachers utilize composition or improvisation only four percent of the time in their elementary music classroom (Orman, 2002). American secondary school music programs, like their counterparts in elementary schools, also have struggled to incorporate composing, arranging, and improvising into the school curriculum (Abril & Gault, 2008; Schopp, 2006; Zitek, 2008). This is due largely to the settings in which music occurs in high schools in the United States. Abril and Gault (2008) report that music classes in secondary schools are comprised of mostly large ensembles. In these classes, the focus is on music performance for an upcoming concert. Chartier noted that while student interest was high in her study in which

composition was integrated into an orchestral classroom, the activities were time consuming and ultimately took away from rehearsal and concert preparation (Chartier, 2009). Menard (2015) echoed these statements in her study in a band setting. Given the pressures of public performances it is hardly surprising that little emphasis is placed on composing, arranging, or improvising. The exception to this statement would be jazz ensembles. In jazz groups, both vocal and instrumental, there is dedication to improvisation in the curriculum. However, this improvisation is often very specific to the style rather than overall musical improvisation (Schopp, 2006).

When music composition is taught in the classroom, it often is used to highlight the structure of rules of music making rather than to illuminate the expressive qualities that are attainable through creative musicianship. In this model, a teacher gives the student a checklist of things to accomplish, often with little room for variety or interpretation in order to complete the compositional exercise (Dogani, 2004). In an effort to examine successful composition teaching, Barrett investigated the collaborative process between a composition teacher and a student composer in order to find connections to the K-12 classroom. She noticed several themes that seemed important in this compositional process, including: (1) the importance of a strong composition model in the composition teacher; (2) the support that the composition teacher showed the student composer; and, (3) the need for the composition teacher to assist the student composer in finding his or her own voice in music writing (Barrett, 2006).

While compositional pedagogy for the classroom is still in development, one text has emerged recently. *Composing Our Futures* (Kaschub & Smith, 2012) focuses on six major areas in composition exploration: compositional research, model practices in

teaching composition, composition with technology, facilitation of composition in university education, and strategic administrative practices for including composition in music education. While not a strict “how-to” compositional pedagogy, Kaschub and Smith (2012) showcase the advantages and drawbacks to the incorporation of music composition in music classrooms and in music teacher education. Like their predecessors in composition pedagogy, the authors acknowledge that the greatest obstacle for the integration of composition into the curriculum is teacher confidence.

With the lack of comfort that teachers feel about teaching music composition, one might hope to find resources available to assist teachers in integrating composing into the music classroom. While some resources are available (Hickey, 2012; Kaschub & Smith, 2012; Paynter, 1992; Paynter & Aston, 1970; Watson, 2011), music teachers still struggle to implement composition in the curriculum (Byo, 1999; Chartier, 2009; Menard, 2015; Orman, 2002).

Arranging

One of the holes in the research literature is information about arranging in the music classroom. While the preceding sections discussed the role of composition and improvisation processes, with focus on creative product (Barrett, 2001; Beegle, 2010; Hickey, 1995, 1997, 2001; Kaschub, 1999; Kratus, 1985, 1994, 2001; Kyle, 2007; Menard, 2009; Priest, 2001; Yannon, 2011) and creative person (Amabile, 1996; Carter, 2008; McCutchan, 1999; Webster, 1977, 2002, 2003; Webster & Hickey, 1995), there is almost no research focusing on the person, process, or product for arranging in the music classroom. In the 1994 National Standards, arranging was grouped with composition: “Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines” (National Association for

Music Education, 1994). In the new art standards, arrangements fall under the anchor standard “create,” though it is unclear if students are required to improvise, compose, and arrange individually or simply engage in one of these activities (National Association for Music Education, 2014).

One area that makes reference to arranging in music education is in a cappella vocal groups. In his book, *Powerful Voices*, Duchan (2012) shared how his group has a desire to do something inventive through arrangements. In the a cappella music ensemble, original compositions were not common, and there was less value on replications of song material. The value was in creating a new way to introduce a known song. Paparo (2013) echoed this observation in his own study of an a cappella group. He also noted how there were primary arrangers in the group, and, while all members could arrange for the choir, certain people were relied upon for their skill in creating successful arrangements for the group.

One other piece of research involving the use of arranging as a creative tool in the music classroom was Randles’ (2009) study, which involved asking two music teachers to create an arrangement for their ensembles. By the end of their work with the arrangement and after sharing the work with their students, the teachers were much more confident in their ability to create for their ensemble. Randles suggests that arranging would be a good tool for music teacher education programs to consider incorporating in their curriculum.

Green (2002) discusses the world of cover bands in her book *How Popular Musicians Learn*. While a cover song can fall into two distinct categories, being played exactly like the original recording and being musically arranged, it is the latter that

connects to arranging in music education. In her follow-up book, Green (2008) takes the ideas she learned from popular musicians into schools. She talked about how some students had a difficult time progressing from a direct cover to arrangement, as they had little experience with the different process. Later the students embraced the idea of making the music their own through arrangements.

While these four studies touch upon the use of arranging in music education, there is a noticeable difference between the research in improvisation, composition, and arrangements. It would be helpful if there were studies on the use of arranging as it pertains to person, process, and product in the same way that has been done for both composing and improvising.

Mentorship in Composition

The Vermont MIDI Project (VMP) began in 1995 and is one of the few documented examples of music composition mentorship with young students. At its inception, VMP connected collegiate composition mentors and elementary and secondary students of composition to one another by utilizing music software and the then-fledgling World Wide Web. The projects were created by students and then shared with working composers and teachers for input and editing. The goal was for these works to be performed live by youth orchestras and professional music ensembles. VMP has continually updated its technology. Today, students use Noteflight®, a browser-based notation software program, to share music with mentors. In addition, Skype® conferencing has served to further connect this composition community, enabling students and mentors to discuss the compositional process. Lessons from VMP that can be applied into a K-12 music classroom include encouraging sketching or early drafts of

music creation, listening as practice for music creation, provide tools for students to use outside the music classroom such as notation software, embedding composition activities throughout the K-12 music experience, and composing should be a teacher and student activity (McLeod, 2012).

Greher (2012) describes another example of compositional mentorship. Her undergraduate students in an elementary general music methods course worked with a class of elementary school students to create a composition to accompany a fairy tale. Looping software was used to assist in the creation of the compositions. The undergraduate students served as composition facilitators while the elementary students created their music. This role of facilitator is echoed in Kaschub's (1997) work with composition in the choral and general music settings. The facilitator's job was to translate the students' ideas into notation, not to provide the ideas for them.

McLeod (2012) points out that a composition mentor need not be a professional composer. According to McLeod, classroom music teachers can establish an environment of respect and discourse and be a healthy mentor throughout a student's compositional process. More important than being an expert in composition is providing students the opportunity to reflect upon their own compositional choices. Greher (2012) notes the importance of a sense of community between composer and mentor, stating that this relationship elicits facilitated learning rather than structured lessons. Receiving timely feedback and ideas for editing move the student towards goal-oriented composition. Stories, metaphors, or conceptions about musical elements all are seen as suggestive tools for composition facilitation (Reese, 2003).

Composition mentorship does not have to exist solely between an adult and a student. The process can be enhanced when older students mentor younger students. This continued mentorship through the composition process creates a larger community and showcases to younger students the growth and potential of student compositions (McLeod, 2012). MacDonald and Meill (2000) have found that this connection between students can yield healthy compositional results.

Informal Music Making and Gender

Abramo's study of informal music making and his insights about gender differences in popular music making highlight several issues about girls' participation in composition activities. Several groups were studied as they engaged in creative tasks. Some groups were single-sexed and some were mixed-sex. The researcher observed how the girls and the boys interacted in the various groups. In the all-boy groups, musical gesture was imperative to the communication; rather than describing a new musical idea, a boy would play the idea. In contrast, the girls seemed to compartmentalize their music making. There was time for rehearsing and there was time for discussion. The two activities were different from one another (Abramo, 2011). In the mixed-sex group, the differences in working style became starkly apparent. Specifically, in a group in which one girl was paired with four boys, the girl struggled to find her voice. She ultimately found a role as "the singer" and assisted in lyrics, but was persuaded not to play an instrument and contributed little to the instrumental music creation (Abramo, 2009).

Abramo notes that, while one male had been aggressive and more "masculine" in the male group, in another group of mixed-sex he was able to showcase traits that were more "feminine," including the desire to write a love song. Abramo sums up much of his

findings in this statement: “Gender begets music, but music also begets gender” (Abramo, 2009, p. 302).

Identity and Music

Role-identity is the “character and the role that an individual devises for himself as occupant of a particular social situation” (McCall & Simmons, 1966, p. 67). These identities often develop from the support of others. An identity is further engrained by intrinsic rewards rather than extrinsic. Finally, it is the opportunities or experiences that surround one’s identity that can further solidify one’s ability to resonate with that identity (McCall & Simmons, 1966).

MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell (2002) discuss identities in music (IIM) in great detail. IIM are culturally defined roles such as performer, composer, or other professionally-oriented labels. They are a product of the world around the musician. Prior to the development of musical identities, home and environment play a great role in students’ early education. Later, students who engage in musical activity are more likely to identify with music along with mentors and the continued support of family. MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell assert that it is a combination of people and experiences that enable an identity in music to flourish (MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2002).

Davidson and Burland noted that, in the formation of music identity, all musicians have encounters with listening and making music. Various interactions with people, peers, family, and community can solidify or weaken a musical identity. However, a negative interaction may not hinder the development of a musical identity. In many cases, young musicians employ coping strategies in order to counteract either a negative or

unsatisfactory experience (Davidson & Burland, 2006).

By exploring the world of a community children's choir, Mills sought to understand the effects of participation in the choir on the choristers' identities. Engaging in the choir increased their abilities to identify as musicians. The choristers also compared the community choir to other ensembles in order to differentiate their identities in this group. Mills (2008) suggested that teachers should consider what it means to be a musician and consider having conversations with students about these issues in identity development and construction.

In Kastner's study looking at the musical identities of young musicians, she asserted that enjoyment and meaning from music was heightened especially when students were allowed to exert agency. In other words, when the children had some say in what was played or how it was played, their interest in the activity was piqued. Kastner also suggested that their musical identities were a compilation of both their own experiences and whatever experiences were modeled in their family (Kastner, 2009).

In her work, *How Popular Musicians Learn*, Green (2002) asserted that a person's parents have a great deal of influence on how they are acculturated into music as popular musicians. This does not mean that the parent's must play popular music themselves (though they may) but rather must allow for opportunities in music such as listening and lessons. She later asserts that popular musicians exhibit high levels of autonomy and motivation in music learning.

As mentioned earlier, Randles (2009) asked two music educators to arrange music for their ensembles and looked at the participant's developing musical identities as they created and shared their arrangements with their student ensembles. The teachers noted

how after creating their arrangements their students viewed them differently and seemed to relate to them. Randles concluded that by creating these arrangements, these teachers were able to find the beginning stages of a creative identity (Randles, 2009).

Davis looked at the experiences of middle school general music students to determine if they viewed their experiences as meaningful. Davis found that experiences were meaningful to the students in four ways: vocational, academic, belongingness, and agency. The vocational category indicated that the students enjoyed being actively involved in music. The academic category showed that students were interested in learning about music beyond the active role and enjoyed learning about music in areas such as music theory and history. Belongingness dealt with a student's feelings of acceptance through music, while agency dealt with their abilities to find meaning through music. Davis suggested incorporating classes like middle school general music and alternative music classes in secondary curriculums in order to serve the needs of more students (Davis, 2009).

Music Composition Identity

In 2008, Carter investigated undergraduate music compositional identity. To begin his research, he visited an east coast university with a well-respected composition studio. Carter attended the composition studio class and introduced himself and the project. The next week he received consent from three male undergraduate students and one female. These students were full time undergraduate composition majors between the ages of 17 and 24. Each composer was interviewed five times.

“The goal of the study is to offer a rich illustration of undergraduate composers’ experiences to better understand their development, beliefs, and perspectives” (Carter,

2008, p. 83). Carter utilized both case study design and a narrative approach to investigate his research question. “To help reveal meaning within this study I wrote composers’ narratives from their point of view, as if they were writing their own autobiographical account of their lives” (Carter, 2008, p. 87). In addition, Carter reflected on his personal experience with the composers. After Carter transcribed the interviews from the composers, he constructed a storyboard for each case in order to write a narrative for each composer.

Carter found that these composers were strongly supported by their families, mentors, and teachers in their professional decision to major and continue in music composition. All of the composers stated that the influence of winning composition competitions bolstered their confidence. It was only after winning the awards that these young adults were able to label themselves as composers. None of the composers thought that music composition would be their main career after graduation. All of the composers agreed that their K-12 music education had little effect on their development as composers (Carter, 2008).

Maureen, the one female composer, had been involved in music for quite some time, playing both piano and trombone. She stated that her aversion to performance but love for music was part of the reason she became interested in music composition. She had a composition teacher prior to her entrance in a college music composition degree program. She viewed this composition teacher and her parents as her largest support structure. She called her composition teacher a coach because he engaged her in a positive and affirming way. He never dismissed ideas; rather he encouraged new ways of thinking (Carter, 2010).

The research done by Carter was a major source of inspiration for this study. While he brings up many interesting issues surrounding the identity of these young composers, it was surprising to hear that none of his participants viewed composition as their final career. This claim made me wonder about the strength of their self-identification as composer. I believed that by working with graduate students, I could find a greater commitment to composing and thus a stronger connection to students' identity in composing. I also believed that by working with all female composers, I would be able to draw stronger conclusions about the nature of women's experiences in the world of music composition.

Summary

This chapter investigated the related research as it applies to music composition in education and gender, beginning with an investigation of the prominence of music composition in school and then looking at composition pedagogy in music classrooms. The role of mentorship in composition was then explored, followed by a discussion of gender issues in informal music making. Finally, the most closely related research to the present study is Carter's qualitative study of four undergraduate students in composition. My study will be informed by this investigation, but it will vary in the following ways:

1. This study will investigate only female composers.
2. This study will focus on graduate students who will likely have a more developed sense of compositional identity and have more compositional experiences from which to draw. In addition, graduate students have made a greater commitment to the craft of composition, as this is likely their second degree in the field (though this is not always true).

3. This study will observe the composers “in action” by observing studio classes, rehearsals for performances, and performances of their composed music.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the method used in conducting this research study. I begin with a description of the pilot study and the lessons learned moving forward towards the current study. Next, I follow with a discussion of the design, my researcher's lens, the participants, the method for data collection, the data analysis and trustworthiness, and, finally, I end with a discussion of limitations of this study.

Pilot Study

In the spring of 2012, I became interested in exploring the journey of established female composers in order to find avenues for young women to gain confidence in composing. The purpose of this study was to investigate the journey of one female composer and explore some of the issues surrounding music composition and gender as it relates to this particular participant. The specific research questions asked were as follows:

1. How did this female become a musician and composer?
2. How did music composition evolve in her life?
3. In what ways has her gender had an impact on her as a composer?

I conducted a pilot study with one of the three final participants for this study. Gwen and I had been acquainted previously in our musical careers and found it quite easy to converse about her personal history with music and composition. The primary data collection for this study were three 30-45 minute interviews conducted over the length of one semester. Interview questions centered on family, music, and composition and the role they served to the participant. The participant gave me two music compositions both as recordings and as scores. One was a finished work, premiered during data collection.

The other musical work was “in progress” and would not be finished until the following year. I examined these and then used them as a discussion topic during the final interview. Questions related to the musical works involved theoretical choices, orchestration, score markings, and general overall feel of the music. Beyond interviews, several email interactions between researcher and composer served as data. As interview transcripts were the primary form of data collection, member checks were the principle methods used to ensure its trustworthiness. The edited transcripts then were coded for themes.

After comparing the codes to the related research, I grouped the codes to look for themes in the responses. Gwen’s responses fell into three general categories: (a) arranging as a gateway, (b) composition over performance, and (c) composer as teacher. Suggestions for future research included more case studies of female composers. At this time, I speculated that Gwen’s journey was unique and likely different from that of her composition peers. By interviewing more female composers, I believed this would serve to enlighten music education on the issues that females face as composers.

Design

The design of this study is a multiple case study. A case study fully investigates in depth all aspects related to a real-life phenomenon as told from the perspective of the participant(s) (Yin, 2009). While the pilot study began the process of in-depth study on the experiences and identity of female composers, the current study sought to find connections across cases by employing cross-case analysis of the data.

I used ethnographic techniques to collect data from multiple sources. Data sources included multiple audio-recorded semi-structured interviews, field notes of composition studio classes, rehearsals, performances, and email communications. The data were then

coded and analyzed for emergent themes. More information on coding strategies is included in the data analysis section below.

Researcher's Lens

Oh no. I'm in class. Why must this happen now? I am in the middle of Dr. Snow's choral methods class, acting as the graduate assistant. I am supposed to be on task and focused and helping in any way possible. This is going to distract me from that. The problem is that if I don't immediately work out this music, I will lose it. Use it or lose it, right?

This time it was a lyric. Most times it's a melodic idea. Honestly, I'm seldom attracted to words in the way I am attracted to musical ideas, but when these inspiration moments do happen it completely distracts me from interacting with humans. All I can think of is the poetry and how it would tie so nicely into a musical setting. In these situations, I am a blank face deftly trying to keep up conversation, but obviously my mind in another place. It has happened again today.

The lyrics came from thought. I was preoccupied thinking about a book that I had read and realized that this thought had a rhythmic element. Within 10 seconds, I had constructed the length of the refrain in my head. I knew its tonality, its meter. I knew the expressive qualities. I knew the harmonic structure. I opened up the sticky notes application on my computer and raced to write down as much as I could before the concept vanished from my mind.

While my own experiences with composition and composing differ from the women that I interviewed, I believe that my experiences as a composer, arranger, and improviser helped me to understand the women in this study. While I identify first as an

arranger and an improviser, my need to compose is a very personal one. When I feel the need to compose, I find myself compelled to compose, and this need will stop me from working on more pressing projects and tasks. My styles and genres are eclectic, though they often reflect the current experiences I am having in music. While I rarely share my compositions with others, this personal experience with composition helped me gain rapport with the women and enabled us to speak clearly to one another.

As previously mentioned, my years teaching music composition to adolescents also made me an excellent candidate to discuss the role of composition as an art and in education. I shared my own story regarding composing in the music classroom with the women so they understood my perspective and my interest in the topic.

Participants

Selection

The institution where all three participants were earning their degrees is a large midwestern state university. The music program is well established and contains undergraduate, masters, and doctoral students in various areas. Throughout this document this institution will be referred to as State University. As all three participants are graduate students, their previous institutions also are important in telling their compositional tales. In these instances, these schools will be referred to as Bachelors University or Masters University.

Being someone who is naturally curious about this profession, I was and continue to be in close contact with many composition majors and graduate students. At the commencement of this study, there were three women graduate composition students in attendance at State University. They all were asked and agreed to be participants for this

investigation. These women all attended the same composition studio class and were required to perform at least one work per semester as part of their studio requirements.

Description of Participants

Gwen. Gwen was a 26-year-old masters student in music composition who was also concurrently working on a post-BA with certification in music education. Originally from Kentucky, during her K-12 education Gwen participated in choir and band. In her senior year of high school, she took a music theory course that had made her curious about the theoretical ideas presented by her teacher, which she attempted to apply, at first by arranging music. At the same time, Gwen began to expand her music activities outside of arranging and explored composing. As an undergrad, Gwen majored in both clarinet performance and composition. After completion of her undergraduate degrees, Gwen was accepted to a clarinet studio at State University. However, during the summer months prior to her attendance, Gwen had a change of heart and decided she was burned out on performance. Subsequently, she re-auditioned as a music composition major. Gwen composes mostly contemporary music and neo-tonal instrumental music, but she also writes pop/rock songs. Since Gwen was the participant in the original pilot study, Gwen received an addendum on her consent form. This addendum allowed the use of the data from the original pilot study to be used alongside new data for this study.

Tessa. Tessa was a 23-year-old masters student in music composition. Tessa had lived in Michigan her whole life. She participated in band in her K-12 education but never felt very connected to the program. Tessa credits her parents for encouraging her in her various music endeavors, including composition. A pianist and flutist, Tessa originally began composing in elementary school along with writing poetry. For a time,

the two were closely connected. As she began her undergraduate degree, her two veins of creativity, while continuing to be important to her, were not as closely connected to one another. Tessa was close to her undergraduate composition teacher and often sought him out for advice even in her graduate study. While working on her graduate degree, Tessa composed mostly electronic music and vocal music.

Kim. Kim was a 27-year-old doctoral student in music composition. Kim came to composition later than the other two composers. While completing her undergraduate degree in music education in Ohio, Kim was inspired to write music because of her music theory courses. On a whim, Kim submitted her first composition to a summer music camp and was accepted on the basis of this single work. Kim began to seek out composition lessons after this camp. Even then, she did not seek out full time study in composition until after an injury forced her to abandon trumpet performance. After a brief break from music study, during which time Kim substitute taught in band classrooms in Ohio, she returned to music study, now in Michigan, for both her masters and doctoral degrees in music composition. Kim composed mostly for instrumental ensembles, focusing on wind instruments.

All three of the women chose pseudonyms. During the focus group interview, there was a discussion of the pseudonyms to be used for the other figures that were important to their story as composers. We began with the four composition teachers at State University. While initially there was discussion of Darth Sideous, the magical Mr. Mistofffoles, and Uncle Charlie, we eventually settled on Dr. Griffin, Dr. Martin, Dr. Nicholas, and Dr. Walken. Finally, all three women had influential composition teachers

prior to their time at State University. For Tessa this is Dr. Willis. For Gwen this is Dr. Murphy. For Kim this is Dr. Getz.

Data Collection

The original pilot study with Gwen was conducted in 2012. The following summer, I conducted a preliminary interview with Tessa. In spring 2013, I conducted the rest of the observations and interviews. Data were transcribed and analyzed during the fall of 2013 and spring of 2014. Member checks of both the original transcripts were conducted in the summer of 2014 with peer reviewers looking over codes in the summer of 2014, and the final narrative was completed in the summer of 2015.

The primary data collection for this study was a series of four or five interviews conducted with each of the participants over the length of one college semester. Each interview varied slightly in length though they ranged from 30-90 minutes. Interviews were semi-structured in order to explore questions specific to each participant, allowing me to follow up on topics that seemed particularly interesting. Early interviews focused on building a sense of trust and rapport. Later interviews were connected closely to specific music and performances related to the participants' compositional work. The participants shared their compositions (scores and/or recordings) with the researcher to clarify interview information. These were examined by the researcher and then used as a discussion topic during the interviews. Questions related to the musical works involved theoretical choices, orchestration, score markings, and general overall feel of the music. In addition to interviews, email interactions between the composers and myself as well as between composers themselves served as data. Alongside the emails and interviews, I visited composition studio classes and observed student-professor and student-student

interactions. Following the last studio class, one focus group interview was conducted with all three women. Finally, I witnessed three different public performances of original music by the women.

The nature of the interviews was fluid and did not just include a certain set of pre-determined questions. For example, during some interviews I asked questions regarding public performances of compositions that had I had attended. I took notes on certain aspects of the compositions and then asked the composers to comment on their thoughts on these sections of music. In addition to the interview, I took field notes during studio classes, rehearsals, and concerts. These field notes were as descriptive as possible using a method known as “thick description.” Thick description is a term that “means the complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated” (Merriam, 1998, p. 29). By using thick description, I attempted to recall as much detail surrounding an event as possible through written narratives. In these narratives I focused on what could be perceived through all senses. This information was especially helpful during the later interviews with the participants, as I asked the participants about my observations surrounding the events.

Initially there was discussion of observing the women during their composition lessons at State University. Ultimately, this idea was dismissed due to the private nature of composition lessons and small quarters of the rooms in which the lessons were held. However, during the primary semester when the three women were interviewed, Tessa gave composition lessons to three undergraduate non-composition music majors, all three of whom were female. Tessa and her students agreed to let me observe her in this situation. Field notes from these lessons and a concert planning session also were

collected and coded. Tessa was the only participant from whom I collected field notes in compositional lessons, because she was in a position of teaching rather than learning.

Making audio recordings allowed me to reconnect to the material that I wrote during field notes in the moment. Both individual interviews and the focus group interview were audio recorded. Two pieces of equipment were used for audio recordings: an iPad and iPhone (both equipped with an audio recording application). The data were stored in a secure digital location that was password protected.

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Interview transcripts were the primary form of data collection. Triangulation was achieved by also collecting field notes from studio classes, rehearsals, and performances, as well as email communications with the participants. Member checks were the principle method used to ensure the trustworthiness of this study. All transcripts and field notes were sent to the relevant participants to read, make corrections, and delete any unwanted documentation from our interactions. The corrected transcripts and field notes were then coded for themes.

Coding is a process in qualitative research by which the researcher assigns a short word or phrase to a portion of narrative data (Saldana, 2012). For this study, narrative data included transcribed interviews, field notes, emails, and other documents that the participants shared with me. “Just as a title represents and captures a book or film or poem’s primary content and essence, so does a code represent and capture a datum’s primary content and essence” (Saldana, 2012, p. 3).

Three types of coding processes were used for this analysis. *Initial* coding was my starting place. This is an open-ended approach that allows the researcher to consider all

possible results. When possible and appropriate, *in vivo* coding was used in order to keep the voice of the participants alive and present in the research. *In vivo* coding uses direct excerpts in the words of the participants in order to create a code (Saldana, 2012).

Finally, codes were refined through a process of *axial* coding. In axial coding, codes are altered in order to allow for greater understanding of context and to link related codes together (Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

Codes then were arranged in order to classify and categorize the data. This coding allowed shared characteristics between codes to become more easily noticeable. Codes first were grouped for within-case analysis and then later grouped for cross-case analysis among all the participants. Eventually, the similarly grouped codes were united as a category. From the collected categories, I searched for themes from the study. These themes allowed a discussion on topics related to the research questions (Merriam, 1998).

In addition, I relied on my own experience as a music educator, composer, and music teacher educator to provide insight into the data. After considering the codes in the context of the related research and the research questions, I sorted the codes to look for themes in the responses. Some codes were deemed irrelevant to the research questions and were excluded from the findings. The codes that were relevant to the questions presented by this study then were organized into themes and categories (Saldana, 2012).

Merriam (1998) indicates that six methods are imperative to ensure data trustworthiness in qualitative research: (1) triangulation, (2) member checks, (3) long-term observation (4) peer examination, (5) participatory or collaborative modes of research, and (6) acknowledging researcher bias. All six methods of trustworthiness were implemented in this study, including a peer examination of the analysis and results. For

peer examination, one peer was a colleague in music education and one peer was a colleague in composition.

Limitations

The experiences of the female graduate students at this large Midwestern University may not represent the experiences of all female graduate students in music composition or all female composers in general. Additionally, all members of the composition faculty at this particular institution were male. While this did not seem to be a factor that the participants noted as a problem, given the rather personal nature of composition lessons, some student composers may prefer a teacher that matches their own gender. As Tessa said, compositions lessons are like “divulging your diary” (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). These women all were classically trained musicians and tended to compose in art-music styles and genres rather than popular music genres. In general, they identified as composers rather than songwriters. It is possible that the experience of those who identify as songwriters is different than those who identify as composers, despite both being creators of music. The small number of women being interviewed for this study also prevented me from making broader generalizations; however, by interviewing and observing three women, I was able to get an in-depth picture of composing and the role that composition took in their lives. In addition, while I did my best to ensure anonymity, it is possible that complete anonymity is difficult to obtain given that these are the only women studying music composition at State University during the time of this study

Personal Connections

One final step that I will provide in the cross case analysis is a personal connection to my own story as a composer of music. While I realize my own experiences will be different as I chose to pursue degrees in music education rather than music composition, I have consistently created music throughout my life. I identify as musician and teacher, but struggle with the identity of composer. By comparing my own experiences to the experiences of these women, I hope to provide further insight to the path towards identity as a composer.

Summary

This multiple case study allowed for an in-depth understanding of three participants in this study. While the focus interview and observations were helpful in triangulating the data, ultimately it was the primary interviews that I conducted with the women that provided the strongest insights into their experiences and identities as they related to music and composition. The following three chapters share (a) the general narrative of each composer, (b) their foundational identities as musicians, and (c) their emerging identities as composers.

CHAPTER 4: COMPOSERS' NARRATIVE

This chapter begins the results section of this study. However, before moving forward, it might be helpful to the reader to know that these results will answer the first three research questions (“Why do these women choose to compose?”, “What experiences and relationships have played a foundational role in shaping these women as composers?” and “What experiences and relationships allowed these women to self-identify as a composer?”), but were unable to answer the final question regarding gender and composition. While gender related questions were asked, the data collected did not support a fulsome discussion of issues related to gender for these three participants. While some small speculations were noted given the lack of other women in the participants’ composition studios or the lack of female composition teachers, these answers were often given as an afterthought. Gender issues did not seem to generally concern the women in their development as composers.

It is a person’s story that allows a reader to understand and empathize with that person’s situation and the related characteristics of her story. This chapter will give context to the three participants involved in this study: Gwen Watson, Kim Johnson, and Tessa Cedar. While all three have some clear similarities, as they are all female, the same relative age, composers, and are interested in instrumental music, there differences that will come to the surface in this chapter. We begin with the participant I met first, Gwen Watson.

Gwen Watson

Gwen Watson grew up in the rural Southern United States with her mother, father, older sister, and younger brother. She grew up in a house where music was present but not necessarily with trained musicians. Her father played the trumpet when he was younger and sang. Her mother was less confident in her musical abilities. “She says the only instrument she can play is the radio” (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012). Gwen’s mother and father listened to a wide variety of musical repertoire, including classic through 80s rock, piano sonatas, symphonies, and operas. Her grandfather listened to popular music from the 1900s and 1910s. Gwen’s sister listened to more modern music from various genres. Her maternal extended family would occasionally play instruments while her grandfather sang. Her paternal grandmother played the piano and violin (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

During elementary school, Gwen had a positive experience with her elementary music teacher. In her elementary music classroom she played recorder, read notation, and sang. Further, she sang in a choir led by her elementary music teacher. It was during this time that Gwen began her first attempts with musical creativity. This mostly took the form of transcribing songs, typically with a blend of traditional and invented notation. When ensembles began in 7th grade, she had to make a choice between choir and band but ultimately decided upon band because her older sister was playing in this ensemble. Despite being initially drawn to the sound of the flute, Gwen picked up a clarinet and immediately fell in love (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

Her high school, the only one in the county, had a population of approximately 1,500 students. The music program contained both band and choir and had a combined

roster of 150 students. Gwen participated in concert band, marching band, and jazz band. Gwen began a clarinet choir during her sophomore year of high school, acting as a leader and teacher. As a leader, Gwen picked out the music and led rehearsal. When music was not available, she arranged music for the group (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

My sophomore year I started a clarinet choir and so I had experience teaching a clarinet choir. I was the head of the group and at that time I was the highest chair as well. I formed the group and we started playing whatever music we could find or that I could arrange. That was my first chance at getting to arrange things that the group could actually play. That was a really good experience. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

Gwen's band teacher was a published composer, though her high school band never played any of his composed music. Instead, he purchased pre-packaged shows and wrote music for other groups that commissioned his work. According to Gwen, her band teacher never really spoke of his composing. The only reason she knew that he composed was the collection of music with his name in the band library (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012).

During her junior year of high school, Gwen began clarinet lessons. The teacher was a trumpet player and was not always clear on the specific technique for clarinet. Gwen came away feeling that the technique he taught might have been more appropriate for a saxophone player rather than clarinet. However, if there was one good lesson that

she took away from these initial lessons it was how to practice on any instrument (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

Outside of traditional high school ensembles and lessons, Gwen was also a part of a garage band. In her words, “It never got out of the garage” (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012). The group struggled to decide what kind of music to play, specifically either cover songs or original music. There were a few attempts to create original songs during this time that provided some insight into songwriting. As a songwriter, Gwen focused first on lyrics and then moved towards melodic and harmonic concepts. Just prior to her establishment in the garage band she began playing the guitar, and the garage band afforded Gwen practical application on the instrument. Gwen expressed that some of her songwriting ideas were stilted because of the groups’ developing musicianship on the garage band instruments. However, Gwen allowed this time to give her a more holistic view of music. She began to apply ideas that she learned in concert band to this setting and vice versa (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012).

Early in high school, Gwen thought her career would lead toward a psychology degree. Because of this, much of her high school coursework was heavy on science and other honors courses. She invested time at a home for the elderly, where she could gain relevant experience. However, prior to her senior year Gwen realized she would need to decide between her interests in band and psychology. Initially, Gwen decided not to take music during her final year of high school. During the second week of classes she resolved that she would be much happier investing in music and therefore reenrolled in band and music classes (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

When presented with an opportunity to take a music theory course during her final semester of high school, Gwen jumped at the chance. Eager to learn more about the ins and outs of music, the theory course offered a chance to explore the various ways that music was formed and offered an opportunity to create music that would be critiqued. The teacher for the course was also Gwen's band teacher. He was very encouraging of Gwen's composing. He offered to have the band play Gwen's music. During this time, Gwen would often show early drafts of her music to this teacher. He was encouraging and affirmed her compositional choices. Now fully dedicated to pursuing a musical career, Gwen's decision to earn a music degree was fully supported by her family (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

Gwen attended an undergraduate university in her home state with a small music program. She described the music faculty as inviting, typically with an open door. This open door policy allowed for students to drop by at any time and talk with the faculty. Initially, Gwen majored in music education. Despite her original focus on music education, Gwen decided to take composition lessons the second semester of her freshman year. However, Gwen had trouble connecting with the music education faculty.

Initially, I started out music ed for about a year. One of my professors that I'd auditioned with somewhere along the way at one of the schools indicated to me that it was like the "safe" option to choose music ed. So I started out with that and I had a class in the college of education that kinda turned me off of it for a long time. It was basically a teacher that had taught kindergarten up until the time that she decided to teach college. So she really talked down to the class and she was not very nurturing to the

music ed kids. So that turned me off to that for a while. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

She decided to switch to a double major in both clarinet performance and composition

As a music major, Gwen was required to enroll and participate in music theory and ensembles. This exposure to new music and new musical concepts inspired her as a composer. Not only did these ideas inspire her in her original work, but also in her writing as an arranger. This kind of curricular expansion had the added affect of giving Gwen confidence in her compositional output (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

Especially when I got into my undergrad classes. I think it really took off once I got into college and was surrounded by a whole bunch of new music that I had never really heard. Ensembles that I hadn't really had a chance to hear before. Of course, we covered a lot more once I got into freshman theory than I had when I was in high school. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

The composition studio did not meet in her freshman and sophomore year. During her junior year, however, the group began regular meetings through the semester. During this time, the group would share music that individual students were creating or had recently finished. Sharing might include visually displaying a score, playing a MIDI file, or playing a recording. The focus of interaction was on sharing, though occasionally there might be feedback. For Gwen, one of the benefits of these sessions was the diversity in writing styles that she got to hear and explore. In this, Gwen was able to see similar approaches to writing music among her colleagues and absorbed what might be useful for

her in her composing. While not aware of this until her senior year, Gwen began to notice that she was part of the minority of composition majors as one of only two women in the studio. While she appreciated the ability to connect with her fellow composition majors during these studio meetings, it was because of this collaborative time that Gwen started feeling awkward about her status in the group as one of the few female composers (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012).

During her undergraduate experience Gwen prepared and participated in four recitals: two for clarinet and two for composition. Junior year recitals were a half hour in length and senior year recitals were a full hour. In order to be more efficient, Gwen decided that her junior year recital would be in two parts, the first half hour dedicated to her clarinet performance degree and the second dedicated to composition. The senior recitals were done separately (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

Gwen was able to compose approximately one piece a semester during her undergraduate experience. At this pace, Gwen felt prepared for her composition recitals. One part of the composition degree that caused stress for this budding composer was the process of finding performers to play her music for composition performances. This time became important to Gwen, as she realized she was more partial to the composition performances than the clarinet performances. Gwen had performance anxiety when performing on her clarinet. Alternatively, she did not have anxiety issues with composition performances. Since she found musicians to perform her music, Gwen was able to enjoy her composition performances rather than worry about her performance of the work (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

By the time Gwen was finishing her undergraduate degree, she was becoming burnt out on clarinet performance and she was frustrated with the performance anxiety that accompanied her clarinet performances. Her undergraduate clarinet professor, who Gwen described as “hard-core,” compounded this. Despite this, Gwen was accepted and planned to attend State University as a master’s student in clarinet performance with the dream of becoming a clarinet professor (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

However, the summer following her graduation, Gwen found herself teaching at a summer fine arts camp. As an assistant teacher, Gwen tutored students in both music theory and composition. This watershed moment was pivotal in Gwen’s identity formation as a teacher. She found joy in working with others on their music, more so than when practicing her instrument. In addition, Gwen had the opportunity to socialize with other dedicated composers. She even had the opportunity to collaborate on compositions and see and hear those compositions be performed. During some of the final rehearsals of her composition, Gwen thought, “Man, if I could do anything for the rest of my life, that’s what I want to do. I want to teach and compose” (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

While she initially was accepted and planned to attend State University as a master’s student in clarinet performance, this summer experience made Gwen realize that she wished to change her concentration. The summer before she officially enrolled, Gwen decided that she would be happier as a composition student rather than major in clarinet performance. At about the same time, Gwen decided to complete her baccalaureate degree in music education (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

Gwen's family remained fully supportive of her choices in further pursuing her musical career. Her younger brother even decided to follow in her footsteps and enrolled as a music education major at Gwen's undergraduate university. However, just prior to beginning her tenure at State University, Gwen's father passed away. Gwen reminisced how he was particularly supportive of her composition work. "He was always there for my composition concerts. I couldn't say the same for all my performance concerts, but he was always there for composition ones. He just wanted me to do whatever made me happy" (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

During her time at State University, Gwen migrated through three different composition professors. Having worked with various composition instructors at her undergraduate institution, this was not uncomfortable for her. It was not until Gwen began to work with her third composition instructor at State University, Dr. Nicholas, that Gwen really connected with a teacher. This connection ultimately yielded a stable relationship with a mentor. Gwen studied with Dr. Nicholas for the final four semesters of the eight semesters that she attended State University (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012). She felt particularly supported by Dr. Nicholas because he was non-judgmental yet encouraging (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013).

So... I feel like he's non-judgmental of my work but at the same time is able to encourage it and push it. I think there's a fine line there with pushing a person to grow their ideas and expand on their ideas without putting your own biases into the piece, and he's very good about not doing that. (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013)

The group met regularly as a studio, though some students were more active as studio class participants than others. Differing from most performance studios that gather with a single faculty member, this composition studio was a combined effort of the entire composition faculty. The leadership of the studio class rotated each semester between the various composition professors. Given this change of leadership, the direction of the class often was quite different from semester to semester. However, the general direction of studio class moved beyond reviewing music and instead focused on bigger topics that would relate to the world of music composition (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012).

Over time, Gwen was able to find and connect with various other composition students. She mentioned that the key to establishing relationships with other composer colleagues was to find someone with a similar temperament or sense of humor. “I think a lot of composers are either really serious about themselves or are not. I’m one who’s serious about my work, but not so serious about myself. When I find other people that are kind of that way then it works well.” However, as at her undergraduate university, Gwen was one of only a few female composition students in a male dominated studio with only male composition professors (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012).

Gwen developed an established friendship with one of the other female graduate students in the composition studio. This other female graduate student happens to be another participant in this study, Tessa Cedar. Tessa came to State University during Gwen’s second year and they quickly became friends. They are friends both at school and at home, as they share personal interests as well as musical interests. Gwen feels comfortable sharing her compositional progress with Tessa, despite knowing that their

compositional style can be different. This sharing is a large act of trust for Gwen. There is a vulnerability to sharing developing work with others, but Tessa and Gwen have developed a relationship where they feel safe to do so (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013).

So we became friends pretty quickly. And I feel like, *I feel like we're* pretty close. I mean we can confide in each other. We hang out with each other outside of school and try to bring each other the TV shows that we may or may not like. (Both laugh) But as far as feeling safe, yeah. For sure. Because I feel like, for me to show works in progress to people is a big deal. And we both show pieces to each other and try to get feedback on things like that. Which is a big deal, because again, I mean like, I show them to my professors but that's something you *have* to do as part of the process. But to show them to other people, I think is a big act of trust. One, that you know you can feel safe to show them these ideas and they're not fully fledged yet and still usually in a bad, rough mini-version. Because you have to trust that they'll have some kind of imagination to make it sound better than what it does on notation software like Finale. And then also, I guess you could be worried that someone might steal your thoughts because you're both creative people in the same medium, but I don't worry about that with her. (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013)

One of Gwen's continuing struggles as a composition student was the need to find willing performers for her premiering concerts. While she struggled with this at her

undergraduate university, the problem seemed even more difficult at State University. Despite the fact that there were more performers from which to choose, this continues to be a struggle. Even when she has found willing participants, she found the experience frustrating, as the performers rarely offer insight for improving the piece. The performer's interests at State University were about performing the work as is rather than seeing the project as "in development" (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012).

As a music education major, Gwen was required to take technique classes for learning how to play various band and orchestra instruments. While the purpose of these courses was to learn the instruments for teaching purposes, Gwen found applications in her compositional work as well. By learning how to play each instrument, she discovered the idiomatic qualities that define each of them. She was able to discover what was technically easy or difficult for various instruments, and she learned and understood the ranges of the instruments and where register shifts occurred (G. Watson, personal communication, April 15, 2012).

Besides the instrument technique classes, another music method course also had an influence in her compositional output. While enrolled in early childhood music methods, a course that explores the integral processes involved with teaching music to very young children (age birth-5), Gwen was asked to compose simple melodies in all modes and various meters. These melodies were sung for young children in an early childhood music class. Later, Gwen used her melody that she created in Phrygian and triple as the basis for an instrumental work. "I think it has helped a lot to help me think

about different modalities. It's kind of freeing in that way" (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013).

Outside of her work for school, Gwen continued to write songs on occasion. A woman at her church inspired her to do so. This woman also wrote songs and had them performed at the church. Gwen was attracted to the idea of creating songs for others to perform. In particular she was inspired by this woman's ability to continue creating music, even though it was not her main profession. "She's really doing what she loves even though it might not be a career, but she is writing music and putting it out there" (G. Watson, personal communication, April 15, 2012).

During her time at State University, Gwen had the opportunity to teach composition on a few occasions. During this time, she mentioned the need to be very individualized with her compositional teaching. For all her students, she felt compelled to be encouraging of their efforts, but also felt a responsibility to be more encouraging to her female students. During these lessons she noticed that the female students would be negative, despite making excellent progress from a previous lesson. Often, Gwen would have to give more specific instruction to her female students. Contrastingly, her male students would need less encouragement and would jump into compositional projects with less direction. While she noticed this difference, she empathized with her female students, as she recognized her own need for specific feedback in her compositional process (G. Watson, personal communication, April 15, 2012).

During her time at State University, Gwen was dealt another personal blow as her mother also passed away. This loss was extremely traumatic for her, as she now had lost both of her parents (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Her mother,

also supportive of her compositional career, often wished to come to State University to hear Gwen's newest compositions but had difficulty traveling long distances (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012). This loss further connected Tessa and Gwen, as both of their mothers were deceased (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013). Despite the grief she felt over the loss of both of her parents while at State University, Gwen felt compelled to continue working through her coursework, as they were so supportive of her choice to be a composer and a musician (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013).

For her composition thesis, Gwen created a band work inspired from religious scripture. Working through this music provided some escape from the grief she felt from the loss of her father and the recent loss of her mother. The text from which she drew her inspiration gave her comfort and strengthened her faith. Gwen created this work for wind ensemble in order to further her skills to arrange and create music for this setting (G. Watson, thesis document, 2014).

As for the future, Gwen sees a dual identity in both composition and education, with perhaps a heavier emphasis on teaching. Gwen believed this makes her unique from her compositional peers.

I'm kind of a weird anomaly with composers because I have other interests. Like in my undergrad it was I was always clarinet and composition. And now it's clarinet and education *and* composition. (G.

Watson, personal communication, April 15, 2012)

Early in her time at State University, she saw herself teaching a middle or high school band or orchestra with ambitions of arranging and composing for her groups (G. Watson,

personal communication, February 19, 2012). However as time progressed, Gwen was drawn towards elementary and secondary general music (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012). In either capacity, she sees her compositions being utilized with her students. Currently, she is uninterested in the publication of her works for outside musicians. Gwen is excited for the possibility of incorporating creative assignments for her future music students. She sees the possibility of teaching her students to unlock their musical creativity through cover songs, technology, music theory, keyboard, or other various scenarios that might be appropriate to the classroom in which she resides (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

Kim Johnson

Kim grew up in the Midwest with her mother, father, and two older brothers, all of whom were very involved in sports and had little experience with music. However, their home contained a piano, and as a young child Kim found herself drawn to the instrument. Her parents found a piano teacher, and Kim took piano lessons starting in 2nd grade. Despite her interest in music, Kim found committing to the piano difficult. She would avoid practicing and would hide her piano books prior to a lesson but pretend to have forgotten them (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

Kim's school district required that a student be enrolled in band, choir, or orchestra in 6th grade. At first, Kim considered joining the choir, as it seemed easier, but when a friend joined band so did Kim. Kim's initial instrument in the band was oboe. While she enjoyed the musical experience, she was less keen on her particular instrument. She recollected how she would avoid practicing the oboe and would sight read in her lessons (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

It was during middle school that Kim was given an opportunity to play with a music notation program. Later when shopping with her parents, she spotted a notation program that could be put on her home computer. She remembered how much she enjoyed playing with the program at school. She said, “I want *that*.” At first, Kim simply dabbled with the program. But before long, she began to input and arrange the music of others using the notation program. As she grew older, she continued to arrange music for brass and woodwind ensembles (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013).

By the end of middle school, Kim wanted to join the marching band but oboe did not have a place in this ensemble. Independently, Kim began learning how to play the trumpet. When playing the trumpet, she felt a connection to this instrument that she did not remember having with either piano or oboe. “I couldn’t stop playing. I practiced all the time.” While it took some time to convince her band teacher that she should play trumpet in concert band and not just marching band, he later relented and agreed that this was the best decision as Kim played trumpet very well. She surpassed her peers who had been playing the instrument for three years (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

In addition to concert band and marching band, Kim also participated in jazz band during her senior year. This was a tense situation, as she often felt uncomfortable improvising. Rather than truly improvising in the moment, Kim often would compose her improvisations ahead of time. Later on at her undergraduate institution Kim once again participated in jazz band but immersed herself in the musical repertoire. She was able to truly improvise but still found the experience unnerving (K. Johnson, personal communication, June 10, 2013).

RG: Ok. So what was it like to improv?

KJ: Terrifying. Absolutely - that was our final exam in high school and it was terrifying. I wrote it out and memorized it and got away with it. (K. Johnson, personal communication, June 10, 2013)

During Kim's junior and senior year of high school she had the opportunity to play in two honor bands and one all-state band festival. These experiences were especially salient. She enjoyed the opportunity to play trumpet all day, but she also realized that she genuinely loved the aesthetic experience of music beyond playing an instrument. The conductor for the honor band during her junior year had a special impact. Dr. Getz conducted a piece for the honor band that he composed. While the ensemble worked through the piece, Dr. Getz explained part of his compositional process. This information invested Kim in the music she played for the honor band with Dr. Getz (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

Kim first encountered music theory with piano lessons but was frustrated by the experience. However, by her senior year of high school, Kim knew that she would be majoring in music in college and knew that music theory would be an integral part of her education. Seeing this as an important preparatory step, Kim followed the advice of her band teacher and enrolled in music theory. While there was some headway made, music theory was still a frustrating experience and often left her confused (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013). Notwithstanding her feelings of confusion, the music theory class did provide Kim with an opportunity to have her first composition performed. Her brass quartet was performed for the music theory class with live players

without rehearsal. Despite less than optimal performance circumstances, the class reacted positively to the performance (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013).

Knowing that she wanted to major in music but unsure about the particulars of music school, Kim auditioned for two universities close to home. She recollected how underdressed she was for her auditions, noting that she dressed in jeans and a sweatshirt.

The day of my audition before Bachelors University I woke up and told my mom “I don’t want to go. I’m tired.” That’s how much I cared about this! (RG laughs) But I went in jeans and a sweatshirt, and I played for them and they were blown away - they were like “your dress could have been better, but...we’d really like you to come here.” (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

She was accepted and received scholarships at both schools, but she received full tuition at the institution that she ultimately attended (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013).

Upon entering her undergraduate university, Kim decided to major in music education. She always believed that she would be a teacher, and early on this manifested as a desire to teach high school band. She would have liked to double major in trumpet performance, but her undergraduate university did not allow students to double major. Because of this, Kim decided to continue majoring in music education but put a great deal of effort into her trumpet practice (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013).

Like Gwen, Kim took instrument techniques as part of her music education coursework. While the intention of these courses was to prepare pre-service music

teachers with the basics of each instrument of the orchestra, Kim found this study exceptionally useful as a composer. Like Gwen, Kim found these courses useful for learning the idiomatic qualities of each instrument. Kim went one step further and exclaimed a belief that all composition majors should take these same courses as part of their coursework (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013 & June 10, 2013).

Kim's interest in trumpet performance only grew as she began to think of a different career for herself. Between her sophomore and junior year, Kim began imagining herself as a trumpet professor at a university while also playing in an orchestra. This was her first image of herself as a college teacher. But also during this time, Kim continued to be quite interested in music theory, especially as it related to writing her own music. She vividly remembered exiting music theory class and running to a piano to play and experiment with the chords and ideas that had just been explained in theory class. Because of this experimentation, Kim began an independent composition project for a string quartet. She sought out compositional insight from her college music theory teacher, but he was uncomfortable critiquing musical creativity when he himself had little experience in this area. This string quartet ultimately became part of her application to a summer festival program that accepted her as a student for trumpet and composition (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013).

Kim traveled to the East Coast and attended this summer music festival where she received her first formal composition lessons. In addition to lessons, Kim had the opportunity to have her works performed. This was especially exciting, as she never before had heard her works performed for an audience. Her teacher was encouraging and

gave Kim the confidence necessary for a budding composer. This is also the first time that Kim had confidence to call her work “a composition.” Kim attended this summer festival three times during her undergraduate years (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013).

Because of her valuable experience at the summer festival, Kim wanted to continue learning about composition. During her junior and senior years, Kim sought out composition lessons outside of her institution, since they were not available through the school. Kim regularly traveled 45 minutes to receive composition lessons at another university. Notwithstanding these positive experiences with composition, Kim saw her musical identity as a trumpet player who happened to compose (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013).

Prior to her senior trumpet performance recital, Kim incurred a lip injury. Her regret was apparent as she discussed how she played through the injury due to her upcoming recital. Despite the injury, she decided to move forward and play her recital as planned. “That’s when the real injury I think happened. I think I could have avoided it if I stopped” (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013).

As the capstone experience for her music education undergraduate degree, Kim student taught in both a secondary band classroom and an elementary general music classroom. She felt more comfortable entering the secondary school than the elementary. In fact, she entered her elementary placement quite fearful. However, through the process of student teaching in elementary music, she felt she grew the most as a teacher. Prior to this time, she felt she would never be able to teach young children, but this experience proved her capacity to do so (K. Johnson, personal communication, June 10, 2013).

After completing her student teaching experience and graduating from her undergraduate institution, Kim enrolled in a performance masters degree in trumpet. Unfortunately this time was cut short, as her muscle injury continued to plague her. Kim left this institution after one semester and returned home to bide her time until she would be able to play again. However, the injury required serious attention. In order to resolve this issue she would need surgery. After coming to terms with her injury, Kim was crushed by her grim future as a trumpet performer. At first, she thought she would completely remove herself from a musical career. But after waiting for the surgery and then the three months of recovery, she found a renewed interest in music through composing and teaching music (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013).

Kim began substitute teaching in music. She was able to obtain several long-term substitute jobs in music classrooms. Once she was a known entity as a music substitute, she was requested regularly. “I didn’t have a problem finding jobs” (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013). Despite her success at finding employment, she knew that she wanted more. She was not completely happy teaching in these situations. She liked and felt successful teaching music, but Kim felt called to teach at the college level (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013).

During this transitional time her high school band teacher suggested that she revisit composing. Reluctantly, Kim began writing music again, this time working on a piece for a full band. Kim continued to correspond with her high school band teacher and decided the work would be dedicated to him. Feeling compelled to receive feedback on the work before submitting it to her teacher, Kim asked Dr. Getz, her former honor band director, to look over the work. Knowing that Dr. Getz was also a well-known and

published composer for band, Kim decided to ask for his input. However, Kim did not expect to hear back from him, given his notoriety. Kim was shocked that he was not only willing to look at her work but asked if she would like to attend his university as a master's student in composition. While initially surprised, Kim spent the car ride home considering his offer.

He's the nicest person I've ever met in my life. Oh my goodness. And then when I got there I wasn't expecting anything other than telling me how to make this better. And he's like "do you want to come to school here for your masters?" Like I didn't ask for this! I just wanted the guy to tell me how to make this better. (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

But Kim intended this to be a temporary sidestep. After completing her master's in composition, Kim intended to complete a doctorate in trumpet performance (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013).

Prior to committing to a master's in composition with Dr. Getz, Kim decided to develop her compositional portfolio. To do so, Kim sought out instruction to assist her with this process (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013). With her new composition teacher, Thomas, Kim wrote her first large band piece and orchestra piece. His goal was to work on settings that she had yet to explore compositionally. Like her teacher from the summer music festivals, he was an encouraging mentor. Thomas's ideas were broad rather than specific and allowed for Kim to go in the direction that creatively appealed. Kim recollected that this time is when she made the largest growth as a

composer. He constantly encouraged her to compose but also encouraged her to be a better composer (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

Once Kim began her master's coursework in composition, she had a comfortable relationship with her composition instructor Dr. Getz. She regarded him as an extremely encouraging composition mentor. No matter what kind of work she produced, he would find something positive to say (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

Studio class at her master's institution was somewhat unsatisfactory for Kim. Run by a fellow master's student, the focus was on listening to music written by various members of the composition studio. Kim was particularly uncomfortable with studio being run by a graduate student rather than a composition professor. Kim remarked that it yielded a studio that failed to be cohesive as a group. "It felt like we were all individuals doing our own thing" (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013).

Kim's thesis for her master's in composition was written for string orchestra. Common to her typical compositional process, she started working on her thesis early in her degree. So early, in fact, that this was the first piece that Kim completed while at her master's university. Also typical for her writing, Kim based her music on scripture. While there was text used in this instrumental ensemble, the scripture was the inspiration for the music she wrote (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013).

After her masters, Kim decided to pursue a doctorate in composition. She looked at both State University and one other school at both of which the suggestions of Dr. Getz. Both institutions offered substantial financial packages but at State University she could focus primarily on composition rather than both composition and music theory. Once she accepted the offer from State University (SU), she decided to study with Dr.

Griffin, a composition professor at State University, as she had a good interaction with him during her visit there. Kim studied with Dr. Griffin for four semesters until he went on sabbatical during her fifth semester. At this point she began working with Dr. Nicholas (K. Johnson, personal communication, June 10, 2013).

Beyond her composition instructors, Kim had one confidant to whom she turned for compositional feedback while she worked on her degree at State University. A peer from her master's university, Kim often sent works electronically to this gentleman. Their relationship was reciprocal, as he sent compositions to Kim as well. That being said, they were editing partners and did not have much of a relationship beyond input on each other's composition. For Kim, the benefit of working with this gentleman was that he had a particularly good ear. He could hear when individual melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic ideas worked and when they did not. Kim remarked that on occasion she would send her music to other peers, but only if she was specifically interested in receiving positive feedback (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013).

It was not until Kim was well into her doctoral coursework in composition that she started thinking of herself as a composer. When I initially talked to Kim in our first interview, I asked her if she called herself a composer. She responded, "That...just started happening" (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013). Despite being in her second degree in composition and her lifelong production in musical creativity with various composition instructors, Kim had only recently begun to call herself a composer. "I'm learning to love it" (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013). Despite all of her work in composition, Kim still considered herself a reluctant composer. If she had not injured herself, she was sure that she would be

pursuing a trumpet performance career instead of composition (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

In addition to completing her doctoral composition coursework, during her tenure at State University Kim decided to also work on completing a masters in theory. Since her undergraduate degree, Kim had an interest in theory. While she was initially developing her identity as a music teacher, she found herself interested in the idea of teaching music theory. Kim credited her undergraduate music theory instructor for her continued interest in this topic (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013).

While at State University, Kim had teaching opportunities both with music theory and composition. She taught two semesters of theory for non-majors on her own. Kim structured the course so that the first semester was all theory instruction and the second semester was mostly individual composition lessons. Despite none of the students being music majors, Kim treated them as musicians. She fully engaged them in music theory knowledge and sought out ways for them to see connections to musical content. By the end of the first semester, Kim began to ease the students into thinking about music theory as a creator. In the second semester, Kim infused her teaching with the understanding that each student would write a song by the end of the semester. Despite a degree of fear from some of her students, they remained committed because of Kim's belief in their ability to complete their musical composition. All of her students shared their final creation with the class by playing their MIDI tracks (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013).

In addition to this opportunity, Kim was asked to teach private composition lessons online to a seventh grade boy. This young man was preparing to enter a summer camp as a composition student.

KJ: Just this year I had a little seventh grader take like four online lessons with me to get ready to go to a summer camp.

RG: How was that?

KJ: It was his first time composing (KJ has an obvious smile on her face) It was fun! It was just a little kid, like it was so cute! And it was his first composition so really I just wanted to keep it going.

RG: What was he composing?

KJ: Well, he had like short, ten different non-finished things. And so at first we sat down and said, “We gotta finish one of these! Which one?” So we picked a brass quintet because he’s a trumpet player. We had to add a couple instruments. His first thing he had like really complex instruments and drums and “How about brass quintet, because this works together really well.” So we just worked on that. (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

Despite enjoying this experience, Kim wished she could have had lessons in person rather than communicating via the Internet (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013).

Like Gwen, Kim remarked on the struggles of finding performers to play her musical compositions. “It’s almost discouraging enough to stop me from just writing” (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013). Kim often wrote music with particular

instrumentation knowing that she had certain players she could count on to perform her work. When she wrote music for unknown performers, she relied heavily on her friends to connect her with potential performers (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

Like she did with her thesis, she considered her dissertation for quite some time (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013). In this work composed for wind ensemble, Kim juxtaposed two differing melodies and used them as a narrative metaphor. While not strictly programmatic, her music described a person's evolution from dark to light as expressed by contrasting melodies. The conclusion of the work resolves with the light expressed as a quiet whisper (Johnson, 2014).

Kim hoped that in the future her career would include teaching at a university as a composition and theory teacher. In an ideal situation, she also would have the opportunity to teach brass lessons either as individual lessons or technique classes. Kim also mentioned that the ideal job would include the possibility of conducting a small band (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

Tessa Cedar

Tessa's family lived on the West Coast. Prior to their marriage, each parent had previous relationships that complicated the family's dynamics. Tessa's mother had a son from a previous marriage. When Tessa's parents finally met, it was through a church that remained important most of their married life. Besides her mother, father, and a half brother, Tessa also has an older sister. When Tessa was five years old, her half brother was removed from her house by social services due to inappropriate behavior instigated by her brother. The offending actions caused Tessa to have a strong distrust of her brother

and men in general. It also caused large stress in the relationship Tessa had with her sister.

She's twenty-one months older than I am. And she - because of what my brother did - he did it to both of us - it took about a year for them to catch him, for my parents to catch what he was doing. She was seven and I was five. Do I remember everything? Yes. I remember everything. And because, I'm guessing - I mean, I'm not a psychologist - but because of what he did to both of us we grew up hating each other. *Hating* each other. Like, sibling rivalry doesn't come close and we actually had to go to counseling for it and it still didn't get fixed. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

Both of her parents were untrained musicians who felt comfortable singing for and with their children. Their house was constantly full of music and Tessa's parents often would take their children to concerts and musical theatre productions. Tessa's father was a teacher and her mother stayed at home (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). At six years old Tessa began piano lessons, as was the custom in their household. Tessa's parents had all their children take piano lessons, requiring that they try it for a while. Tessa caught on quickly but was less enthralled with practicing. Despite this initial immersion, Tessa was the only one of the three children that stuck with music lessons beyond middle school (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012).

At age nine, Tessa heard a flute played in church and was drawn to the sound. Her mother secured an instructor. However, in retrospect Tessa felt that this teacher was not the best technician for flute. This instructor was primarily a clarinet and saxophone

player, and Tessa had a frustrating time creating the proper embouchure. Despite issues with technique and knowing that she was not the best player, she loved playing her flute. While she had no plans to be a flute performer, Tessa credits the flute as an important step for her as a composer.

The flute actually became very important in my compositional process because composing for me started with hearing a melodic line that I thought was cool. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

By learning this instrument, her ears opened to hearing melodic lines in music (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012).

Tessa became curious enough to figure out how to play those melodies on her flute. She would hear melodies from Disney musicals or other movies and attempt to notate the main melodic content. Rather than bringing her flute to the television, as a young child she would listen to the music downstairs on the TV and then run upstairs and try to play what she heard. Once she felt confident that what she played was correct, she attempted to notate the material. This dictation used a blend of traditional and invented notation (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012).

When she was ten, Tessa's mother was diagnosed with cancer (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013). In order to be closer to extended family, Tessa's mother and father moved their children from the West Coast to the Midwest when she was twelve years old (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). During this time her mother underwent a crisis of faith that Tessa witnessed and that affected Tessa's own view on faith. Her mother lived with the disease for five years but ultimately succumbed

to the cancer when Tessa was fifteen years old (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

While in middle school and high school, Tessa participated in band. She had a particularly positive relationship with her high school band teacher. Tessa credits this teacher with helping her become a musician. Her school's bands had a high quality of musical output and were well respected throughout the area. "You wanted to play well for him. There was absolutely that need to please him, to give him what he wants out of the ensemble, and we weren't satisfied with ourselves until we had gotten his opinion." Tessa remained in contact with her high school band director following high school and regularly sent him her compositions for his feedback (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012).

As a sophomore in high school, Tessa was afforded the opportunity to take a music theory class. The course was geared for students who were planning to study music in college. Tessa was the only sophomore in a class of seniors. Although she had learned some music theory while studying the piano, this course was a watershed moment for Tessa, because the theory became relevant. She started to see how the theoretical choices of a composer could have an effect on the audience. As part of the course, the students were required to compose simple melodic ideas. This connection between studying theory and creating music with theory was illuminating. Tessa began to look at all the music in her life in a new way. "When I discovered that I was incredibly excited about that and would literally run down the hall to this class" (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). During this theory class, Tessa wrote a simple melody over a rudimentary chord progression. Over time, Tessa would continue to revisit this

piece and, when her mother died, this melody became an anthem to her mother. She worked on it during her undergraduate education with her composition professor, Dr. Willis, and again during her master's degree. She finished and orchestrated the piece into a string ensemble composition in her final year of her masters program, almost ten years after she originally composed the melody (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013).

Shortly after the time that Tessa's mother died, Tessa's sister began acting out. After a fight with her father, Tessa's sister was able to drain the family's bank accounts and leave town. This had long-term effects for the family and for Tessa. Tessa and her father, now living alone, lost their house. Her father became depressed. At sixteen years of age, Tessa was put in the position of being the "adult" in the house.

TC: And you can imagine how he went through two divorces in his life, ya know? He's *never* been financially stable. Matter of fact, right now is the most financially stable he's been, which I think is why I think he's starting to recover. But he collapsed on the garage floor and when I was eighteen I had to figure out what we were gonna do, because I had to put him to bed and figure out where we were gonna live. Which we actually, he had..

RG: Did that contribute to your thought to not go to college right away?

TC: That *was* why I didn't go to college right away. We couldn't afford it. I couldn't imagine it? I was actually - before - when I was a senior in high school he waited until after spring break of my senior year to tell me we were gonna lose the house. Because he didn't want to ruin my senior year of high school. That's the kind of person my father is. And so we got

kicked out of the house that summer. On my birthday actually. I had already been accepted to and then pulled out of State University because I just wasn't ready to go to college yet. So I took a year off because I *had* to. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

She took over responsibility for the family's finances and took care of her father. Even after she graduated from high school, Tessa stayed at home for two years to ensure that her father was financially secure (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

After taking the music theory course as a sophomore, Tessa looked for more opportunities to continue her music theory education. During her senior year, she dual enrolled in her high school and a beginning course in music theory at what would be her undergraduate university. As a high school senior, Tessa took the freshman level of music theory with a professor whom she enjoyed but found to be rather eccentric. Tessa continued to enjoy writing music through this experience, though she had not yet committed herself to majoring in composition (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012).

Because of various personal and financial crises, Tessa took two years off between high school and beginning her undergraduate education. Despite her disconnection from school music, Tessa felt a compulsion to continue her music composition, which became almost a form of music therapy. She commented that, at this point in her life, she had not truly made clear the difference between composing and arranging music (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012).

While Tessa had originally considered enrolling at State University for her undergraduate education, she eventually settled on the university in her hometown. When

she enrolled, she immediately took the body of compositional work to the lone composition faculty member Dr. Willis. Thinking back on the work that she had created at the time, Tessa remarked that she would now be embarrassed to show the work she had done before college. The large majority of her works were arrangements for flute, piano, or voice. These were the mediums to which she had access as a performer. Beyond those arrangements was one composition for band. This band piece was the work that got her accepted into Dr. Willis's studio and started her time as a music composition major (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012).

She credits Dr. Willis with helping her become a composer. Whatever task Dr. Willis asked of her, she happily completed. She valued her lessons with Dr. Willis, because he individualized lessons for each student. According to Tessa, he would start each student in his or her compositional comfort zone and then slowly ask him or her to elaborate his or her musical creative vocabulary. Dr. Willis required students to journal to track their progress. Dr. Willis's influences and musical compositions were impactful to Tessa, as they shared many favorites in music, both with compositional influences and musical repertoire. By the end of her undergraduate degree Tessa felt confident in her identity as a composer (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012).

Since Dr. Willis was the only composition teacher at Tessa's undergraduate institution, he also ran the composition studio. He had many contacts in the professional composition world. He also believed that composition education involved more than just learning to create music. Dr. Willis required his students to be articulate about their music. "Fifteen percent of it was teaching how to write music. Eighty-five percent was teaching how to be a professional composer in the world" (T. Cedar, personal

communication, May 14, 2012). Dr. Willis also sponsored several new music ensemble opportunities for his students, allowing them to not only create new music but to experience new music written by others (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012).

While her undergraduate cohort was small, it was an active composition studio with an equitable distribution of both male and female members. Tessa maintained close relationships with several colleagues in the studio. In particular, Tessa calls three of these relationships lifelong friendships. These three friends all happened to be female. Tessa is still in contact with several of these former studio members and keeps track of their musical or compositional activity. To continue fostering these friendships and connections, Dr. Willis hosts a yearly reunion party during the summer at his house (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

Like Gwen and Kim, Tessa also remarked about the difficulty in obtaining performers for composition premieres. Tessa had some of the strongest language on this stating, “All the girls in my undergrad studio adopted this idea of almost a prostitution of your music in that, if you’re trying to get girls to play your music, hang out, you go out for coffee or you buy them a wrap or whatever, somewhere, buy them a salad. But if you were getting guys to play your music you were flirting with them to do it. That’s how you do it. That’s what I did. That’s what I still do” (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012).

Outside of composition, Tessa also was involved in a writing center at her undergrad institution. As a teacher for the writing center, Tessa was required to be trained in various ways of writing and teaching writing. Tessa then assisted undergraduate

students who were learning to be better writers by editing their work. She became fascinated with the connections between writing music and creative writing in language. This was the beginning of her interest in teaching and teaching in creative arts (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012).

Deciding upon a graduate school to study music composition became a cross between personal choices and financial decisions. The other school where she was accepted was significantly more expensive but also had a much smaller student body, which was less appealing to her. Tessa was not expecting to be accepted at State University, since she turned in her application a month after the deadline. “When I was accepted, I figured what the hell I’ll just go. I kind of did it on a whim. I never even met with the faculty before I got there” (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 10, 2013)

While at State University for her masters in music composition, Tessa worked with two different composition professors. For the first three semesters, she worked with Dr. Walken (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). During her fourth semester, Dr. Walken was on sabbatical, and Tessa did not take lessons (T. Cedar, personal communication, March 19, 2013). While working with Dr. Walken, she had learned to become independent in her compositional thought and choice; she had developed clarity in what she would like to write and what she did not want to write (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). She learned through Dr. Walken that for every piece you write you must know why you wrote it. Every piece must have a purpose (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013). During her fifth semester she worked with Dr. Nicholas (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013).

In her studio, Tessa has only a few students with whom she connects. As previously mentioned, Tessa is quite close with Gwen, and both women have a connection with Kim (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). Gwen and Tessa are friends but also seek each other's input on compositions. They have a mutual trust of each other's thoughts and opinions (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013). Beyond this, there are few others with whom she feels comfortable. Studio class was run by combining all of the composition studios and rotating composition professors as the leader every semester, but, despite this varied opportunity, Tessa rarely enjoyed participating in the class. Studio class discussions typically revolved around details related to upcoming composition concerts and recordings, she felt that it did not often result in fruitful outcomes (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012).

During the fall semester of her second year, Tessa taught a course on music technology. The focus of the course involved learning various music technologies by engaging in creative activities. "My only major goal was to broaden their understanding of what they considered music." There were three major creative assignments. The first was to produce an electro-acoustic piece with live audio; the second was to compose a pop song using MIDI; and the third was to produce a score for a scary movie trailer. The capstone project was to present their music to a selection of graduate students in class. Tessa described her teaching style this class:

I keep that very informal way of teaching even into a classroom setting with the exception that I kind of look at the body of students as being that one on one mentor relationship and so it's almost like dealing with one person with multiple personality disorder. And I do a lot of individual

teaching in that aspect, too. Every time they completed a project, we would have a workday where they would come in and have five-minute conferences with me about how they were doing. So I translate as much as possible that individual teaching aspect into a classroom setting, because A, that's what I'm most comfortable with, and B, I feel that's what's most productive in a creative art. (T. Cedar, personal communication, March 19, 2013)

Following this experience, she taught private composition lessons to three female students (T. Cedar, personal communication, March 19, 2013). These three women had Tessa as an instructor the previous semester during the music technology course. All three asked if they could take private composition lessons and were told to meet with the official composition studio graduate assistant who taught composition lessons for non-majors. These students met with the official GA and found the experience to be unsatisfying. They followed up and finally a resolution was achieved in which Tessa could be their instructor as long as the focus was on electronic music (T. Cedar, personal communication, March 19, 2013). Tessa described her methods to help inspire these new composers to create music:

I think it always depends on each situation, but if the goal is that I want them to create something original and they are asking me for right and wrong answers, that I put them in situations that will inspire creative thought. And those situations can get pretty crazy. For example, one time when [student 1] was having a hard time finding inspiration for one of her pieces. We stood up, went over to those windows and it was when it was

really torn up and there was all kinds of crap going on down [construction in the music building courtyard]. I had her put together a little story about if those things down there were alive. And we came up with like the little tiny posts were the little soldiers of a war, and the big thing back behind was a general. I had music playing in the background so that it could set a mood for her so she wouldn't have to start with a completely blank slate. But she came up with a story that was completely different than I would have come up with and if I had dictated that to her she wouldn't have been thinking for herself. And from there you can use that as a stepping-stone. And like with [student 2] today, musically, tell me what this story sounds like. (T. Cedar, personal communication, March 19, 2013)

Tessa had such an outstanding experience teaching her fall technology class and these three women in private composition lessons that she felt confident and excited with her new identity as a teacher (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013).

Tessa required all of her students to premiere one piece in a public performance. As time progressed, Tessa decided to host a concert for the purpose of presenting her students' works and other electronic compositions. She obtained a performance venue in an art museum. In order to connect the musical compositions to this unique space, Tessa required her students to include an extra-musical element in their premiered work (T. Cedar, personal communication, March 19, 2013). For one student, this element meant a live dancer, moving in the space with her electronic composition. For another this element was live painting done by the audience. The third student created a video that accompanied her music. In each work, Tessa stressed the importance of dependence, that

the extra-musical element should not be able to stand on its own. The extra-musical element should coexist with the music and be truly meaningful only when paired with the music (T. Cedar, *Thick Description* 2013). The pride Tessa had for the resulting work that her students were producing was clearly evident. The process of organizing this concert was especially exciting for her, as she was able to organize it with complete autonomy. She did not need to seek approval from the composition faculty (T. Cedar, personal communication, March 19, 2013). As part of the curriculum for her composition lessons, Tessa involved her students in the planning and production of the composition concert. “Producing that concert really, I don’t want to say changed my life because that sounds so melodramatic, it’s really, that whole process has been so enlightening about concert production” (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013).

Tessa and Gwen had the opportunity to teach a music composition with technology class for young children through a community music school. Tessa was originally asked to teach the class by herself, but Tessa sought out Gwen’s help, as Gwen had more experience working with children. Gwen’s role tended to focus on the process of teaching young children, while Tessa focused on the technology setup of the room in which the two women worked each week. The two women collaboratively created the lesson plans in the evenings (T. Cedar, personal communication, March 19, 2013).

During her final year at State University, Tessa switched composition instructors and began working under the tutelage of Dr. Nicholas. While Tessa believed she would have a positive experience with Dr. Nicholas, the reality was even more successful and encouraging than she originally conceived. Tessa held in high regard the way that Dr. Nicholas navigated the pedagogy of teaching composition but also his interpersonal

connections with students. Prior to the beginning of each lesson, Dr. Nicholas always asked and seemed genuinely interested in her life outside of her composing. Tessa considered her trust in Dr. Nicholas so great that she felt comfortable enough to cry in front of him, something that she has never done with any teacher prior to or since her time with Dr. Nicholas. Concerning composition instruction, Dr. Nicholas never directly dictated changes or new ideas to integrate into student creative work. Rather he focused the lesson discussions so as to elicit music expression in the composition that was a true reflection of the student's intention.

Initially, Tessa was considering a large-scale work for her composition thesis. Tessa's original vision included ten to twelve movements and would have been created for voices, electronics, and dance (T. Cedar, personal communication, March 19, 2013). After some brief discussions with Dr. Nicholas, she rethought this and decided to create a piece of music that was more reasonable to complete. Tessa created a three-movement choral work with electronics and strings. The text was drawn from scripture (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013). The work was inspired from her own life and the trauma of losing her mother and recovering. In order to prepare for this work, Tessa took voice lessons, a course on choral repertoire, and participated in an auditioned choir at State University. This group was conducted by the director of choral studies and performed her thesis (Cedar, 2014).

After finishing her master's degree, Tessa intended to take a break and then return to compositional academia to finish her doctorate in music composition. At the beginning of my discussions with Tessa, she seemed only mildly interested in teaching composition, but by the end of our conversations and after the experiences she had teaching private

composition lessons to her three female students, her attitudes towards teaching were quite different. After our time together, Tessa was eager to explore composition and the pedagogy that would elicit a strong mentorship in composition teaching. After doing so, she hoped to gain a position as a composition professor to teach composition and to continue to create her own music (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012).

Summary

Tessa Cedar, Kim Johnson, and Gwen Watson all came to music and composition in slightly different ways. Despite their differences, the end result was an interest and ultimately a pursuit of the art of music composition that became central to or a part of a vocational quest. Around the time of this study, their lives have been focused on this art and the means to establish a reputation as a composer and other activities that would allow these women to launch careers as composers. The next two chapters will look at the commonalities between these women in their journey to identify as a composer. This past chapter illuminated the presence of trauma for all three women, either through parental loss or injury. As these traumas occurred at different points in their journey and transpired in various ways, they do not directly connect to a clear theme in a developing identity. However, it is possible that these traumas may have played a role in the developing identity of these women alongside the themes that will be outlined in the upcoming chapters.

CHAPTER 5: THE FOUNDATIONAL MUSICIAN-COMPOSER IDENTITY

In this chapter I will analyze the foundational components that allowed for a burgeoning musician-composer identity for all three participants in this study. Inspired by the terminology from Snow on her research on the conductor/teacher in the choral rehearsal (Snow, 1998), this foundational identity connects the words musician-composer. While Snow used these words to show a connection between the two in the choral rehearsal, I also will use it to show order of importance. The order of words in this identity is important, as the experiences of the participants first began with an identity as musician. Later, through a variety of practices, a composer identity began to emerge from the participants but was not completely established. Because of the foundational experiences that we will soon explore, all three women self-identified as musicians first but were only beginning to explore music composition. While none were quite ready to call themselves composers at this stage, all three made progress towards this compositional identity that would later be more prominent. The four areas that presented in the musician-composer identity for these women were family support, mentor support, diverse experiences, and perseverance/independence.

Family Support

Family support of a person's hobby, passion, or career can come in many varieties. This section will analyze these variations in familial support systems. While all three women experienced family support of their musician-composer identity, each experienced a combination of different kinds of support. The support of their families towards a foundational musician-composer identity came through musical, financial,

emotional, or physical means. For most of these women it was a combination of these that allowed their foundational identity to establish.

Musical emersion

Like learning a new language, learning music can be supported with a familial environment rich with musical sounds. Some of these women experienced musical influence from their families. This musical influence exerted itself in many ways. For both Gwen and Tessa, this influence emerged in the opportunity to listen to a variety of music recordings and live performances. Gwen recalled all the kinds of music that she heard as a young child:

They liked a lot of different things. My dad was into everything possible from classic rock through pretty much the 80s. He's the one that really got me listening to and enjoying classical music, everything from piano sonatas, to symphonies, to operas. We would sometimes just sit and listen to classical music together. My mom likes a lot of things like the Beach Boys and 70s bands and 60s bands. So I heard a lot of that. My grandfather listened to a lot of records. He'd listen to all kinds of things from around the turn of the century and steamboat sounds. My older sister listened to more modern music from pretty much every genre. On my other side of my family, they still play instruments on occasion but it's not like they get together and jam or anything. They just play something here or there. My grandpa used to sing a lot. That was one of my favorite memories of him, my grandpa on my mom's side. He would just sing all the time, which was really cool. Going back to my dad's side of the

family, I know that my grandmother played violin and piano. So she had a lot of musical skills, but she died when I was pretty young so I don't really remember much (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

Tessa recalled attending live music concerts:

Both my parents exposed us to a lot of different types of music very early on. I saw "Phantom [of the Opera]" with Michael (Crawford) and Sarah (Brightman) when I was five. It scared the hell out of me (laughs) (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012).

Gwen's parents attempted to make music accessible for her, despite their financial situation. Beyond listening to music, they tried to share various music-making experiences to continue musical exploration:

That said, they did what they could to give me any inherited musical items the family had, despite the fact that I was the third kid (with my younger brother to follow) in band in the family. I think they knew early on that I had a passion for music. So, they gave me my older sister's old, 1-note-at-a-time keyboard, which I used to write some of my earliest songs and compositions. I also remember a nursery rhyme book that they bought me. That book stands out because it had all of the songs in musical notation but it also had a (pentatonic) keyboard on it that allowed the reader to play along. That helped me learn a LOT about notation aurally. They gave me other inherited items, such as my dad's old flutophone, music boxes, my grandma's old piano sheet music, my dad's old trumpet sheet music, and

any instruments the family retired. For example, I was given my grandfather's trumpet when he wasn't able to play it any more. I remember pouring over the trumpet sheet music in particular after I figured out (around sophomore year) instrument transpositions and realized I could play all of it on my clarinet. I tried to teach myself trumpet in high school but the endeavor was hopeless. It didn't take until I finally had brass methods several years later. But I think experimenting with all of these instruments was very helpful. (G. Watson, personal communication, September 10, 2014)

Neither Tessa nor Gwen was the sole music maker in the family and indeed some musical influences presented because other family members were playing instruments.

I really wanted to do band because my older sister did band and I really wanted to follow in her footsteps and play the flute (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

Tessa described how her mother, father, brother, and sister all attempted to explore a musical instrument, but their involvement did not last very long. Beyond the exploration of musical instruments, her parents were particularly comfortable singing (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). Gwen shared a similar experience with her own family.

My sister was just in band for a little while, my older sister. My dad played trumpet when he was younger. So did his dad before him. So, they were supportive and really encouraging, even though they don't do anything with it now. My mom doesn't do anything musical. She says the

only instrument she can play is the radio (laugh). But it was a thing in my house to have some kind of music going on. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

Gwen shared that her younger brother was also a music major, majoring in music education as an undergraduate student. As she put it, he was “following in her footsteps” (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

Of the three women, Kim described the least amount of musical influence from her family.

My brother tried to play the saxophone in 6th grade and it didn’t go well. So he quit! But yeah, my dad can’t even sing on pitch, like it’s just bad. I don’t know where I got it! But my family is not musical. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

The major influence and involvement in Kim’s family was sports. But despite some initial concern from her family about giving up active sport participation in favor of music (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013), Kim never slowed down from pursuing a musical career through many music camps and three different music degrees.

Financial support

Financial support from the family appeared to be an important part of these participants’ success as musicians. With the financial support of their family, all three were able to perform on various instruments, receive private instruction on these instruments, attend musical camps and performance groups, and/or utilize assorted music software.

All the women played band instruments that required the purchase or rental of an instrument. Both Gwen and Tessa's family bought a lower quality instrument when initially starting out on music instruction (G. Watson, personal communication, September 10, 2014 & T. Cedar, personal communication, September 11, 2014). As they grew older and showed that music was to be a constant in their lives, a more substantial purchase was made. These purchases were investments for which the women themselves saved and made independently. They never forgot how the family invested in their education despite the financial difficulties. Tessa recalled a particular moment involving her family and their financial investment in her musical future.

My father has been the greatest financial contributor as my mother had passed by the time I truly began compositional pursuit, but I do want to note that, as the poor woman was dying, she hauled herself out of bed one day to go to a [music store] and buy me a piccolo because she knew I wanted one. She wanted to see me have it before she died. And I was ecstatic - I came home from school one day and it was sitting on my pillow in my bedroom. The woman was a marvel. (T. Cedar, personal communication, September 11, 2014)

Tessa and Kim's families were able to pay for lessons on multiple instruments. Tessa began private lessons on piano. While Tessa was the only child in her family to stay with piano lessons for any time, she felt strongly that her parents did the right thing for their children by insisting upon initial musical instruction.

And so the deal was....my parents are fantastic....the deal was, try it for a certain number of years and if you hate it then walk away. That's fine, but

you have to try it for a certain number of years. So from when I was six until I was nine I studied piano. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

Later, Tessa was able to switch her focus on and receive private lessons on the flute. Tessa's parents were able to pay for these private lessons to support her and their other children (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012).

Kim received private lessons on multiple instruments. When she showed interest on the piano, Kim's parents provided financial support for lessons. Later, when Kim joined band she was given private lessons on the oboe. Finally, Kim settled on a passion for the trumpet, and her parents once again provided financial support for private lessons on the trumpet (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

Gwen remarked that her family was "pretty poor growing up so we couldn't afford a lot of extras, especially with four kids in the family" (G. Watson, personal communication, September 10, 2014). Her family was not able to provide as much financial support. However, they supported her musical interests when possible. "My family also supported me by paying for all of the costs of concert and marching band as well as any associated costs from district bands, all-state bands, and clinics I attended in high school. To them this was a significant gesture, considering the combined cost of all of these" (G. Watson, personal communication, September 10, 2014).

During her time in high school and her undergraduate institution, Kim participated in many honor bands and summer music camps. Kim noted her consistent involvement in honor bands throughout high school. "Junior year I did an honor band at

[Home State] University. My senior year I did the same honor band plus I did All-State band, and then there was another weekly honor band that I did at [Home State] University that me and a couple other people were in. ” (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013). Kim noted that her participation in the summer music camps as well as the honor bands was free, but her family supported her in other ways financially, including transportation to and from these events (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013). Without the financial backing of her family, these experiences would not have been possible.

While most of these experiences supported the participants’ investment as a musician, Kim’s family also was interested in investing in her compositional exploration. In middle school Kim had an experience playing with notation software in her music classroom. When she spotted a similar program in a local store, she told her family of her desire for the program. They were able to support her interest by investing in the software on the spot. This investment led to Kim’s early ability to explore transcribing, arranging, and even some composing (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013).

Tessa also remarked on her father’s investment in the technology she needed to pursue her musical and compositional dreams:

As far as my father, two VERY big recent contributions have revolutionized the way I compose, and they were tremendous financial commitments. First - this computer I'm typing on. My father purchased me a regular MacBook when I was 21, which worked well throughout my undergrad. However, as I started moving further into electronics (both compositionally and in the editing of recordings), I needed a more

powerful machine that could handle the software. He purchased me this MacBook Pro the second year of my masters. I WOULD NOT have been able to complete my thesis without it and the second major piece of technology. The second was my MIDI controller. Dad and I drove down to Sweetwater with a \$500 budget (half mine, half his) to purchase my MIDI controller. We ended up spending \$900 to purchase one of the best 68-key controllers out there and its accompanying carrying case. My father made up the difference in cost. I say this very emphatically - I NEVER compose without this controller now. It has revolutionized my process in keeping me away from the formatting of notation much further into the compositional process and allows me to flesh out ideas SO much more quickly. This is another piece of technology that I WOULD NOT have been able to complete my thesis without. It was also purchased in the second year of my masters. (T. Cedar, personal communication, September 10, 2014)

All three women noted the importance of the financial support they felt from their families, but Tessa summed it up quite nicely:

My father in no way could afford these purchases. He is still paying off the computer. He always, always puts himself second behind my dreams. His help in making me a musician is evidenced by his favorite parenting phrase - "Daddies exist to make dreams come true." (T. Cedar, personal communication, September 10, 2014)

Emotional support

This final word on financial support from Tessa's father leads nicely into the next area of support from families: Emotional. Emotional support means that the participants heard and felt reassurance from their family members regarding their musical endeavors. While Gwen had less financial support from her family than the other two, she had constant emotional reassurance from her family to support her musical passion. This passion came from her immediate family, but also beyond.

My grandfather owned an upright piano. He often invited me to play it, which I would do any time I walked the 1/4 mile to his house to visit him. Again, I didn't learn to play piano until class piano in college, but I enjoyed tinkering around with it and picking out melodies I had learned from sheet music or by ear. (G. Watson, personal communication, September 10, 2014)

The emotional support for musical performance from her family clearly was evident, but Gwen also received emotional support for her creative efforts with music:

When I was a junior in high school we started attending a little Baptist church as a family for a while. The pastor there asked me to play for church. My mom encouraged me to follow up on that offer, and under her suggestion I arranged hymns out of the church's Baptist hymnal for my brother and I to play as saxophone and clarinet duets. That was one of my earliest public premiers of my work. My mom was right there, watching

and listening, and giving her comments afterwards. (G. Watson, personal communication, September 10, 2014)

From the way she spoke of both her parents, it was clear that Tessa's father and mother emotionally supported her decisions to study and continue in music.

I mean my parents were the most supportive loving parents in the world and my father is absolutely still like that and I mean I'm taking a path in college that's going to make me *no* money. None. And he's - I mean - you saw how supportive he is. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

While Kim did not share as many stories regarding her family's position on her desire to enter into music as a major, she did share that her mother supported this decision (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013). Her family likes to ask her about her musical career, though she has some reticence to continue the conversation during these interactions (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013).

When Gwen chose to major in music, her family continued to support her. "I wasn't sure how they would respond to it, but they were really supportive." (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012) As Gwen continued to further her musical passion with graduate degrees in music, she continued to hear support for her dreams:

And I feel like, and it's harder to say some ways more than others, that my parents do want me to finish. They were always really encouraging whatever decisions I made about my degree even when I was changing my mind about it. They always felt like I knew where I was going to go and they were encouraging about whatever that decision was. And even when

my mom was sick she wanted to make sure that I was still trying to keep my life going, to never give up. (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013)

Physical presence

Beyond music immersion, financial investment, and emotional reassurance, the final support that the women experienced from their families was physical presence. This kind of support from their families revolved around being in attendance at the various performances of these women throughout their musical careers.

Gwen discussed how present her parents were when she and her younger brother performed either at school or at home:

Sometimes my younger brother and I were allowed to entertain the family, and we'd both set up our wire music stands in the living room for an impromptu concert. This usually involved playing songs from a method book while my parents watched and listened. Later, when we were both in high school, we'd play our parts from our concert band music together. We would do the same thing when we (on those rare moments when we got along as kids) practiced together. It helped me a lot to teach my younger brother about what I was learning in music. (G. Watson, personal communication, September 10, 2014)

This support continued, despite Gwen moving farther away from home for both her undergraduate and graduate degrees:

He (her father) seemed supportive of the idea. He was always there for my composition concerts. I couldn't say the same for all my performance

concerts, but he was always there for my composition ones. He just wanted me to do whatever made me happy. My mom's kinda the same way. She was supportive either way. She's been eager to hear a lot of my new music since she hasn't been able to come up all the way to (State University) to hear it. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

Tessa made it abundantly clear that her parents were supportive of her music endeavors. In many ways, Tessa felt this support because she had never known a home without music:

Well, I started taking piano when I was six and so I don't remember what it was like without having music in my life. I know that - and the best way that I can describe it. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

When Tessa spoke of the support she received from her family, it often came as an addendum to something she did. A clear example of this was when she discussed taking college music theory while in high school.

And I wanted to dual enroll in a music theory course and the school would pay for it. So we went to Bachelors University, me and my father.....my mother passed away when I was fifteen so, so ever since this whole process started it was just me and my dad who is incredibly supportive and I love very much. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

But for me, one of the joys of working and learning from Tessa was the concert that she produced. Not long after I walked in the front door of the concert, Tessa introduced me to her father who was there with a smile on his face that beamed with pride. Tessa

introduced me to her father who was excited to talk and share with me. Tessa's father was clearly a proud father. It was during this time that Tessa mentioned to her father how we had become friends. She stated how she felt like she had known me for many years. This moment felt really important. In the moment, I smiled and acknowledged her words, but on the inside I was beaming. It was not just that he was present or that I was present, it was the interaction between the three of us. Here were two people that were inherently interested in Tessa's life and she wanted those two people to know each other. (T. Cedar, Thick Description 2013).

Mentor Support

But family support is only the beginning of a foundational musician-composer identity for these three women. All three women noted a strong foundation in musical experiences in their high school ensemble. For all three women, this high school experience was band, and they attributed their positive experience to an encouraging and supportive high school band director. These directors, all men, had a great impact on their protégés (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012, K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013, T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). Tessa spoke at great length of her admiration for her high school teacher.

The high school band director was also my middle school band director so I've known him for a very long time. He is another one of those incredibly passionate and wonderful band directors, who like most band directors, got eventually crushed by the public school system. His dedication to the specifics of the aesthetic of music brought those things into the light for me. His bands were fantastic for middle school and high school bands.

And the dedication to detail and the dedication to the craft, even though it was not composition specifically, (pause) created, I think, in me a similarity of how to approach music with that kind of specificity. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

As the discussion moves toward mentorship, the qualities that created positive mentorships emerged in conversations with the three participants. These music mentors appeared in both ensemble and compositional situations, though the vast majority of references to mentor support were attributed to composition teachers. These qualities included being encouraging, trustworthy, offering useful feedback, allowing for autonomy, and being receptive. The combination of these qualities yielded overall admiration from this study's participants.

Encouraging

An encouraging personality seemed to come up as the first quality many of the women mentioned in their descriptions of various musical mentors. While high school ensemble directors were not necessarily composition instructors, their encouragement of these women to attempt and continue their compositional education formed an important piece of the foundation in the development of their musician-composer identity. In her first interview, Gwen noted the early impact of her high school teacher. "My band director was encouraging. He offered to let me present a piece in band if I wanted to. I never did, but he was encouraging of the idea." Gwen later noted the encouragement that this teacher provided during her music theory course involving some composition. "I remember when I first started studying music theory I would show him some stuff and he would be like 'Yep! That's right! You're on the right track.' He would look over things

in that way (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).” Perhaps one of the most encouraging moments for Gwen’s foundational musician-composer identity came when her high school teacher gave her the notation software *Finale*.

When he saw how interested I was in composing, he wanted me to have a better medium by which to notate and express and explore that interest.

That was when I was 15. Unbeknownst to me at the time, that was a crucial stage in my compositional development because, as many of my fellow composers in college were struggling with simply putting their ideas down on paper using the software, I was already very familiar with it. I loved the challenge of figuring out how a rhythmic or melodic idea went and being able to flesh it out in notation. It felt like completing a little self-made puzzle. (T. Cedar, personal communication, September 10, 2014)

Both Tessa and Kim indicated that they have stayed in contact with their high school ensemble directors. These directors have continued their encouragement of Tessa and Kim’s compositional careers.

And I’m still in contact with him. And I recently finished a middle school band piece that I’ve been sending him back and forth and getting feedback from him.....so I still have a lot of love for my high school band director.

(T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

Like many of the statements from Kim, sometimes the gravity of her words did not hit me until I transcribed them. It was her unassuming nature that sometimes led me to

believe something was “no big deal.” Kim’s admiration of her high school ensemble director was not at first immediately evident until I transcribed this statement.

But in that time my high school band director suggested I started composing again. And I’m like (begrudgingly) “oh...k” So the person who suggested it, I wrote him a band piece. My first band piece, which I always have been scared to. I wrote that one for him because we were having a lot of conversations about spiritual things and so it has a hymn in it and it ended up being his favorite because of this (smiles) but, he didn’t know I was doing it - I was doing it behind his back. (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

It was because of her high school band director that Kim was able to resituate herself after her injury and find a new way forward musically. She took this suggestion and decided not only to write for an ensemble that she had feared in the past but to dedicate it to her high school band director. This encouragement by her high school music teacher seems key to her future as a composition professional.

But an encouraging personality was not a quality that was reserved only for high school music mentors. These women’s composition instructors in their undergraduate and graduate degrees also encouraged their students. This quality often was the first trait listed by the women in discussions revolving the style of their composition instructors. Kim noted about one composition teacher, “He was so kind to me. And so encouraging. So it went really well. I hadn’t had much confidence in it; I was like ‘this is fun!’” (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013). Kim later noted about the same

teacher, “He’s always the most encouraging person. It could have *bombed* and he would said it was...(laugh)...Yeah he said it was great (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013).” Kim had similar comments about a different composition instructor. “Just the encouragement to do it is mostly what he gave me. More or less. He did not give me a lot of criticism. It was more like a cheerleader. Like every time I went in, like really, ‘Just keep going!’ (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)”

Tessa noted how one teacher used encouragement after a concert where she received mixed feedback from others on the premiere performance of a piece she had composed.

Which Dr. Nicholas came up to me afterward in tears and said, “I’m so glad you wrote that piece.” Somebody’s parent got up and walked out during the piece. Another person’s parent actually asked me for the recording of it because he wanted to have a copy of it. I expected those kind of violent reactions. That’s why you write a piece like that. (T. Cedar, personal communication, March 19, 2013)

Tessa indicated that Dr. Nicholas’s support and encouragement was particularly important to her. The exchange above came prior to Tessa’s connection with Dr. Nicholas as his composition student (T. Cedar, personal communication, March 19, 2013). This positive reinforcement along with various other positive exchanges led to a positive working relationship between student and teacher (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

Trustworthy

While mostly exclusive to Tessa, the characteristic of trust was discussed quite

often. Trust and the need to trust were ever present in Tessa's discussions of her composition mentors. Perhaps Tessa dealt with the need for trust with these mentors, because she has personal issues with trust rooted in her family. It also could be inferred that trust was hugely important to her because the music she was sharing with her composition teachers was so deeply personal. Whatever the reason, it is clear from her conversations that trust was an important quality in her mentors.

Tessa spoke often about how she had great trust in her undergraduate composition teacher, Dr. Willis.

And then when I got to my undergrad, I felt a connection with Dr. Willis right away. My high school band director made me a musician, but absolutely he (Dr. Willis) made me a composer. If he said "jump" I said "how high?" because you could absolutely feel how much knowledge he had and how much he had to offer. And as a student it's simply foolish not to do absolutely everything he would tell you to do. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

This trust was a personal connection, but it also had a musical aspect. Tessa explained how she never questioned a piece of feedback he gave her because of this trust.

I trust him so implicitly and I trust his instincts so implicitly. It's not like that with some of my department professors here. And so my dedication is now more to the craft than to the professor. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

In making this change in her dedication, Tessa moved beyond the personal connection towards her instructor that she felt so strongly during undergraduate

and dedicated herself to the profession and practice of composition.

Tessa also had a trusting relationship with her final composition teacher at State University, where she completed her masters degree. Like Dr. Willis, Dr. Nicholas elicited a trusting environment both personally and academically.

He [Dr. Nicholas] has this diplomacy about him that makes him so much, I mean you know that, so much better to work with. And he's not an *easy* professor. I mean, he's really tough on you. I've taken, what, three or four classes with him. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

Tessa connected with Dr. Nicholas because he seemed to understand her without Tessa having to explain herself. This kind of understanding yielded a positive trusting relationship. "I didn't have to tell Dr. Nicholas that. He already knew somehow. He could see that on me" (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

Offers useful feedback

While these women were looking for a supportive mentor, they did not want a mentor that acted solely as a cheerleader. They did not want a mentor to offer support without also offering useful guidance and insight into their music and composition. Sometimes these supports were indirect and simply led the women to think about their ideas. This was the case with Gwen's final composition mentor at State University. "He encouraged me to study about it and gave me some reading material to do which was very enlightening, actually" (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013).

Tessa saw some of the vague probing questions that some of her composition mentors posed as important. No matter what her answer to the questions were, the thought process raised by answering the questions was helpful for her in her development as a composer.

“That’s actually the biggest thing that I’ve learned from Dr. Walken. You know, “Yeah you've written this! But why are you doing it?” (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013). Gwen had a similar experience with this questioning technique with one of her composition mentors. She indicated that these indirect suggestions through questioning helped her grow as a composer and think about the larger picture of her developing composition.

My current professor has brought in other pieces we could talk about, we don’t do much score study in this lesson, which is good, because we have so much to talk about. He will at least point me in the right direction of things to listen or things to read because he is anticipating where my piece might be developing. What things I might need to study on my own to look at. (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013)

Because of the trust established between teacher and student in these positive mentoring relationships, when one of the students felt the interaction was too vague or too indirect, they also felt comfortable asking their teacher to elaborate. Gwen described this scenario:

At times he’ll give suggestions that are actually too vague because he’ll explain an idea, maybe he’ll explain some kind of harmony that he think would be appropriate but then he’s not specific about where that should happen. And so that’s a little too vague for me but at times that helps me to think a little bit more critically about how to put that in place the way that I want it to do it. Which is nice because I feel like he is able to focus on both big picture and small picture that way. Whereas a lot of professors

focus on so much note-to-note detail that that can feel like someone else is controlling your work. (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013)

In these positive mentoring situations, the teachers gave specific comments as well as less descriptive comments. These mentors appear to have understood that specific comments should be paired with comments with less direction. This pairing allows the students to develop the music as they would like. The teacher also seemed to consider where a student needed to grow as a composer; what musical aspects the student ignored or seemed to fear. In these instances, the teacher limited compositional parameters in order for the student to focus on aspects that had previously eluded the student. Kim outlined this technique several times.

He gave me, actually, limitations for all my pieces, which was perfect. So, I remember the first thing, and the teacher in New York actually criticized this method until he saw the piece I came up with. And then he was like “I take it back!” (laughs) The first thing he had me do was he only let me use three intervals in the whole piece. Three intervals!!! He’s like “ok go!” I think I still remember, it was a minor second, major third, and a minor sixth, which is actually really only two intervals (laughs). But it’s kind of nice to have that change now because I’ve gotten harmonic focus. I’ve gotten a lot of the other stuff in the past. So I kind of like having it. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

I’ve had a lot of freedom in what I - I mean I had been held back, but I’ve also encouraged that, too. Just because I know it would be better for me,

like, to write for a certain ensemble that I'm afraid of. Like so "we should do that then!" "Ok!" (K. Johnson, personal communication, June 10, 2013)

Gwen also identified benefits from specific assignments to focus on compositional deficiencies.

He was so helpful...he stretched different things in my writing, but a lot of times it was more technique focused and not only just one style. And he often would try to get me to write for more instruments than the one I was used to. So he would push me in different ways. (G. Watson, personal communication, April 15, 2012)

It is in these moments, when there is useful feedback balanced with encouraging support, that these mentors truly became positive mentors for these composers. They gave input, but they also believed in the quality of work that the students were producing. This belief in these women's personal ability as composers was incredibly reassuring.

But I had met with him in his office for a second and he mentioned that he felt like with a couple of little tweaks it could be a really fantastic piece. And he's right. It does need some more tweaking. But he said that he was really shocked by how [name] gave me almost no feedback and that means he really likes the piece. I'm like "Weee!!!" Because I kept asking him the entire time "Well, what about this? And what about this? And what about this?" And his general answer was basically "That'll be fixed when it's the entire orchestra." "That'll be fixed when it's the entire orchestra." (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013)

Allows for autonomy

The mentors' feedback would not be well received if they did not allow these young composers some room for autonomy. It is the balance between sharing insight into the work of composition by giving both indirect and specific feedback, but also allowing these women to take their music in the direction that best served their own ideas. Gwen spoke of this often, especially when comparing her teachers with some mentors who did not allow for this autonomy. "I feel like, again, a lot of my musical decisions are, I feel like I'm able to take some personal ownership over them now with my new teacher" (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Tessa also spoke about clarity when given autonomy. While she greatly admired her undergraduate they presented dissenting ideas.

Actually, what I've found out is that because I was so dedicated to Dr. Willis and my undergrad that I wasn't making my own opinions. I was adapting all his opinions because I worshipped the ground he walked on. And since coming to State University, a lot of what I have learned is from people showing me what I don't want. Dr. Walken has been good in making me be independent because all I do is disagree with him. He's so forceful in making me think for myself and I mean you know this from the way he teaches and I totally understand why some people find his teaching method so frustrating. Because there is no direction. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

Gwen spoke of the various ways that her composition mentor interacted with her. In these situations, he was able to invoke conversation that allowed her to improve, but he still yielded to change in the music that was reflective of her thoughts and compositional ideas.

So... I feel like he's non-judgmental of my work but at the same time is able to encourage it and push it. I think there's a fine line there with pushing a person to grow their ideas and expand on their ideas without putting your own biases into the piece and he's very good about not doing that (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013).

She further elaborated that she believed her composition teacher knew her desired intention, but conversation this teacher helped her realize how to achieve this goal rather than directly specifying how to do the intended effect.

Yeah, so I feel like the things that he says are inspiring and again he is kind of anticipating the direction that I'm going but he's not dictating. So for instance when I was telling him about my programmatic idea, he suggested that I try to make it, if that was the programmatic idea that I wanted, he first helped me develop that idea a little bit more thoroughly by having me read about the idea that two identities could exist in the same person. I was playing around with it, but the knowledge I had about it was kind of vague (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013).

Tessa experienced a similar kind of occurrence.

He completely changed my whole thesis. He changed my idea for it. Not "you should do this" but us talking about it and just drawing ideas out of

me changed my whole idea. And I think it's a lot more reasonable now.

And I've really been looking forward to working with him on it. (T.

Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

Perhaps the appreciation of autonomy in compositional lessons cannot be understood unless a student has lacked autonomy. Gwen was particularly pleased with her final composition teacher and his understanding her voice, but it was largely shaped by a prior experience when this was not the case.

Even though he was directing me, I made all of the musical decisions myself, which was nice. And then with the other professor I feel like there wasn't that kind of thoughtfulness going into it, and that there was more of an overarching atmosphere that he wanted to go for that wasn't necessarily clicking with me intellectually or emotionally. And so I feel like I was kind of being pushed towards a direction that wasn't necessarily the way that I wanted the piece to go. So I feel like the fact that even though I basically took a scalpel and did plastic surgery on the entire thing, it's kind of worked out because I feel it's closer to what I want now. (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013)

Kim commented that, while her mentors gave specific suggestions, it was only to elaborate on the music choices that she dictated. Sometimes these suggestions were not to diminish her voice, but to augment it.

Right, because he, again, just try to get your portfolio big. So two things he made me do. He didn't make me do a lot, but he did make me do a woodwind quintet and a string quartet. And the rest were completely my

decisions. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

And in those instances when the feedback might have been more direct, the mentor dampened the directness by indicating it was his personal preference and not a requirement.

Sometimes he would have me expand a section. So a little bit of form. Just personal preference really. “I wished that you would have repeated that.”

Like that kind of thing. But nothing too specific. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

Overall, the women indicated that they felt a connection to their composition mentor when the desired result was about growth and not necessarily learning to copy a style or mimic the composition teacher’s preferences about music writing. “What mattered to him was that I had actually learned (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013).”

The ability to allow for autonomy turned these composition teachers into positive mentors for these women.

And then when I was finally able to start taking lessons with him, this third year of my masters – it’s been amazing. We click so well and he pushes my composition but in a way that makes it healthy and fruitful and it just grows. I feel like it really is true to my voice now but at the same it’s still challenging me to become better constantly. (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013)

Receptive

While an encouraging personality was the typical leading point for musical mentorship, other characteristics were also present. Gwen and Kim noted the kind and receptive nature of several musical mentors. Gwen discussed this nature as an open door policy.

And it was pretty common practice for the professors to leave their door open. You could just go in and chat with them. Most of them were pretty good about that. They usually had some sort of couch that you could come in and sit in and have like a little mini therapy session if you needed it. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

Kim was impressed with the receptive nature of a composition instructor she worked with as an undergraduate. Since her institution did not offer a composition degree, nor did it have any teachers that were composition instructors, Kim sought help outside of her institution. Kim found a teacher at another school. “I went to this guy at [Other Institution] and was like “yeah, I’ll take ya!” He didn’t know a darn thing about me. He just took me” (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013).

Prior to attending her Master’s University, Kim asked for feedback on a composition from her future teacher, Dr. Getz. His receptive nature to view and critique her work was impactful on Kim. “‘Will you look at this? I don’t know you’ and he was like, ‘Sure!!!’ He emailed me back like within an hour saying, ‘Yeah’” (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013).

Kim later commented on how this initial perception of Dr. Getz continued throughout her lessons. “He’s the nicest person I’ve ever met in my life. (RG: Very

human?) Yes. Oh my goodness. And then when I got there I wasn't expecting anything other than telling me how to make this better" (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013). Gwen also commented on the continuing receptive nature of one of her composition instructors.

Yes! And he was very kind and saying that usually he doesn't like to do school stuff outside school during the summer because, you know there's this whole thing about teacher contracts and how they're only for like certain months but he was very kind and he's like "If you want to send me anything I'll be very happy to look at it, listen to it, offer you comments, whatever you need." And he's like, "I'm not just gonna let you go now that you're finished with this part of it." So (RG: that's very kind) that was really nice. Yeah. (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013)

For these women, kind and receptive is not an attribute that is merely an impression, but rather a lasting quality.

The women seemed to be aware that what works for one student might not be the best for other students. In this, the women articulated a need for a mentor to be adaptive. This means that a positive mentor is not prescriptive, but rather flexible, depending on the student and the student's needs. The idea of adaptivity often surfaced in the phrase "open-minded." When the women articulated the merits of being "open-minded," it often served as a counter to a previous experience when a teacher failed to be adaptive and was closed-minded to a student's input and ideas. Gwen and Tessa both articulated this need from a mentor.

Actually, I will be studying with Dr. Nicholas next semester. This might work out better since Dr. Nicholas is more open-minded than a person can succeed as both a K-12 educator and a composer. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

Gwen commented that because of previous mentors with less open-minded teaching styles, this prevented her from walking into lessons with confidence in her music, even when she knew the new mentor would not view her music with bias.

I think there's a couple professors in our school that have other views as well. Because even Dr. Nicholas who I've studied with, when I brought him the idea of writing a high school band piece for my thesis, I was afraid that he'd be like "that's not full orchestra! Why would you even spend your time with it?!" He wasn't at all! He's like "there's a great market for that. People write that and they're very successful there." So I don't feel that's his thought at all. But a lot of his music is not *that* either, so I don't feel like he's of that mindset. (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013)

While all three women articulated a desire for a mentor with an open-mind and adaptive teaching style, Tessa went one step further when discussing the adaptive teaching style of her positive mentor. Adaptive did not just have to do with the mentor's approach to coaching about new compositions. Adaptive also meant that her mentor gave suggestions so that students could support themselves in the music composition industry.

See that's the thing that I find so special about the way Dr. Willis teaches. Because 15% of it was teaching how to write music. 85% was teaching

how to be a professional composer in the world. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

For Dr. Willis, composition was not just an art to be learned; it was a business to understand. In composition lessons and composition studio, he counseled his students about the music composition business of marketing and promotion that could be adapted for every different composition style that his students explored.

While in some early compositional experiences these women took on the compositional style of their mentor, as they grew older the prerequisite for a positive mentor did not include similar background, demographic, or musical style. Gwen mentioned this explicitly: “Definitely Dr. Nicholas even though his music is different than the music I would write, I feel like his mentorship has been the greatest.” (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013)

None of these women had female composition mentors. All of their mentors were men. Kim and Tessa both spoke about how they felt this might have worked to their advantage. “I’m actually a lot better at talking to guys. I think it’d be worse if I’d had a female teacher, actually” (K. Johnson, personal communication, June 10, 2013). While these feelings may be exclusive to these women, it is interesting to consider if the only women who succeed in university music composition programs are those who are able to adjust to male composition mentors. Tessa further articulated:

Well and also, he’s another one of those professors that...I think some of this is because he’s a very strong male personality that you *don’t* want to disappoint. I saw him get angry one time at one student and that student literally shifted his entire strategy for composition because he had

disappointed him. I mean, I can honestly say that I have never had a female compositional influence that has that kind of effect on me. I've met really fantastic female composers, but all the ones that I admire and all the ones that have set a fire in me have all been male. And I don't know if that's because I'm female or not. All of my buddies from undergrad who had access to these same people, admire the same people I do who all happen to be male. Anyway, I never was in a position where he wanted to check my journal because I worked so hard to never disappoint him. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

Overall admiration

What strikes me as so remarkable yet understandable is how these women adhere to positive mentors. These women know and admire these mentors and often sing their praises. In some cases, they would praise these mentors quite loquaciously. When talking about their mentors, their entire demeanor changed from a person who was talking about the business of composition to that of smiles and exuding positive energy.

They [composition lessons] are amazing. I really love my new composition professor and.... Mmhmm. Dr. Nicholas. It's been great.

And, trying to see how I can articulate that without just adjectives.

(Laughter) (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013)

Tessa also articulated the benefits of a positive mentor. "You're talking about someone that I could literally never shut up about" (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). This kind of positive experience established a desire for further study with the mentor. "I have since come to know that I would, in fact, study with Dr. Nicholas

forever” (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012). It seems that positive interactions beget the desire for more interactions. These interactions become top priority for composition students. “Because it’s unusual and very stupid for anybody to miss any extra time with [teacher’s name]” (T. Cedar, personal communication, March 19, 2013).

These positive interactions with mentors led to general admiration that is lifelong. “Most of my teachers have been that way. I’ve been very lucky in that I think” (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013). This general admiration could be because the positive mentoring has allowed for a new, emerging identity in these students: A composer identity.

I remember...I’ve developed so much that even though it was only about five years ago, it feels like a lifetime ago. I developed into a composer because of him and because of his program. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

Diverse Experiences

For all of these women, their backgrounds extended into diverse experiences both inside and out of music. While the specific experiences varied from participant to participant, it is clear that having a variety of experiences contributed to their developing identity. Alongside family support and mentor support, this breadth of experience inside and outside of music that appears to be important in their foundational experience as both musicians and composers. These experiences can be grouped in the following sub-categories: Varied music listening, music instrument study, music ensemble experience, and creative explorations outside of music.

Varied music listening

While the majority of the quotable material on variety in music listening came from Kim and Tessa, Gwen also indicated several times that her music interests and what she listened to were varied. As previously mentioned, Gwen indicated that she grew up in a house filled with a variety of music based on her parents' personal choices such as the Beach boys and bands from the 60s and 70s (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012). She also mentioned her affinity for score study and her desire to listen to music based on sounds she would like to emulate in her own music writing (G. Watson, personal communication, April 15, 2012). In addition, Gwen showcased an inclination towards various vernacular styles of music. She played in groups that she would characterize as garage bands and more recently became interested in exploring songwriting (G. Watson, personal communication, April 15, 2012).

Kim, however, did explicitly state that her music listening interests lie in three different styles of music: Big band, jazz, and neoclassical. "I like jazz a lot" (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013). While she may have the inclination to listen to other styles, her preference often steers her away from these.

Big band. Although, I'll put on some Miles Davis sometimes or Dave Brubeck. So that's like my laid back, "I'm just chillin'" listening music. And in the car I'll listen to the radio. I don't, I really don't listen to that, it's kind of embarrassing, because I get really annoyed really quickly. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013)

In reference to neoclassical music, Kim showcased a strong affinity for Stravinsky and Shostakovich.

I'd pick orchestral music oddly enough because I don't write it. But that's what I prefer to listen to and I like things like Shostakovich. I could listen to him everyday and not get tired of it. And Stravinsky. Those two. Put one of them on and I'm happy camper. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013)

Kim indicated that she could listen to these composers without tiring. "I could listen to the *Rite of Spring* any day" (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013). And, while she greatly admired both of these composers, she did not believe the appeal came from a desire to write like these men.

There is - there is an aspect of when I hear something I think "man, I wish I wrote that." But at the same time I don't - I don't really write like either of them. There's a little bit of Stravinsky in some of my stuff, at least I'm told. I don't hear a lot of Shostakovich, oddly enough. In my early stuff when I was, before teachers came in, Shostakovich was definitely an influence. I don't hear that anymore, though. But I like to listen to it. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013)

Always lush with details, Tessa mentioned many works, styles, artists, and composers to which she listened in her spare time. Keen on early influences, Tessa mentioned how Disney music played a large role in her childhood, but that she still continued to listen to various works in Disney animated films. Recently, she has used this influence in her own writing. "I've done so many dozen Disney songs. My most recent one is a medley of all the Disney villains for band" (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). Cinematic music has been on her music listening playlists for many years

and even influenced her early writing, including music from the movies *Emma* and *Secret Garden* (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

Regarding art music, Tessa preferred to listen to minimalist music, specifically works by Steve Reich and John Adams. She explained her preference for the work “Music for 18 Musicians.”

Bachelors University’s new music ensemble did a recording of “Music for 18” several years ago. (RG: really?) Yeah. It’s gotten national attention because of its, becausewhat’s his name....not New Yorker, that guy who always comments on new music, I want to say Scott something...And Steve Reich has commented on it and they performed it for him at Bang on a Can. I wasn’t a part of it, obviously because there’s no flute part, and I wouldn’t have been anyway, but it’s an unbelievable recording. It’s beautiful. I feel like it’s not as harsh as the other ones just as far as the recording aesthetic not the performance part. And it’s so beautiful, uh.....It’s gorgeous. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

This preference for minimalism is likely due to its connection to the style of music that Tessa was producing. She listened to the music because she enjoyed it, but also because she was studying the scores as part of her study in music composition.

Last fall I set out to write a piece like “Short Ride in a Fast Machine.” And I *love* John Adam’s scores and I fell in love with his scores before I fell in love with his music because he is so specific and so sympathetic to his performers. (T. Cedar, personal communication, March 19, 2013)

Neither Gwen, Tessa, nor Kim listened to a single style of music. They were

drawn to multiple genres. In addition, this diversification was both casual and intentional. Music listening and score study are a very important part of the development of composers. These women listened to various kinds of music because they saw the influence of these various musics, but also because they simply enjoyed various forms and genres of music.

Music instrument study

Besides listening to various kinds of music, all three women explored multiple instruments during their early musical development. Prior to beginning band, Gwen sang with an elementary choir (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012). While she enjoyed her experience in this ensemble, she knew that would eventually join band. She originally envisioned playing the flute as her sister did.

I tried the flute and the clarinet and the moment I played the clarinet I fell in love with it. So that's the one I chose. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

Gwen continued to play clarinet through both her undergraduate and graduate degrees in music. In her undergraduate experience, she chose to be a clarinet performance major. Initially she intended to pursue a masters degree in clarinet performance but switched to composition prior to beginning her degree (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012).

In addition to clarinet, Gwen also explored the guitar. Her goals with guitar closely related to her goals to form a garage band.

I picked up the guitar and then shortly after, we started the band. One of my friends was kind of teaching me with the hope that I would form a

band with them and that's what we did. (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012)

While Gwen played her guitar through her high school years, she fell away from the instrument during most of college.

I picked it back up in the last year or two and I've been playing folk guitar. Very different music than what I used to play on guitar. (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012)

While Gwen went through voice, clarinet, and guitar, Kim moved through a different set of instruments. Kim began with piano until she had the option to choose another instrument. "I started in band in middle school. So I switched to taking oboe lessons" (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013). Initially, she planned to pursue a vocal music education, but social influences can be strong.

And I thought choir would be easier, so I almost did choir, but my friend, my friend did band (smiles) so I was like "ok! I'll do band!" (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

However, this instrument choice did not last long because of her interest in various extra curricular activities in music.

Eventually I realized that I wanted to be in marching band and so that's when I switched to trumpet. And I convinced the band director to let me switch, too. He had enough trumpets and they needed the oboe. But I was like "No! I don't want to do it!" And he's "Ok!" And then later after my senior year he had retired, so I'd only had that band director for two years.

He came up to me and he's like "I'm really glad I let you switch." (K.

Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

Kim had a strong affiliation with her final instrument. While her undergraduate degree was in music education, she intended to pursue a masters in trumpet performance before an injury made that impossible. Kim has stated on a few occasions that if it had not been for that injury, she definitely would have continued a career in performance rather than composition (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

Tessa and Kim had similar beginning journeys with instrument selection. Like Kim, Tessa also began her instrumental education with the piano.

And like every other normal child, I was enthralled with it [piano] at first and then realized that I had to practice all the time. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

But Tessa continued lessons on piano until another instrument intrigued her.

Then I heard a flute player at my church in California and thought "Ooo! That's pretty!" So I told my mother that and she knew the person who was playing. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

Tessa continued with the flute through her undergraduate and graduate degrees in music. Of the three participants Tessa is the only one not to consider a degree in performance rather than composition (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). During the latter part of her graduate degree, Tessa began taking voice lessons. While she enjoyed the experience, her intentions were focused on the voice for composition. She took voice lessons in order to be able to write music

more appropriately for the vocal mechanism (T. Cedar, personal communication, March 19, 2013).

Both Gwen and Kim had the opportunity to take instrument technique classes as part of their coursework for in music education. While not as extensive as studying an instrument privately, both composers cited how important these instrument technique classes were for them as composers. As mentioned earlier, Kim believes that every composition student should take these courses as part of their degree in order to understand how to write idiomatic music for these instruments (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013 & June 10, 2013).

Music ensemble experience

Beyond varied music listening and music instrument study, these women also participated in various music ensembles. There are some connections between music instrument and ensemble participation. What is more interesting is that these experiences allowed these women a plethora of musical experiences prior to and while creating music.

Gwen participated in choir, band, and garage band. Her experience in choir was the shortest. “I was in the district choir at that age for a little while. 6th grade was when we had to decide if we wanted to go into band or choir” (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012). The major work in ensembles came while in middle school, high school, and college. Unique among the participants, Gwen experienced a focus on chamber ensembles with her clarinet.

There was a lot more emphasis on chamber ensembles. So I was in a woodwind quintet for about three years, and I was in clarinet choir for all five years. Our clarinet choir was a pretty big deal cause we would rehearse twice a week as part of a class with our professor. They go on tour. They're going on tour again this year to the international clarinet association. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

Beyond traditional large ensembles, Gwen also is the only one of the participants who had experience in a vernacular music group. While she enjoyed this experience, it was short lived.

A little bit in high school. It never got off the ground very well. We never actually performed. We were one of *those* bands. (laughs) It never got out of the garage, exactly. But we did write a few songs together. (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012)

Kim's ensemble experiences were focused within the traditional band world and jazz band. Beyond high school and college, Kim had some especially memorable experiences in honor and all-state bands.

Oh yeah! Those were the best. That's actually when I decided to go into music was at the Home State University honor band my junior year and it was just a weekend thing. And a guest composer would come in and conduct. And we just played all day, basically. And All-State, even more so. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

These experiences proved to provide insight for Kim's in helping her to make the decision to be a music major. It was during one honor band that her future career became clear.

But it didn't click until the honor band, like actually hearing music and enjoying playing it for music's sake, more so than just trumpet playing, if that makes sense. I like to be around people, too. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

This honor band scenario proved to be important to her future not only as a musician but also as a composer. It was during this honor band that she met her future composition instructor with whom she would study during her masters coursework.

Yeah, the junior year honor band at [Home State University], Dr. Getz was the guy who came in. And he was the one who was conducting, we were playing his [title of music] and I don't know what it was, but after he explained what he was thinking about when he was writing, it was like "Oh! I suddenly like this piece of music!" (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

Tessa's experience in ensembles was the most limited, though she still experience some diverse situations. "I was in choirs as a kid" (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). Beyond this early choral experience, most of her participation in ensembles occurred in a large traditional wind band (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). However, during her undergraduate experience Tessa explored a new music ensemble with her fellow composition students as well as composition teacher. These experiences proved to be helpful to her development as a musician and also as a

composer (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). During her final years of her masters program, Tessa again returned to choral participation in large part to be able to write her own compositions for the choral ensemble (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013).

Creative explorations outside of music

Clearly, diversity inside music was part of the formative years in music education for these women, encompassing varied music listening, music instruments, and music ensembles. But music was not the only venue through which these women explored creativity; beyond music, each participant engaged and, in some cases, continues to engage in creative disciplines outside of music. These disciplines include writing, drawing, cooking, technology, and variations on these topics.

Gwen shared her passion for drawing, creative writing, video games, cooking, and baking. Her diverse interests in creative explorations are due to her general interest in things that involve invention. “I like anything creative, pretty much. I used to draw a lot and I used to write books when I was a kid” (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012). Gwen elaborated on her connection to writing and video games.

I've actually been drawing and writing fiction a lot more. There is also an open-world, 3D construction video game I like to play called Minecraft which also allows me to create structures and even cities. These are ways I like to explore and create. (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012)

Finally, she shared her thoughts on creative writing and cooking.

I do write a little bit of poetry, so I'm creating here. And I guess I do like to create with food. I do like cooking. While I do like recipes, I also like to tweak them and go my own route. I find myself when I'm teaching about composition that I have a lot of analogies that relate to cooking and baking. Which sometimes, they actually work (laugh). (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012)

Later, she connected this need to create outside of music to being inspired inside music.

But sometimes it's nice to feel inspiration from other places, too, outside of music. I love going to art museums. I love reading poetry or a good fiction novel. I love to draw, and I'm writing my own poetry and fiction a lot more these days. Sometimes though, there are times when I'm not able to do that because of deadlines or the hectic schedule of life. (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013)

Finally, she summarized her reasons for exploring creative pursuits outside of music.

Sometimes it's nice to step away from it for a little bit and do something else non-composition related, to study other pieces, or to compose on a different piece for awhile. (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013)

Like Gwen, Kim also enjoyed a freedom in writing and drawing. For Kim, these other creative pursuits did not specifically serve a purpose as Gwen articulated but were simply outside interests that she enjoyed.

Yeah I used to write random poems. Like I just sent someone on their Facebook a - like "do you remember this!?" Like it was - Like I was just

trying to rhyme it and be funny. So I have books of like random poems where I would just write. And I used to draw all the time. It was like the best I ever - because I've got - like I wasn't in the world I was drawing. I was in my own special place. So drawing was great. And sometimes I do still do that. Just draw random stuff. And I like writing but – it's hard to say that it's creative because it's not fiction by any means. But I do - I like just writing. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013)

Later, Kim reaffirmed her connection to writing and her continued pleasure in it. "I still write. I work on that all the time because I enjoy it" (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013).

Like her fellow participants, Tessa also enjoyed creative writing. "Because I had written poetry and creative writing all my life" (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). Her connections to writing grew to a point where she was considered an expert. Tessa worked as an instructor in a writing center during her time at her undergraduate university (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013). As she began to pursue music composition as her future career, Tessa found connections between her creative pursuits. "I found some research that would draw crossovers in between writing music and any sort of other kind of creative writing" (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). She further elaborated on both the creative process as well as the publication process.

It feels like it's so applicable in every sub-genre inside of music because we have...the rhetorical analysis would be such a good perspective, I think, for theoretical analysis. And I mean, the process between the two, I still

send poetry of mine out to get published. And the process between the two is so bloody similar. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

Perseverance/Independence

All three women had a strong streak of perseverance/independence. This section will discuss the independence that all three women showcased. This independence came in various forms; namely, musical independence, compositional perseverance, and entrepreneurial independence.

Musical independence

All three of these women were the first in their families to pursue music as a career. Given this, all three women needed to share with their families just how important music was in their lives. While Tessa's parents always intended their children to receive music lessons, this was not a foregone conclusion for Gwen and Kim. Kim's family was much more sports-minded, but she was able to ask for and receive private lessons for three different instruments during her K-12 education (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013). Gwen not only asked for private music lessons but ended up paying for them on her own while in high school (G. Watson, personal communication, September 10, 2014).

Both Kim and Gwen participated in extra-curricular musical performances that were not sponsored by school or a teacher.

Although me and my friend, Jonathan, I took piano lessons with his mom, so we were like best friends, we would like play duets every once in awhile, and stuff like that, we were more out in the streets rollerblading. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

These kinds of collaborations were not performance oriented but often were social in nature.

I think I might have had one or two that a friend of mine would just get together and play. She played flute and I played clarinet. We tried a few things. Just simple duets that way. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

Since she was one of the founding leaders, Gwen's involvement in a garage band also fits into this category of musical independence. This group rarely found outlets for performances with an audience, but they were able to find ways to build on the music skills being taught in class and in private lessons (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012).

Compositional perseverance

But the spirit of musical independence was only the beginning. For all three women, the independence that started off as musical initially, transcended naturally into compositional perseverance. Their musical independence led naturally into a general curiosity about music. How does it work? When doesn't it work? Gwen explained it quite nicely: "I was one of those geeks that tried to learn as much as I could besides doing my normal school stuff" (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012). Despite all the participants having a broad range of musical exposure, they were not satisfied with only music listening and playing. Curiosity was only the beginning. These women felt a compulsion to compose.

This compulsion began during Tessa's adolescent years. Though she cannot pinpoint a moment when she moved beyond transcriptions to arrangements and

compositions, during this time she knew she needed to write music. “During that time I was writing, but I didn’t know I wanted to be a composer but I was already composing” (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). This compulsion became therapeutic during trying times. In particular, the end of high school and the two years after graduation were quite difficult for Tessa.

Right, I just, I wasn’t thinking...during those two years I was going through a lot of personal things. We lost our house and stuff like that. And so I wasn’t really focused on thinking about my career, it was more I was thinking about survival. But I felt, I felt a compulsion to write. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

Gwen identifies this compulsion to write as continual, even when we spoke for this study. “I think I have always had some kind of music ideas there that I wanted to kind of come out with and just try” (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013).

While Gwen and Tessa were able to put this compulsion into elegant words this compulsion, it was clear from the way that Kim talked about the idea of composing that she felt a similar compulsion. Kim continuing interest in composing and seeking out lessons during her undergraduate education despite being a performance major is an indication of this compulsion (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013). In addition, her application to camps for her compositional output also indicates continued compulsion to write (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013). Kim’s compulsion was closely tied to mentors and a desire to make her music presentable to those mentors.

This desire to improve their compositions was present in all of the women. These women were not content to simply create music. They actively sought out advice and input from composition instructors. Tessa discussed her high school band director as an original source for feedback. “I was writing stuff on my own all the time that I would bring in to show him and get his opinions on” (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012). Kim and Gwen also sought out advice before they majored in composition. Gwen did not major in composition until her sophomore year of her undergraduate education, but that did not stop her from seeking out composition instruction. “I had been taking composition lessons starting my second semester of my freshman year” (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012). Kim completed an undergraduate degree in music education, but had a desire to receive composition lessons as well especially as this would allow her to get into the compositional summer camp. When she realized she could not receive lessons at her school she asked another instructor at another local institution and was turned down. This did not stop her from asking one more instructor at another institution farther away (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013).

But I have to give credit to my very first teacher during my undergrad, because I ended up traveling to [other institution] my junior and senior year because the final way to get into the camp was for me to get a teacher. (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

Kim continued to seek out advice for her music while in transition from undergraduate to graduate school. When she began writing music again after the completion of her undergraduate degree, she had a strong desire for input on her music. “I wrote it and

eventually I was like ‘well I want it to be good.’ So when I was at the end of writing I took it to Dr. Getz, at Masters University” (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013). But Kim knew that in order to seek out a master’s in composition she would need to get a full portfolio of music for her application. To do this, she again sought out a teacher to help her with this process. Kim strongly believed that composition lessons should be available to anyone no matter what degree they are pursuing. “You have to be more motivated because it’s not going to be a part of your coursework. But you could get lessons” (K. Johnson, personal communication, June 10, 2013).

Tessa has a compulsion not only to continue to improve her craft and receive opinions on her music, but also to continue on in her compositional education. “I’m gonna take two years between masters and doctorate...I’m nowhere near done studying composition” (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012).

Entrepreneurial independence

Perhaps the most impressive trait that all the women displayed was their ability to function as entrepreneurs. Each woman looked beyond what was given to her and sought out new opportunities to fine tune and utilize their musical and creative interest. In some cases it seemed to be curiosity that was acted upon, but in many cases this entrepreneurial independence manifested out of a desire to be a working musician and composer.

One of the key entrepreneurial skills for budding composers is the need and desire to get their music performed for an audience. Tessa discussed the need to speak up and be willing to share her created music when opportunity arose.

But when we had a studio class meeting where they brought up, [music group name] is gonna be doing the reading and blahblahblahblah and we

need more people and..." Cricket. Cricket. Cricket. And I'm like, "Hey! If they don't mind reading a string orchestra piece and pretending there's a string orchestra behind them they can do mine!" And that was right after I had put the final touches on [name]'s piece and I was kind of taking a break for a while. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013)

Kim also described a similar situation early on when she was attending music camps as an undergraduate.

And actually that same piece got performed at the festival I went to because we needed another - we needed an opener and it just worked. It's like "Hey! I got something we can use!" So we used it there. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013)

Tessa had a unique experience as an entrepreneur when she decided to create her own concert. Her desire to create her own concert came out of frustration with the status quo of the composition concert series sponsored by the university. This frustration was derived from both difference in opinion with the concert series coordinators but also her own desire for a concert series specifically catering towards electronic music (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013). Tessa first described how she went about finding a venue for her electronic music concert.

In somewhere around February when I found out that the museum was actually, I didn't realize it was open yet, I just contacted somebody out of the blue. I contacted one of the art directors. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013)

Tessa further reflected how this new art museum provided a unique opportunity for her and for the museum.

But she said she had sent an email to the music department but it had never gotten around to the student body. I hadn't gotten an email about it because I was looking for something like that. I thought that they're massive beautiful beautiful building, they're never gonna support. So I just went out on a limb and like "eh, I'll ask 'em. What could it hurt? There's no way in hell they're gonna say 'yes.'" So I met with her and she said "A bunch of music students - a bunch - had already come to them saying, "can we have our recital here?" And they've been saying "no and no and no and no" because they don't want to be just another space. Which is totally understandable. That's very counterproductive to what that museum's trying to go for. I mean for god's sakes the bathrooms even have those weird angles. (laughs) I didn't use one of the toilets but I'm not surprised it would be on a parallel trail. (both laugh) (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013)

Her ability to organize and willingness to figure out the logistics of the concert program also showcases her entrepreneurial independence.

And they were worried about logistics with how fast could we get out of there because there was something right after us. Which we *nailed* because good producing is good planning. And I don't mean to toot my own horn but I planned my *ass* off for that. And I thought about the way that every single one of those pieces came together. I mean, I emailed my friend,

who had something like four pieces on the concert. He *works* for “Bang on a Can” in New York. He’s a professional electronic composer. And “Yeah! Sure have a couple of pieces! Here you go!” And, I emailed [name] and he composed a *tremendous* piece for that concert. I mean, the process that he went through to create that piece was phenomenal. “Here! Here you go! Do you like it?” “Yeah! Perfect! Let’s go!” And [name] came to me about a week before the concert. He’s like “Is it too late to submit something.” I’m like “It’s electronic music. You can turn it in the day beforehand. It doesn’t matter” As long as it fits in the program. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013)

But Tessa felt strongly that the concert programming and logistics be in collaboration with her composition students who were to be featured on the program.

But I did this. And it was me and those three girls and that’s the way I wanted it. And I mean, I didn’t consult with anybody. I didn’t ask anybody.

(T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013)

When the concert was over, Tessa felt proud of the work that she had accomplished on her own.

I mean, the freedom in putting together a concert where I didn’t have to answer to anybody. There was nothing done by committee. There was us sitting around, discussing ideas, and we met here [coffee shop] a couple of times during the semester to talk about things. “Well, how bout we try this?” “Well what do you think of this?” “You don’t like that? Ok, let’s not do that.” (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013)

She further elaborated:

And so, ok, when I'm presenting my own music, do I give you what you want or do I stay true to what I want, which is why I'm so excited about this concert. I am not running this through anybody. This is *mine*. (T. Cedar, personal communication, March 19, 2013)

With all the women, the idea of publication came up. Of the three women, only Kim has had some of her music formally published, but all of the women shared a desire to have their music published. Tessa shared the desire to begin embarking on publishing soon.

And one of my goals for this summer is to take my large ensemble pieces and I'm gonna start sending them off to as many people as I have envelopes for because I've tried to get people to perform my band music before ... (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013)

Also interested in publishing, Gwen discussed the pros and cons of publishing in different ways. She first mentioned self publishing as an option saying, "I've still been toying around with the idea of self-publishing" (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013), but she has also considered the opportunities involved with publishing companies.

If there's a specific publisher that really works with that type of instrumentation or that particular instrument, like trombone has a big publishing company that is very trombone centered. Then those pieces are easier to get published. But then in the clarinet world, and sadly most of my pieces have clarinet in them, there's not one publisher that does solely

clarinet. So I'd have to go with a big publisher and then there's less of a chance that I'd find any more from that or that it would get promoted, because it would get lost in a sea of clarinet music. So, that's the hard thing about clarinet. (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013)

Last, when speaking about independence all the women described their desire to simply be better, to be smarter, to learn more. But Gwen spoke in detail about what this would mean to her.

I have a lot of interests because it's always been my aspiration to be a Renaissance woman--I want to be good at everything and have a varied skill set. (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013)

She analyzed how this desire fits in with stereotypes about her generation.

People in my generation or younger often feel that this is even an essential trait for the work force. Any weakness or deficiencies I have I try to modify into strengths. (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013)

But most impressively, Gwen is good at seeing some less positive traits in herself and using those attributes to help her goals.

As many of my peers, I am over-scheduled and hyper-critical. This can be a blessing and a curse. Curse because it brings a plethora of stressors both internal and external on time, body, and mind. Blessing because I feel I accomplish much in a small amount of time and I work diligently to produce my best work. I put my best foot forward in all I do. (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013)

Summary

This chapter showcased similarities between the three participants that relates to their budding musician-composer identity. These various foundational experiences allowed all three women to self-identify as musicians. These four areas, family support, mentor support, diverse experiences, and perseverance/independence, seemed to be the important aspects that facilitated their eventual ability to identify as musicians, but also created a foundation which later enabled them to explore an identity more closely associated with music composition.

As an afterthought, I have been considering my own place in connection with these themes associated with the foundational musician-identity. I can relate easily to all of these areas. My family, specifically my mother and father have been the most supportive parents a budding musician could ask for. They paid for and transported me to piano lessons throughout my young life. They continued to support me as I added more and more musical groups into my weekly activity list. They supported and were excited by my decision to pursue music as a career. My parents did this despite lacking a background as musical professionals. While I will not detail all of my experiences as they relate to mentor support, diverse experiences, perseverance/independence, I did find myself relating to these traits the women expressed. These feelings were further encouraged as I transcribed and coded their words.

CHAPTER 6: THE EMERGING COMPOSER-MUSICIAN IDENTITY

Alternative Format

An alternative format of this chapter exists in audio form (i.e., podcast). The audio format includes narration by myself as well as the voices of the participants. It can be listened to out of context of this dissertation; however, it makes the most sense in connection with the entire study. The alternative audio format is about sharing the power of the narrative with the participants. These participants, Tessa, Gwen, and Kim, have expressed their ideas through their voices, and by sharing their compositions. This allows them to share some of the control of the dissemination of this research. In the podcast, I explore the themes that contributed to these emerging identities through their voices and occasionally, through their music. The audio podcast version of this chapter may be accessed through this stable link (<http://soundeducators.org/dissertation/>).

All three women had experiences in music education that were similar to many future music majors: they received private lessons, they participated in large ensembles, and they found a passion inside a musical world as it could be experienced in middle and high school. However, some of their experiences moved beyond a traditional musical performance experience and provided a foundation upon which they were able to build musician-composer identities, such as family support, mentor support, diverse experiences, and perseverance/independence. This chapter will move beyond the experiences needed to create a foundational identity, one for which the musician is the primary label. And explore situations that establish an emerging identity in which composer moves to the forefront. The three themes that presented in relation to emerging

composer-musician identity were: arranging as a creative introduction to composing, interest in music theory, and composition as an alternative to performance.

Arranging as Introduction to Composing

As I have mentioned previously, I began these interviews with Gwen. I conducted interviews with her for over a year, while I had nine months and three months with Tessa and Kim, respectively. Gwen mentioned arranging in our very first interview in February of 2012. In that moment when she casually discussed these ideas, I was taken aback. The surprising element was not that she arranged music; I could have expected that. What amazed me was the idea that Gwen arranged for quite some time before moving towards composing. It was an initial exercise, perhaps even a readiness activity for the composing she would later do. What excited me about this information was that I could self identify with this experience.

I arranged throughout high school and college. I would eagerly share those works with others to play and perform. However, like Gwen, it took more time before I felt comfortable creating music that was original and sharing it with others. I workshopped a few pieces on my own, dabbling here and there in new works, but none of it saw the light of day for a while. I was excited to hear from Gwen that musical arrangements were her early explorations in music creation. Then, I heard the same thing from both Tessa and Kim.

Early experiences in musical creativity

Some of the very early arrangements that these women produced could be viewed as transcriptions. Rather than seeking out music books where the music was written down for them to play, they would transcribe the music they heard into notation.

Yeah, I was in elementary. I started writing a lot of songs when I was young and notating them as well as I could. You know how kids write note figures with names underneath them. But it was a start. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

Tessa had a similar experience notating melodies that she would later play on her flute.

And so I very vividly remember when I was twelve years old, I don't know why I just didn't bring the flute downstairs, but I would press play...and then run upstairs and I'd write it down, with my flute and everything, and then come back down and press play again (laughs). And I would make up small melodic things and write them down. But I didn't really take it terribly seriously. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

She later added:

That's how I started. When I was ten or eleven or twelve or whatever I would hear something I thought was interesting and wanted to replicate it. I wanted to write it down. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

Tessa found this notation when she was older and remarked on the process and the product of these transcriptions.

But I go back and I look at how - I mean, it literally started with writing AABAC and then the little fat quarter notes with no bar lines and they were rhythmically notated incorrectly and so what would happen is as I got a little older I would pull out that thing again after a couple years just

for nostalgic purposes. I would go to read it and I'm like "I don't know what this is!" It took me a while just playing it on my flute what it actually was. I would notate it correctly. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

Kim also began arranging long before she composed original music. Her first experiences with transcribed arrangements came after her parents purchased notation software for her.

I think one day I was at Meijer or something and I saw a little - it wasn't Finale - it was some - you know, Make Music - Like, "I want *that*" and put it on my computer and was like "ooo, this is fun." I don't know. I think I just did it, in middle school actually. Now I remember. There's a program and there was a sub one day and we could do whatever we wanted and I went to a computer and it wasn't Finale it was some toy kind of thing - but you could plug in notes and it would play it back and I was like "That's so cool!" And I think that's what made me want to get the thing at Meijer.

(K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013)

I related to this experience expressed by Kim. In high school, I both transcribed and arranged music, but when I received Finale from my parents as a graduation gift I doubled the amount of arrangements I had created in a very short amount of time.

For these women, transcribed arrangements did not last very long. Soon after these initial explorations, the women began altering the music they heard. "Yeah. So I started playing with other people's stuff" (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013). For Kim, this desire to arrange soon began to increase.

I would take anything I found that I liked. Like there was a 42nd Street musical book that I had. And I really liked one of the songs so I arranged it for - I think it was a sax quartet. I don't think I actually finished that one. I was just doing it for fun because I liked it. I arranged - what did I do? I did a lot of things for fun that I never got - like I would just do it. And a lot of those are finished. They're probably on some old computer somewhere right now. And I think I did some other 42nd Street stuff for - for brass. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013)

Tessa described this desire to arrange as a compulsion. This compulsion to arrange was something that she had not delineated as different from composition.

But I felt, I felt a compulsion to write. I hadn't really separated in my head the difference writing and arranging, because I'd been doing arranging for ten years at that point. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

Gwen and Kim discussed the prospects they had for their arrangements. Both had opportunities to create and have their arrangements performed by music groups.

And then in college - actually that was my masters, I was still - one of the [university abbreviation] marching band members, I went to undergrad with him - but *two* days before a performance said "we need an ending to our show because we don't like it and we can't play it." And it was some Spanish songs. "Will you please help?" And I'm like "Ok." And so he sent me - he sent me no music. I had a recording. And he's like "We really like this recording." And I'm like "Ok..." And so I just listened to it over and over. And I'm like "when do you really need this?" And he's like,

“Tomorrow.” And I’m like (exasperated face)...Aight. And I’m “Ok..”

And so I just listened to it over and over again and came up with something for this little trumpet quartet that was going to play at the end of their show and sent it to him. And he’s like, “THAT’S AWESOME!” and stuff. So they played it for one of their shows. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013)

While Kim was asked to arrange music for a specific group, Gwen decided to create groups for which she could arrange music and would perform her work.

I formed the group and we started playing whatever music we could find or that I could arrange for the group. That was my first chance at getting to arrange things that the group could actually play. That was a really good experience. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

Eventually, these arrangements found a more permanent ensemble: her clarinet choir.

Because then I would arrange things for friends to play and I would arrange things for my clarinet choir to play in high school. So yeah. (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013)

Arranging is important

Because I noticed that each of the women had early experiences with arranging prior to composing during the interview process, I asked each of the composers if they believed arranging was a key step in their development as a composer. When I asked Kim about her thoughts on this topic, she put it quite simply. “Oh yeah. I think it’s terrifying, composing at first. Arranging was like that first step” (K. Johnson, personal communication, June 10, 2013). She later elaborated:

You can't mess this up completely. Because you know that this is good.

And you had nothing to do with it. So you can say it's good. If you're like self conscious like me. You could mess it up, yes, but we're going to try to make it better. (K. Johnson, personal communication, June 10, 2013)

Kim later confided that her comfort in arranging connected directly to her nervousness about composing. With a composition, the creator is responsible for all work produced. In an arrangement if there was criticism of the work it could be blamed on the source material.

And big yes with the arranging thing, too because you can blame it on the person or the piece. (K. Johnson, personal communication, June 10, 2013)

While Kim had an answer that spoke to her confidence in her output, Gwen discussed arranging as a step in the process of music creation. She related arranging music as a parallel to learning language.

I *do* think about that. I think about that a lot. I think about like - yeah - arranging is very essential because, like I said before when you're learning to write words, you're copying letters that you see, you're copying sentences that you've seen in a book, when babies learn to speak, they're copying things they've heard other people say in the same order they've heard other people say them. So I mean, even great composers have studied composers behind them and copied their music, maybe verbatim, to learn how it's put together. So I think it's essential. An essential step in what you do and it doesn't have to be a one-time thing. I still go back and

arrange things to learn how to do something better. (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013)

She further elaborated:

Definitely. Yeah. Definitely. That's a huge part of what I think they should do, cause I mean I really believe that when kids learn to read and write they have to do both copying things which you could think about as arranging and they also do writing their own creative short stories, their own sentences, making up things. So in music they should be able to do those same things. They should be able to learn how to arrange, so that they can copy things, and learn the ins and outs of composition from looking at other things. And then they should be able to compose their own thoughts as well or else they're truly not being fluent in music and they're not able to express it at a level that they might be able to otherwise. And more than likely I kind of believe in that idea that there's going to be fewer kids that continue to play their clarinet and trombone outside of school but they might continue to compose for a long time afterwards. And I look at other people that I know that didn't go on to do music and that's the case. It's like if they had any kind of composition skill or experience in arranging before, that's the stuff that they continue to do. Not playing their flute after high school. (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013)

While Kim needed arranging in order to gain confidence, and Gwen saw arranging as a natural stepping-stone in music prior to composition, Tessa believed that arranging provided an essential musical understanding.

I think it goes back to the age old studying what has been done to be able to take next steps, kind of thing. The thing I found interesting about when I did that - the process I took. So many college students even don't know how to take what they hear in their head and notate it. I started practicing that when I was ten years old. And so I have a really strong grasp of...(RG: so aural skills were not a problem for you) No (laughs) I think being able to flesh out music on the page made me very quickly be able to take steps away from that. Because so many students get stuck in the idea of music on the page, they get stuck in the idea of bar lines and it dictates the way that they write. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

Tessa also believed that through arranging, not only would students be able to audiate their music, but they would develop theoretical understanding of music and be able to notate with added proficiency.

TC: Yeah. For one thing it's *absolutely essential* I think, to understanding notation. I am better at notation than most of the people that I meet because I spent so much time arranging.

RG: Notation is integral to composing?

TC: (Very enthusiastic) YES! I mean, so many times I've had students or peers or somebody come to me and like "this is what it sounds like, did I notate it right?" and I'm like "how can you not know it's right?" I mean "I

wrote down words are these the words?” “Yeah those are the words.”

Rhythmic and harmonic understanding it seems like arranging really merges all those ideas in the most effective way to cover learning all those things because it’s also a lot of fun. I mean, I still have some of the things that I wrote when I was ten. I have a folder with some of them in them and I ...yeah. (smiles) So, but even, that process happens. I still do that. I mean, whenever I’m cleaning out my computer from old files, I’ll pull up Finale files and - now it’s not I’m notating them correctly but did I take the entire palette of the idea because almost everything I’ve ever written the palette of the idea is still in my head. I can go back to them and be like “I didn’t mean to do that.” I let it go back then because my skills were not good enough to put down what was in my head because the way that I heard music, if I get an idea for a piece, it happens like (snaps) *this* in my head and my whole compositional process is trying to understand what I heard. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

After all this discussion about arranging as an early development tool, the women also added why they thought arranging was important in it’s own right.

Right! Right. Right. And it’s not just parroting. Arranging can be a very beautiful artistic thing in its own right. And, I mean, one of reasons I got into composition was I liked the idea of making medleys. I thought that was a really cool thing of putting together all these separate ideas in a unique way. And I mean, a transition between those ideas can be *sooo*

amazingly crafted. I think those are very interesting. (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013)

She further elaborated on the creativity of arranging medleys:

But sometimes the transition in between those I was really interested in, like “where could this go? What could the next idea be?” It’s really interesting to see the unique voice that can still come through even in arranging. Because two people could take the exact same ideas, even the same songs, and do amazingly different things with them in terms of orchestration or the way that they go into the songs or the songs that they sequence, in the order they sequence them. So yeah. There’s a lot of personal voice you can include even there. (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013)

These women continued to arrange music after they began composing. Tessa discussed the pleasure associated with arranging medleys.

I get a lot of pleasure out of doing that. I arrange for fun. I arrange to relax. I mean, it’s a lot easier to manipulate someone else’s material than to come up with your own. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

Tessa was keen to add how arrangements created real challenges, especially in melding two distinct concepts into a new work.

I don’t know why. I think almost working on [name]’s piece might have helped because I spent so much time thinking about the juxtaposition and the interactions that melody could have with itself. I mean, I was working

with a line this way - this much material that stopped and ended here and it felt like it helped me. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013)

Finally, Kim added her thoughts on arranging versus composing in her current situation.

It's interesting. It's kind of funny. I remember I used to - I remember saying the exact statement to my band director like "I think arranging is way more fun than composing." And now, it still is fun, I wouldn't say it's way more fun than composing. But there was a time in my life when I was like "I'm not composing, I'm just going to arrange." That's all. (K. Johnson, personal communication, June 10, 2013)

Because Tessa had composition students and taught music technology classes at State University, in which she assigned composition projects, Tessa shared her thoughts on arranging as a tool for a composition teacher.

In fact, if I'm thinking about it in a teaching aspect, if I had to start for the freshman, undergrad, who had never composed before and they came to me, I would not tell them this, but if they came to me and said they wanted to arrange, I would absolutely let them do that for their very first project. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

She felt that the application of arranging in a composition curriculum could be an appropriate starting place for musical creativity no matter what interests a student had in music.

If you were to ask someone who's in love with Lady Ga-Ga to arrange, or put together a medley of her pieces, it would be an unbelievable outlet of

creativity. Because, I mean arranging, not transcribing, is such a creative process. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

Over the time we spent together, Tessa had shared information about the music technology course she taught at State University in which she integrated composition into the curriculum. She shared a particular project for which the students were asked to create a new version of *Happy Birthday*. I asked if she embedded this assignment mindfully to put arranging at the beginning of her curriculum. However, she was taken aback by the question. She had not considered the project an arrangement.

It was such a small project that I guess I didn't think about it as arranging because all we did was sing *Happy Birthday* into the computer and its purpose was to get - to have them get to know the program. So that's actually a really good point though, because I mean they're getting to know their electronic compositional tools, the actual physical tools inside the program through arrangements. That's a really good point. I didn't think about that. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

At the conclusion of our interviews and during the member check process of this research, Tessa sent me her unpublished masters document that accompanied her masters composition. In this document, Tessa described how she included the music of one of her former students in the final movement. She credits her desire to incorporate this work into her own music because of the emotional connection she had to her student's work. "It moved me to tears. My reaction moved *her* to tears." While the work is electronic, the incorporation of her student's music illustrates a creative output called sampling. In this context, sampling demonstrates Tessa's desire to continue arranging but marrying it with

composition for her final creative output (T. Cedar, unpublished masters document, 2014).

These women all arranged music prior to composing and continued to arrange music. It was an important step in their emerging identity as composer-musician. They also recognized the important place that arranging had in their development, and see the importance of arranging in the development of all composers. They see it as a tool to be used early, but also to be used to develop new skills. Arranging allowed these women to begin their identities as composers, but it also allowed them to continue to refine their music creation skills.

Music Theory Interest

Arranging was not the only theme that I noticed early during the interview process. When I first interviewed Gwen, I thought it was interesting that she had the opportunity to take a music theory class in high school. It occurred to me that music theory is one of the few setting in which music composition exercises happen consistently. Later, when I talked to Tessa and Kim and discovered that they too had taken music theory in high school, it occurred to me that I had found an important step in the journey toward developing an identity as a composer. While all three took a music theory course, this did not mean they equally loved music theory. The journey with music theory and music composition is quite nuanced and, for these three women, it is stimulated with an experience with music theory in high school, moves towards experimentation with theoretical ideas in their creative output, and finally yields a continued interest with music theory beyond music composition.

High school

It seemed unusual to me that all three women had the opportunity to take a music theory course while still in high school, as music theory is not offered in every high school as ubiquitously as band or choir. In my own high school, music theory was not an offered course, nor was it offered in any of the neighboring high schools. Tessa knew she was going to pursue music in college. Because of her self-determination as well as the interest of other students, her high school music teacher collected a group to create a high school music theory course.

He offered a music theory course for students in the high school that were planning on studying music in college. And the course was all of nine people, eight seniors and me. The course was only a semester long, but that is the “changed my life” moment because we were learning all the why’s of music. I had taken music theory alongside piano, with tetrachord, scales, and blah blah blah blah. But we were starting to learn the real stuff....I was so interested in why music would have a certain effect. Why does a major chord sound happy? Why does a minor chord sound happy? Where does this come from? (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

At Kim’s high school, the class was so popular there were two sections of music theory, though she was not as keen as Tessa to take the course. She was mostly interested because of her respect for her music teacher.

We had two music theory classes because we had so many people that wanted to take it. It’s not that way anymore, but when I was there it was

that way. I think there was about twelve in my class and probably like fifteen in the other. It was scary but I got along with my teacher really well so that made it a little less scary. But I wasn't very good at it. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

However, Gwen's interest in music theory was similar to Tessa's. She was truly interested in the opportunity to explore the theoretical aspects of music.

I was really interested in music theory, too. I was one of those geeks that tried to learn as much as I could besides doing my normal school stuff. So, when I had the opportunity to take music theory my senior year of high school I was really excited about that chance. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

As previously mentioned, composition often is incorporated as an exercise inside the music theory curriculum. For Kim, this was the first time she thought of herself as a creator of a music composition.

I had one in high school for a theory class that I had to write. So I guess two. And then I dabbled around in arranging things and putting things in Finale and stuff. But this was the first one that I sat down and (puts hand down on table) "this is a composition." (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

Unlike Kim, Tessa had explored composition on her own prior to the music theory course, but she had never considered the theoretical aspect of music and how that might help or hinder her writing.

And part of the coursework for this class was to do some writing. Very simple, create a melodic line over this harmonic passage, kind of stuff. I had never sat down and thought about harmony and melody. I played band music my whole life and so it was the flute line and how does it fit and that was it. And when I found the freedom and the expression of writing this way. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

Gwen also identified her theory class as providing impetus to music composition. According to Gwen, her music theory class allowed her to think about creating music that was not previously written by another person. “I think it pushed me beyond arrangements, too.” (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

Pretty simple things. Not really long pieces. Just kind of applying what we had studied. Not anything too big. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

While in high school, Kim still had some reservations about music theory, but her interest in composition was piqued as a result of this class. One of their projects was to compose a piece and then have it performed in class. “It was fun. People liked it. It was good” (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013). She further articulated:

I was excited. I wanted to hear it. There were no negative emotions. I know that. I wasn't really scared. I was pretty confident. I was probably more confident back then than I am now (laughs) with this kind of thing, actually. (K. Johnson, personal communication, June 10, 2013)

But for Kim, despite enjoying the performance and creation of her composition, music theory was not yet something that interested her.

It wasn't hard work-wise, I just didn't understand a lot of it. And that just scares me. And I really was not good at music theory until I got to college.

(K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

It is possible that her wariness with music theory was due to a previous experience with another teacher.

Ha, ha..I always hated music theory. *Always*. I always had a bad, I don't know. Growing up with piano lessons I think is what did it. But, I knew I was going to go into music and so I knew I'd have to take it, so that's part of it. I think my band director recommended it, probably. I don't remember for sure, but he probably did. And you have more room in your schedule when you're a senior so why not take a music class! (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

The other participants did not share Kim's aversion to music theory at this early age.

Tessa was much more invested in her high school music theory class than Kim.

Yes, I went skipping to class. And so when we first – (looking for music on computer) oh my God, I've still got it - when we first starting doing simple chord progression stuff and I could write my own melody, I'm like "I can write my own melody?" Which I had done before but for some reason it never had actually made the connection between that and "I'm composing." And that was the first time I'm like "I'm composing. Cool!" So I composed this very, very simple little piano ditty. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013)

Tessa became so enamored by music theory that she pursued a college level music theory course while still in high school.

A friend of mine was at Bachelors University, dual enrolling in language courses. And I didn't know that you could do that. And so I said "wow!" well for my senior year in high school can I dual enroll in a music course? And I wanted to dual enroll in a music theory course. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

While this high school music theory course is likely not the only reason that all three women pursued music composition degrees, they all shared this experience. It is possible that this high school music theory course gave them the confidence to compose in the first place and continue composing beyond the course. For Kim, it was this theory course that allowed her to explore composition as part of her emerging identity.

But it's also when I got interested in composition because of theory classes. Like after theory I'd run upstairs and play the chords that we were learning. And eventually I just started writing a string quartet from that. And so I submitted it to a summer program and I got in for composition and trumpet. (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

Music theory in music creation

While all three participants took a music theory class in high school class, it was not necessarily a strong interest for all three women. In particular, Kim was still somewhat averse towards music theory in high school. However, once the women entered college and composed with more consistency, music theory appeared to be

helpful in the creation of music. Gwen discussed how her undergraduate music theory courses gave her confidence to create original music.

Other than some pop songs that I had written, I hadn't composed that much before then. By the time I got into college I really started to feel like I had more confidence to write my own music then. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

She also discussed how theoretical concepts were utilized as constructs in her compositions during her undergraduate and masters coursework. These were constructs that were self-imposed, not expectations from her composition teachers.

For a long time it was form. It was definitely form and that's what I base almost all my pieces on was the form. And recently it's become more rhythm based, which I think helps a lot in developing the melody. It's weird because I've never been a percussionist. I've played in an African drumming group, but that's just kind of a hobby. Not really a big skill or anything, but the rhythm has been really important in forming a lot of the melodies I've been forming recently. (G. Watson, personal communication, April 15, 2012)

While Tessa often utilized electronics in her composition, she was interested in theory as a framework for some of her creative output. Tessa mentioned the use of theory in her compositions from her graduate coursework.

It's a very simple piece looking at it. It's really just like via the evolution of a chord structure using different kinds of synthesizer patterns. There's

not really a lot of processing on it (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013)

Tessa also discussed how important theoretical and aural concepts were to her when she began working on an acoustic work. This piece had great sentimental value as her mother, who had died when she was in high school, inspired it.

And since I had spent so much time with electronic music it was nice to get back to some acoustic stuff for a while. And I pulled it out and I started playing with it and it just - it came to me. I almost sat down and did it in one night, actually. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 15, 2013)

While Kim was not initially keen on music theory, throughout her undergraduate work and pursuing of composition in college, she began to see how theory could be useful in her creative process. In particular, one composition teacher focused on theoretical concepts in order to help Kim establish a composition portfolio.

I grew the most, like he wanted me to change the most. And I didn't always agree with it, but I always still ended up changing it. It was like a healthy mixture between the suggestion and my own preference. And he was ok with it. Like there was one time where I wrote octaves in a piano piece and he's like "you can't write octaves!" (laughs) He was like one of those guys. "You can't write octaves!" And then he's like "try minor sevenths." And I'm like "Oh god, that sounds horrible!" And so I didn't write minor sevenths but I also didn't keep the octaves. I think did like a couple different intervals in there and it ended up, I ended up liking it

more because of that suggestion. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

Finally, Gwen discussed the theory involved with one of the pieces that I was privileged to hear performed in a live concert.

I came with this idea of wanting to write a kind of ABA movement with two different motives warring with each other. Kinda back and forth. And I wanted to write something in the octatonic scale because I thought that would give me room to do a lot with a melody and a motive and still have some sort of nice accompaniment that could sneak in some major or minor chords in there. (G. Watson, personal communication, April 15, 2012)

Continued interest in music theory

All three had continuing high interest in music theory at the time of this study. What was most remarkable to me was that the participant who had the least interest in theory in the beginning, Kim, ended up so intrigued with the subject that she formally added a degree in theory. “Yeah, I just recently added a masters in theory” (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013). Both Kim and Gwen found themselves teaching theory lessons just prior to our time in discussion.

I actually taught theory and composition while I was there [summer fine arts camp] as an assistant teacher. I loved that chance. For the first time I could actually see myself as a teacher-teacher, not just clarinet teacher. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

While teaching theory allowed Gwen to feel more like an overall music teacher, Kim has envisioned herself as a music theory teacher since early in her undergraduate education. It

was a teacher during this time that allowed her to enjoy the process of learning and understanding about theory.

For me, even when I was a trumpet player in the back of my mind I was “Oh I’d like to teach theory, too.” I just think because my undergrad professor was so good. It was just magic. I would do...and he was an organist. He didn’t plan on teaching theory but he did a great job. I don’t know. I’ve always like teaching. (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

Kim revealed that she had the opportunity to teach music theory while working on her degree at State University. I asked her about this experience.

Last year I had my own theory class that was for non-majors. So I was completely in charge. The first semester was theory. The second semester was mostly composition. So for the first half we finished some theory things, the second half of the semester I did individual lessons with each student. (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

Intrigued by this, I asked Kim about how she approached and taught her theory class for non-majors.

The first semester was a big, big class. Those were the people, some of them had to be there. And that was just like “lets learn to read music!” I taught them as if they were gonna be musicians. Like, “this is what music theory is, you’re gonna get the full experience.” Some people in the past didn’t do it that way. I was a firm believer that I should. I mean I was gonna be slightly easier on them in some aspects, but I wasn’t just gonna

play music for them the whole time, although it was a big part of it. I taught music theory! And so like “you’re gonna be intelligent musicians! And some of you are in bands, and this *will* help you. I promise!” And then so the second semester, I mean there were only like eight people the second semester. Not a lot, but in the past there would have been like 3 or 4, so you know, so it was just generally a small class. They did it because they liked it. (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

Gwen talked excitedly about the opportunity to teach music theory in connection with composition and technology in her future teaching.

Especially since I’m observing an orchestra right now where the teacher really does do a lot to incorporate composition and creative projects. That’s giving me a lot of ideas. Specifically about things that she does that really work with each project. So that’s helping. Creating ideas that give them a chance to write cover songs, or play cover songs, or do some sound effects for stories. And in a music theory class where I’ll hopefully have some sort of technology as well and that will give them an opportunity to use maybe a keyboard to compose at, I think it’s helpful. And maybe get into some of the notation technology, too. (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012)

Tessa found herself intrigued with the theoretical devices used by other composers. This interest was largely because of highly influential music mentors who highlighted these tactics during coursework.

He teaches the 20th century theory techniques, which is always a big class because it's one of the theory classes other than what [Professor] does. It covers a lot of material cause you do the big three types of analysis. And you spend a lot of time getting relatively deep into set theory, which (state sarcastically) you know students just *love* to do (laughs). Which was great for me! I hate roman numeral analysis. I think it is the most asinine way to analyze a piece of 20th century music. Who gives a damn about harmony anymore? And he teaches the - I can't remember the name exactly but it's the 20th century compositional seminar which Kim and Gwen and [student] and [student] we all took together, which was a riot. That was so much fun. We spent half the semester really digging deeply into "Soldier's Tale." He - because - I'm guessing - because of his background in jazz percussion and everything, he actually studies the other multi-faceted musical effects besides rhythm and harmony. I mean, we're actually studying how the text relates to and what Stravinsky might blahblahblah and there's so much analytical intricacy going on. And it's so much more fascinating. And like if I were to teach any sort of analytical course, that's the way I would do it. There was a lot of discussion and there was a lot of testing based on, long answer kinds of questions. Where I could actually have a dialogue even on a test. And so it was really, really beneficial and it certainly changed how I look at the rhythmic construction of my own music. Because anytime you study

Stravinsky that's gonna happen (laughs). (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

Music theory was a subject that all the participants had access to early and often. In thinking about my own experiences, while I did not have a high school music theory class, I did have a piano teacher who gave me a music theory book to work from by the end of my first year of piano instruction at age seven. I continued to work on theory with my private piano teacher until I graduated high school. While in undergraduate study I was not an outstanding theory student, I have since become a self proclaimed "theory nerd" as it relates to my own music teaching. I am seen as enough of an expert in the field that I have taught ear training courses at the university level. I do not see myself teaching those courses long term, but I do enjoy embedding theory and ear training in my undergraduate music education courses.

Alternative to Performance

An interest in theory and an introduction to musical creativity through arranging were clear themes as I was interviewing these women. The third theme, the need for an alternative to musical performance, was less obvious. This theme did not emerge until I completed the coding process. Perhaps it was because they had such distinct names—music theory and arranging—that the previous two themes made themselves known early. This theme is more apparent because of what it is not: music performance.

Each participant shared her need to move away from music performance in a different way. Therefore, this section will not interweave between participants. Rather, I will explore each composer's story as it relates to that woman's need to move away from music performance.

Gwen

Gwen received two undergraduate music degrees, one of which was in clarinet performance. While she started with a passion for performance, it drifted away as she completed her undergraduate degree.

There were a myriad of factors. But that was one of them. It started out kind small and then it kinda exacerbated. And then by the time I was graduating I was just kind burnt out on clarinet. And part of it was that I just wasn't enjoying performing anymore. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

One of the possible reasons for her “clarinet burnout” could have been her clarinet professor. “The professor of clarinet is pretty hard-core in a lot of ways. She expects a lot” (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012). She further elaborated:

Whereas in the clarinet lesson I always felt that with some of my teachers that they just expected that I should know that next step. They expected that I should know the next step in the repertoire to go look for. They expected that I should know obscure clarinetists and obscure books. (Laughter) And I should go be reading. And sometimes projects that I had to do as part of my undergrad would help me find those things out but it's not like the teacher was guiding me much in that direction. (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013)

It also could have been possible that Gwen was simply enjoying her composition degree more, and thus, was drawn away from performance. In particular, Gwen enjoyed preparing and presenting her composition recitals more than her performance recitals.

“Even in the rehearsals as I was walking around and doing sound checks I was just enthralled....it was really cool” (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012).

I also felt like it was more freeing to compose and present a composition recital than it was to practice and present a performance, a clarinet recital. From my experience all I had to do was write the music, find the ensemble, and then just rehearse them and it was kinda out of my hands after that. I didn’t have to worry about messing up or getting up on stage and being nervous, especially if I wasn’t playing the piece because I could just sit back and enjoy whatever happened after that. (G. Watson, personal communication, February 19, 2012)

While I was getting to know Gwen for this study, I had the opportunity to attend one of her composition recitals. On this occasion, she was conducting her ensemble. Always playful, Gwen and a pair of her performers were in costume for the occasion. Despite this, I noticed she seemed nervous. I asked her about this experience.

GW: That was a little bit different because I conducted on the piece and I had never conducted one of my own compositions before. So that added a layer of stress that wasn’t there before.

RG: Did you feel that was necessary based on their rehearsal?

GW: Yeah, and they asked for it. One of the players just came out and asked me. He’s like “Can you conduct so you can cue me so I can count better?” (Laughs) I didn’t want to conduct them at first, but when they asked I went ahead and did it. So that was a little bit more stressful than it usually is. When possible I try not to play on my pieces, too. Even if

there's a clarinet involved. That way I can be in the position of less stress. To just sit back and enjoy it and hear everything and take it in. And also I like to steal glances at people and see how they're reacting to certain parts, because that's important to know how people are reacting to your music. And you can't do that as much when you're performing on an instrument. I don't know, maybe as a vocalist you don't have the stands sometimes in front of you to inhibit you, but sometimes you're not looking at their faces. (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013)

Whether or not Gwen's clarinet professor caused her to move away from performance, ultimately it was performance anxiety that helped her decide to stop pursuing clarinet performance.

So for me, one of the reasons why I stopped playing clarinet as much was because I felt like I was analyzing everything in the moment and feeling a sense of anxiety about that. So I think sometimes it was difficult for me to perform difficult passages in my lesson because I'd kind of psych myself out about it. It would be things that I'd practiced sometimes ninety times a day. Literally. To make sure they were solid and then I'd get to my lesson and seize up and that was a hard thing to play those passages because I was already fearful about them and then the pressure of the lesson made it worse. Performing became just as difficult for this reason. But it was anxiety over my playing and my abilities because I knew mistakes weren't fixable when something is in real time (G. Watson, personal communication, March 15, 2013)

Gwen felt much more at home being a composer than a performer.

Yeah. I feel like I need to be musically creative, somehow. And I feel like just playing an instrument is not enough for me. I feel like, you know, you can express ideas that a composer wrote down but it's also more fulfilling to think about things as a composer would think about them. (G. Watson, personal communication, May 14, 2013)

Kim

For Kim, composition was also an alternative to performance but for very different reasons than Gwen. While Gwen had performance anxiety, Kim was always eager to play and perform on her trumpet. But, as already stated, it took a while to find an instrument that she wanted to play so eagerly. She began on piano, moved to oboe, and then finally to trumpet. When she found the trumpet, it was a "hallelujah moment" and she knew she had found the instrument that truly spoke to her. "Oh yeah, I couldn't stop playing. I practiced all the time (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)"

RG: Whereas, that wasn't happening with oboe, so much?

KJ: No, I hated it. I would hide, like I mean I took lessons but I didn't practice. I'd go in and sight-read. Go in and play something and "this is great!"

RG: Was it similar when you were doing piano, too?

KJ: Yeah, I used to hide my books and pretend like I forgot them. (both laugh) (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

When she found the trumpet, her music performance experience was much different. She began to love to practice and play her instrument. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

When Kim became an undergraduate music major, she continued to enjoy her trumpet. For a time during her undergraduate degree, Kim considered double majoring in music education and music performance.

I *wanted* to double in performance because there was still something in me... (RG: In trumpet performance?) Yeah, in trumpet performance, that said “you’re gonna be in an orchestra one day” or “you’re gonna perform and be a professor one day.” But they wouldn’t let me there. You could only do one at a time. So I chose education and just practiced really hard.

(K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

At the end of her undergraduate degree, Kim performed in a recital. Sadly, she developed an issue in her lip that would prove to be a greater problem than she anticipated.

RG: So, but you did put together a trumpet recital at some point, correct?

KJ: Undergrad, yeah.

RG: Yeah. What was that like?

KJ: I injured myself a week before. So I pushed it back two weeks and I got through it. Yeah, that was rough. It was good. Somehow I managed to do it, injured, but...

RG: You were already injured at that point.

KJ: Mmmhmm. Nobody knew it. I did.

RG: Ok, did you know it?

KJ: Oh I knew it real well. Yeah.

RG: Ok.

KJ: I knew something was wrong.

RG: When do you think your injury happened?

KJ: It happened, it was *a night*. And then since I didn't stop because of that recital that's when the real injury I think happened. I think I could have avoided it if I stopped. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013)

Kim was greatly disappointed by this development. Her intention was to pursue a graduate degree in trumpet performance at the completion of her undergraduate degree.

And I went to the [Name of university] for...after my undergrad actually - I didn't tell you that - in trumpet performance. I got accepted. But I was injured at the time. And so the whole time I was there we were working through the injury. (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

She further elaborated on her injury, a torn muscle in her lip:

It ended up being a torn muscle So I left to go get surgery in Toronto and then I was crushed and didn't want anything to do with music at all. So, I didn't do anything for a while. Just waited to have the surgery and then waited my three months before I could start relearning to play thinking "nope! I'm still gonna do this!" But in that time someone suggested I started composing again. And I'm like (begrudgingly) "oh...k" (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

After the repercussions of her injury were truly understood, Kim began to consider other options including composition. However, she still primarily considered herself a trumpet performer.

And I was like “well I’m a trumpet player.” That’s what I told him. I was totally honest. “I don’t *want* to do that actually. I’ll think about it.” And so I left that and the whole drive home I’m like “what’s going on?” And so by the time I got home “I probably should do this. I was pretty much set in “ok we’re gonna be a composer now.” But I still didn’t think of myself as a composer. Because I was still relearning how to play the trumpet. I had every intention of getting my masters in composition and my doctorate in trumpet performance. (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

Even though she was making the conscious decision to switch from a career in music performance to a career in music composition, Kim had a hard time adjusting to her new future. “I didn’t want this. I really didn’t. I didn’t ask for this. I really wanted to be a trumpet player” (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013). She further elaborated:

KJ: After I ... wasn’t able to play trumpet anymore. I mean that really killed a lot of music joy for me. It’s coming back, so I think maybe one day I’ll have that again.

RG: You say it’s coming back. Do you think there is something in particular that’s helping that?

KJ: Just to keep doing it. I can't put my finger on what it is. I don't know.

(K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013)

It was after hearing about the trauma that Kim endured that I began to wonder if she was enjoying her newfound identity as a composer.

RG: I do find this just so interesting that you've been like "the reluctant composer." (KJ: yeah) That this has sort of happened to you.

KJ: I'm learning to love it. (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

And despite two degrees in composition, it was only recently that Kim had found the ability to call herself a composer.

KJ: I still considered myself pretty much just a trumpet player who does this for fun.

RG: Well that's an interesting thing. Let's talk about that. Have you ever....do you call yourself a composer?

KJ: That....just started happening.

RG: Ok. And this is your second degree in composition.

KJ: Took a long time (K. Johnson, personal communication, March 27, 2013)

After hearing about Kim's journey to composition, I began to wonder if she had never incurred the lip injury, would she still be pursuing degrees in music composition? Or rather, if Kim had never gotten hurt, would she be getting degrees in music performance and looking to perform as a career?

KJ: I have no doubts in my mind.

RG: Yeah? So even at this point - ok let me ask this question, at this point if you think you could pursue trumpet performance would composition go away?

KJ: Greatly.

RG: Yeah? So you really wish you could perform.

KJ: Yeah.

RG: I'm so sorry it's not working out for you.

KJ: I've accepted it. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

For Kim, composition is an alternative to performance because music performance is a route that is no longer possible for her. Given the opportunity, she stated that she would return to music performance. In addition, composition has given Kim some anxiety in a way that she did not have with performance.

Not at all. I was completely confident. But that could be a pride thing. I don't know. But I was always pretty confident with trumpet. I mean I was scared - mmm - that's a hard question. But yeah, I could be kind of scared but there was always a rock of confidence with trumpet. Even though the scaredness and with composition it's pretty much just scared. (K. Johnson, personal communication, June 10, 2013)

Despite all of her inhibitions and her status as "the reluctant composer," Kim truly believed this was the path she was meant to follow.

KJ: For some reason, at that time my love for - I liked teaching but I just didn't want - I had it in my mind that I was going to be a college professor. And I couldn't get that out of my mind. So that's one reason. And another

reason is just I felt - and this is my own personal life - I felt like that's what I was supposed to do. I was *called* to do that and I was obeying by going. I felt like it wasn't my decision.

RG: Called to do composition as your masters?

KJ: Yes. (K. Johnson, personal communication, May 28, 2013)

Tessa

Unlike her peers, Tessa never considered music performance for her future career. While she enjoyed participating in music performance as a high school student, it was not something that she envisioned for her future. She also did not believe she had the skills to pursue a degree in music performance.

Music was always just a part of my life. Almost like a sport. And I loved to play, but I wasn't very good, but that was ok with me because it wasn't something....I wasn't planning on being a flute performer. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

Tessa also expressed an anxiety in performance. For Tessa, music performance meant solo performance with all the focus on her. This was particularly unappealing to her.

I can't stand being looked at. I hate being looked at. In any way shape or form. I'm one of those people who has never been comfortable in their own skin. And I....I loved performing when I was younger and it's gotten worse and worse and worse the older I've gotten. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

Rather, Tessa found her niche in music as a composer sooner than the other participants. She particularly likes the concert experience as a composer rather than a

performer.

I mean my dream is to stand in the back of a dark room where nobody can see me where someone who is an amazing performer is up on stage playing my music. That is where I get satisfaction with what I do. But every single composer I know approaches his or her craft differently and uses it in an individualized way. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

Moving beyond recitals, Tessa truly enjoyed the experience of composing in a way that she never could as a performer. She was compelled to compose.

You *have* to get it out on paper. And that's the way that I compose. I compose in a fever most of the time. So they're feverish in stages. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 22, 2013)

Her mentors reinforced this passion. It was during her composition lessons at her undergraduate institution that she felt her identity as a musician truly take hold.

Well, he was definitely introducing dedication and passion to music as an art form. I developed as a musician a lot more in general with him at the beginning. He was the first that brought out that kind of particular development. (T. Cedar, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

In Spring 2013, I attended a concert orchestrated entirely by Tessa. It featured electronic works by Tessa, her three composition students (who all happened to be female), and other peers who had submitted works to the program. While Tessa was busy organizing equipment and generally producing the concert, I happened to notice something special after one of the selections.

What's interesting to me at this point is that the audience gets silent. While hers is a selection with an extra-musical element [video projection] the room holds their attention much more so with this work than any other piece up to this point. It made me happy for her student, but happier for Tessa. She set up this atmosphere for her students and it seems that it's been received exactly as she intended. And afterwards, the room breaks out in applause again in a way that none of the other works had received. Immediately after this, the room goes back to the buzz of "music as background noise" – even with a live guitar player in the room. (T. Cedar, Thick Description 2013)

Tessa set up the concert to feature her students' works, even more so than the music she had created. There was something so generous about this. Tessa enjoyed being in the background of the concert because she identified as a composer, but it might also be because she was just a caring teacher.

Of the three major themes discussed in this chapter that relate to an emerging composer-musician identity, this last one, a need for an alternative to performance was the only theme to which I could not relate. As my grandmother has stated every time I come to visit her, I came out of the womb as a "ham." I have always loved to put on a show in whatever way I could. I also have not experienced any situation that would limit my ability to musically perform. My ability to identify as a composer has always been fragile. I do compose music, and I share that music, but I am hesitant to talk about myself with others as a composer. If pressed or it seems helpful to my argument, I do admit to a compositional identity. However, given the similarities of my experiences to my

participants' experiences with this one exception, the need for an alternative to performance is cemented as an important theme in the emerging composer-musician identity.

Summary

These women began to label themselves as composers because of these defining experiences. The foundational musician-composer experiences also were important to create a pathway toward composition, but ultimately the emerging composer-musician experiences appeared to enable them to identify as a composer. These three areas, arranging as a creative introduction, interest in music theory, and a need for an alternative to music performance emerged as important themes. For these women, these allowed them to move beyond calling themselves just a musician, and to move towards claiming their identities as composers.

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

No matter what class I teach, even if it's an ensemble, I'll try to include composition in it somehow. (G. Watson, personal communication, March 4, 2012)

Summary of the Study

Purpose and research questions

With the goal of understanding what experiences and musical identities of women who choose to compose, the purpose of this research was to examine the experience and musical identity of women who choose to compose music.

This study was guided by the following Grand Tour question and sub-questions:

Why do these women choose to compose?

1. What experiences and relationships have played a formative role in shaping these women as composers?
2. What experiences and relationships allowed these women to self-identify as a composer?
3. What influences, if any, do these women perceive that their gender has had upon their approach to composing?

Methodology

This investigation was a multiple case study of three female graduate composition majors enrolled at State University, a large midwestern state university. These were the only three graduate women enrolled in the composition program at the time, so their

involvement was ideal. The primary data collection involved four or five interviews between each participants and myself, email communications, one focus group interview with all participants, and various field observations at composition studio classes and composition recitals.

Trustworthiness was established by the collection of multiple sources of data, member checks by the participants, and peer review of the coding process and cross-case analysis. *Initial* coding was used along with *in vivo* and *axial* coding. I organized the codes of all participants relevant to the research questions into themes and categories. The final results of my analysis yielded two steps in their identity construction as musicians and composers: the foundational musician-composer and the emerging composer-musician.

Throughout this process, I related my own experiences as a musician and composer. This was done to reiterate my lens as someone interested in both the creation of music and as someone who would like to see composition embedded in all music curriculums.

Overview of findings

It is important to begin with the limitations of this study. These findings cannot be used to generalize the experience of all female composers or all graduate students who are female composers. Rather these findings shed a light on the musical experiences and compositional identities of these three women and to a lesser degree, myself. I hope that these findings can give the field of music education some perspective on the opportunities we give inside the music classroom. Even more importantly, I hope that these findings showcase what pathways we inadvertently shut down in order to focus on

music performance. Despite the inability to generalize these findings to all female composers, I hope this study invites music educators to consider how we might allow for non-music performance identities to flourish inside the K-12 music education sphere.

What experiences and relationships have played a formative role in shaping these women as composers? There were four main themes at play in the foundational musician-composer identity: family support, positive mentors, multiple experiences, and perseverance/independence. For these women, the breadth of experiences in each of these themes supported importance. Only one of these categories, family support, directly matches the work done by Carter with undergraduate composers (Carter, 2008). These foundational experiences played a role in their beliefs in their identities as musicians and their interests in exploring composition. The wording order in the identity is important because although these foundational themes were present, the women did not at first truly view themselves as composers despite participating in compositional activities. These themes supported their identities as musicians and gave them the confidence to explore creative tasks inside and outside of music.

Two of the themes, family support and mentor support, in the foundational musician-composer identity are related to people. In the identity literature this is one of the important facets that enable the development of a musical identity (Davidson & Burland, 2006; MacDonald et al., 2002). Diversity of musical experiences makes up the third theme\ . The remaining theme, impendence/perseverance, could be viewed as a coping mechanism—another tool used in formation of musical identity (Davidson & Burland, 2006).

What experiences and relationships allowed these women to self-identify as a composer? Differing from the foundational musician-composer identity, the emerging composer-musician identity and themes that supported this identity allowed the women the confidence to self-identify as composers. These three themes—arranging as a creative introduction, interest in music theory, and a need for an alternative to music performance—established a scenario in which all the women felt confident to call themselves a composer, though in some cases the label was fragile. While I found the ability to relate to two of these themes, my connection to the final theme, a need for an alternative to music performance, diverted my path from the paths of these women. I believe that the absence of this third theme is one reason that I struggle to self-identify as a composer. While Carter did not discuss this theme in his cross-case study with undergraduates (Carter, 2008), he did note an aversion to performance as a theme for his single female participant (Carter, 2010).

The first two themes, arranging as a creative introduction and interest in music theory, are experiences and are important in foundation of musical identity (Davidson & Burland, 2006; MacDonald et al., 2002). A need for an alternative to performance could also be viewed as a coping strategy in order to make up for the lack of mentors or experiences in this area (Davidson & Burland, 2006) It is also possible that this coping strategy could have been put in place because of the churn created by crisis; because they could not perform, they found another way to engage in music through composition.

What influences, if any, do these women perceive that their gender has had upon their approach to composing? This is the question I was unable to answer during this study. I was unable to answer this question not because I did not ask it, but because

the women themselves were relatively unaware of any difficulties they faced related to their gender. It is difficult to realize what you do not have or what opportunities were not given to you, because you did not know they were absent. Studying gender issues in composition is a particularly difficult task because the act of composing is most often done in solitude.

Unlike performance ensembles, or music education, or conducting, the composition world does less work as a unified force. It was quite clear during the studio classes I attended at State University that the composition students were unsure how to act as a collective. Collaborative opportunities in performance, music education, and conducting allow musicians to edit their work on the spot and receive feedback on their adaptations immediately, typically with an audience present. This kind of feedback is possible, but takes place less frequently in the world of music composition. These women could only guess at what was offered to their male counterparts and not to them. Gender issues did not generally concern them as they moved forward with their creative work.

Perhaps this is a question that these young women are not yet ready to answer, given the somewhat solitary nature of composition. While these women were intent in their future as a composer, they were all still young. In McCutchan's book, she interviewed composers, four of whom were female. Only one of the four women mentions the noticeable lack of women in the composition field. Tower states:

Right now I'm trying to understand the whole process of becoming a composer, and a woman composer in particular. We're all taught by males, basically, and the books and the curriculum are all male. There's an incredible network of structures---in terms of the way things are taught,

read, published, reported---which are all-male. There are also all-male networks of funding. I always felt like an outsider, but I never understood quite why. I'm just beginning to piece this together. (McCutchan, 1999, p. 60)

Tower, who was 61 years old at the time this book was published, was still grappling with issues of gender in music composition. If she was still unsure of the influences that her gender has had upon her approach to composing, it is unsurprising that Tessa, Gwen, and Kim also were unsure.

Why do these women choose to compose? These women compose because they must. These women compose because they felt compelled to do so. This compulsion happened independently and in conjunction with many of the experiences that allowed for a foundational musician-composer identity and later an emerging composer-musician identity. It was only after these many experiences and support structures that these women had the confidence to call themselves composers and realized their compulsion to compose must be nurtured and continually expressed.

I have a strong identity as a musician and educator, but I have also pursued multiple degrees in those fields. I am less confident in my own personal compositional identity. I struggle when writing my biography for publications to type the words, "Robin Giebelhausen is a composer." I can identify with all the experiences in the foundational musician-composer identity, but I can only identify with two of the three themes involved with the emerging composer-musician identity. While I love to perform, it seems unfortunate to me that only when there were obstacles on the road to music performance did these women firmly settle on a compositional identity.

Implications for Music Education

While generalizations of these women to all experiences inside music education and music composition would be inappropriate, the stories of these women highlight some possible opportunities that should be considered in both K-12 music education and music teacher education. The opportunities for experiences include suggestions for elementary music education, secondary music education, non-performance music education, the incorporation of arranging as a creative task in music education curriculums, and music teacher education.

Elementary experiences

Only Gwen specifically mentioned her elementary music experiences as formative, but all three women mentioned early experiences as important in their development as a musician. Their lack of input on the subject of elementary school music could be because they did not remember these experiences, because these experiences were minimally influential, or both. No matter what the reason, early experiences in music have a profound affect upon a person's future potential as a musician (Gordon, 2003, 2007). Likewise, the more opportunities a child has to experience creative play in music, the more adept and comfortable they become with creative activities. Music performance begets more music performance. The same is true for music composition and other musically creative explorations (Stauffer, 2003).

As noted in chapter two, the major pedagogues in elementary music education place various levels of importance on creative play in a music curriculum. Kodály and Dalcroze place little emphasis on musically creative tasks for students, while Gordon and Orff explore musical creativity in different ways (Choksy, 1981; Frazee, 2007; Gordon,

2007; Keetman, 1984; Mead, 1996). Beyond the pedagogies of these leaders in elementary music education, while there is general belief that teaching music in elementary school supports creativity, music composition tasks are commonly viewed as the least important skill to develop in the curriculum (Abril & Gault, 2006).

Although experiences in elementary school that utilize musically creative tasks are not solely responsible for a person's development as a composer, it is possible that these experiences could provide some of the foundation for a musician-composer identity in students. According to Orman, elementary teachers utilize composition or improvisation only four percent of the time in their elementary music classroom (Orman, 2002). If musically creative tasks were incorporated often and early in a music curriculum, students might assume that music creation is a natural part of musicianship rather than something only reserved for the select few.

Secondary experiences

American secondary school music programs, like their counterparts in elementary schools, have struggled to incorporate composing, arranging, and improvisation into the school curriculum (Abril & Gault, 2008; Schopp, 2006; Zitek, 2008). The exceptions to these circumstances are in jazz programs, but this exploration of improvisation is often specific to a style rather than overall improvisation. While some teachers have made efforts to include composition assignments in the large ensemble setting, they often are frustrating experiences for the instructors as they feel underprepared to teach creative tasks in an ensemble setting (Menard, 2015).

Secondary school music teachers often worry about community and tradition: "This is what has been done in the past. This is what must be done in the future. We have

always given four concerts a year with this particular kind of repertoire; we must continue to do so.” I suggest that secondary school ensemble programs would do well to rethink this mentality. Why must every concert incorporate music from famous dead white male composers? Why must there be four concerts each year? Could students be equal or better musicians with three programs and attention paid to music history, music theory, and music creation? Could one program feature works created by students? The incorporation of creative musical tasks within the large ensemble program could be helpful not only to the program as a whole but also to the developing musical identity of each student.

K-12 non-performance music experiences

American music schools commonly offer degrees in music performance, composition, ethnomusicology and world music, music education, music history, and music theory. While focus on a singular instrument is traditional at most schools of music because of the requirements of the National Association for Schools of Music (NASM), most high school music programs prepare young musicians for only one of these degrees: music performance. Abril and Gault found that American high schools offer very few music classes that do not use performance as the central focus (2008). Non-performance music classes include music history, music appreciation, music theory, music composition, music technology, and various other school and community specific curricula. Given the number of higher education degrees in music other than performance versus the number and variety of music courses offered in secondary schools, secondary schools seem to fail to prepare students for the multitude of music degrees.

While Gwen and Tessa were able to function in a music ensemble, their

performance anxiety prevented them from further pursuing music performance. It is possible there are people whose performance anxiety prevents them from entering into any music situation where there are high levels of performance expected, even in a group. Secondary schools should consider opportunities for music where music-making is shared informally, but with much less emphasis on public performance. As experienced by all three participants in some way, the culture of high-stakes music performing in either ensembles or solo performance can promote injury and/or performance anxiety. While others have articulated the need for alternative music courses (Davis, 2009; Kratus, 2007; Williams, 2011), I also suggest that the focus of these courses should not always revolve around public performance. This does not mean that the courses are devoid of music making experiences, simply that the focus is placed upon experience and not performance. Students interested in music creation but not music performance could be drawn towards these kinds of classes. Music creators and music performers need not be mutually exclusive.

Finally, I ask elementary and secondary music teachers to consider of all the reasons why students do not continue with music after they exit our classrooms. Some of these reasons may be cultural, familial, or involve a general dislike of the subject. However, perhaps many of the music classes that K-12 schools offer after elementary school are simply not relevant to some of the current student population. It may also be that we are not offering a curriculum that provides for independence in musicianship. Can our students play music on their own or without our instruction? Can our students find ways to interact with music without the collaboration of others? Do our students have the confidence to create music independently? Do the students who are not interested in a

career in music still see pathways for music in their lives after they graduate from high school? Is our job to teach our students music only when they sit within the confines of our classroom, or do we give them the knowledge to keep music with them throughout their lives?

Arranging as an introduction to creative activity

As I mentioned in chapter six, I was quite surprised that all three participants engaged in arranging activities prior to formal explorations in composition. It seemed an unlikely coincidence, but it did seem like a safe way to explore musical creativity without the pressure of creating a fully original work. While these three women uniformly explored arranging prior to composition, only one had an experience with improvisation. The sole participant in improvisatory music activities, Kim, preferred to avoid this exercise and opted to pre-compose her jazz improvisations solos rather than truly explore improvisation.

The major methodologies that advocate for musical creativity in elementary music classrooms focus on improvisation and composition (Frazee, 2007; Gordon, 2007; Keetman, 1984). While Orff does share some thoughts on arranging, children typically only experience arranging as it relates to musical form: selecting whole pieces of music to put together in a certain order. Arranging in the Orff pedagogy does not occur as related to melody, harmonic, rhythmic, or expressive qualities (Frazee, 2007; Keetman, 1984).

In general, I was surprised by how little research literature there was on music arranging in the music classroom, despite its prevalence in popular culture. Arrangements of musical works can be heard on a daily basis from music publishers, popular music

artists, commercials, movie trailers and soundtracks. However, if we look at the National Standards in music of 1994, composition and arrangement are combined into one standard. Improvisation is separate. Composing and improvising have been topics in music education research many times (Auh, 1997; Auh & Walker, 1999; Azzara, 1993; Barrett, 2006; Beegle, 2010; Brinkman, 1994; Brophy, 2005; Burland & Davidson, 2001; Burnard, 1995, 2000a, 2000b; Carter, 2008; Charles, 2004; Dogani, 2004; Green, 1990; Guderian, 2008; Hall, 2007; Hickey, 1997, 2001; Kaschub, 1997; Koutsoupidou & Hargreaves, 2009; Kratus, 1985, 1989, 1994, 1995; Lewis, 2013; Madura, 1996; Menard, 2015; Orman, 2002; Schopp, 2006; Stringham, 2010; Webster, 2002; Wehr-Flowers, 2006), but arranging does not enjoy the same attention as composition (Duchan, 2012; Green, 2008; Paparo, 2013; Randles, 2009).

If we look for parallels in other art forms of arranging as a creative tool, we see how often it is used to help the development of artists. In creative writing or fiction storytelling, arranging is often a first step on the journey to develop a voice in writing. In Jenkins' work "Convergence Culture" (2008), he explores an online universe dedicated to Harry Potter fanfiction. Fanfiction is a literary device in which the author uses the constructs of a previously written story from another author. The new author elaborates on the story in areas previously left unexplored. Often these explorations change perspective, act as sequels or prequels, or on occasion these stories break free from the previously established canon and use the characters to engage in a completely new story that could not occur in the same world as the original story. Jenkins (2008) goes on to discuss how fanfiction writers use these stories, and how the online communities surrounding fanfiction receive feedback on their writing in ways that are safe and often

anonymous.

Fanfiction or arranging in writing is not only used as a writing exercise to improve one's ability to create a story. Many authors have published works that previously could have been considered fanfiction. *The Mists of Avalon* by Marion Zimmer Bradley further explores the world of Camelot but focuses on the female characters, particularly Morgaine or Morgan le Fay (Bradley, 1982). *Scarlett* is a sequel to *Gone With the Wind* but written by a different author (Ripley, 1991). *Wicked* by Gregory Maguire changes the perspective on *Wizard of Oz* from Dorothy to the "Wicked Witch", Elphaba (Maguire, 1995). *Death Comes to Pemberley* is a sequel of *Pride and Prejudice* (James, 2011), while *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* follows the journey of two minor characters in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Stoppard, 1967). One of the most interesting works of fanfiction is the series book *Fifty Shades of Grey* by E.L James (James, 2011). While the worked that is published does not resemble a work of fanfiction, it was originally written with the characters from the Twilight series on an online forum much like the one Jenkins describes in his article. It was later rewritten with new character names and has since become one of the most successful novels published to date (Eakin, 2015).

But storytelling is not the only art that utilizes arranging as a creative exploration, particularly for its young artists. Visual art has a long history of using the works of others to inspire new pieces of art. For much of visual art history, the hope was to capture reality by arranging it on a canvas or in stone. A portrait is often an arrangement of a person as certain facets are placed on a canvas in order to share how the person wanted to be remembered, not necessarily how they were in everyday life (Collier, 1910). Beyond

reality, artists often enjoy the opportunity to capture classic moments from well-known stories and religious texts. The Madonna and Child has been rearticulated into art countless times (Earls, 1987). Much of the reason for rearranged works of art is due to the way art is taught from masters and in schools.

Art educators appear to be more interested in creation rather than recreation. In a music classroom, students learn to perform Pachelbel's *Canon in D* exactly as it was intended or as best as the teacher can interpret. Occasionally we ask our students to interpret certain ideas in music like phrasing, breathing, inflection, or dynamics, but often the music teacher has prepared these topics to guide students toward the desired answers. After the work is completed, the teacher hopes some musical concepts are learned in the process of the performance of the work. In an art classroom, students are given an artistic concept and are allowed some freedom within the concept to arrange the idea however they see fit. They are not expected to exactly replicate an original work, rather they are expected to use an idea to frame how they would like to arrange their art (Efland, 1990).

Music education would do well to consider exploring arranging as a means to accessing composition in an approachable way. Our history is filled with famous artists who have established themselves with arrangements of music in addition to original works. Beginning with cantus firmus, paraphrase, and parody mass, many styles and genres of music were created with the use of preexisting music (Burkholder & Palisca, 2014a). In theme and variation a composer would often arrange new music in several different iterations around a preexisting or new theme (Burkholder & Palisca, 2014b). Most recently, arrangements can be heard in cover songs. A cover song is a vernacular piece of music played by new artist. Sometimes, the cover is played exactly as the

original artist performed the work, but many times the music is recalibrated to match the musician playing the work (Plasketes, 2013). Most recently, the TV show “The Sing Off” was entirely based upon a cappella music groups arranging previously composed pieces and performing them in new styles and versions (NBC, 2015). As common as arranging is in our musical history and in other creative arts, I believe it is time for all music teachers and music researchers to more fully utilize arranging in our creative pedagogy and music curriculums.

Music Teacher Education

While the previous implications—which concerned elementary music education, secondary music education, non-performance music education, and the incorporation of arranging as a creative task in music education curriculums—depend upon music teachers to execute, it is also up to music teacher educators to stress the importance of these concepts when preparing future music teachers. By imparting these ideas to both undergraduate and graduate students in music education, music teacher practitioners and music teacher educators will make the greatest difference for the field.

Implications for Composition

Music education is not the only field that could gain insight from this research. Composers, especially composer educators might consider some of the thoughts presented from this study. The stories from these three women describe career trajectories that would have allowed them to be successful in music performance if there had not been either an aversion or an injury that prevented them from pursuing that career. However, more young composers might develop if there were options for music classes in K-12 education that were not solely focused on high-pressure performance outcomes.

Both music composition and music education might consider ways to collaborate so that K-12 music education is an environment that nurtures future music composers as well as music performers. Collegiate composition educators can only educate future music composers if young composers decide to take composition lessons. Without more experiences with music composition in K-12 education, some students may never realize their potential in music composition and thus never decide to pursue composition lessons.

Suggestions for Future Research

One of the beliefs I have after working closely with these women during this study is that we need to tell more stories like theirs. The story of women in composition simply is under-told. Interviewing more female composers and injecting their stories into the public sphere would be filling this current hole in the research. It is my hope to continue this research with other anonymous living composers as well as some more well-known living composers. I encourage more researchers to pursue this line of investigation.

This study is unable to make assertions in how the development of this compositional identity varies from female to male composers. While it will likely require more case study work given the rather solitary nature of the composer and their work, more case studies of young composers would benefit the field in order to understand the differences between a female compositional identity and a male compositional identity. It is also possible that this kind of case study work might reveal that there is no difference at all between genders in compositional identity.

I previously suggested the inclusion of arranging into the music curriculum.

Given this possibility, I further suggest research that explores how arranging music allows students to explore creative tasks in music. Music education would benefit from more research done on the role of arranging in the curriculum alongside studies in composing and improvising. While there is much research on composition and improvisation, little research exists on arranging in the music classroom.

While I initially delimited this research to those who identify as composers rather than those who identify as songwriters, the exploration of identity as it relates to female songwriters might also yield interesting results. Sandra Snow has worked with many all-state choirs in various states across the country, many times as the conductor for the all-women choral ensemble. She shared with me an antidote about these situations as it relates to women and songwriting.

In recent years, I became interested in the ways singers in all-state or honor choirs made music outside of the formal choral classroom. I had a theory that, like being bi-lingual, they were likely bi-musical—able to negotiate the formal music-making alongside informal or individual activities. I remember asking a choir of high school women how many were composing their own music. To my surprise, only a smattering of hands went up, and reluctantly or apologetic at best. This stuck with me, my perception that they felt embarrassed at acknowledging their composition. In another setting, I asked the question again with the same result but this time I followed up with a twist on the question. By asking, “how many of you are writing your own lyrics and songs,” I was curious if the response would change. Indeed, hands flew in the air, and this time

not apologetically. I have replicated this now over a period of years and have come to believe that young women identify composition as something “other”—and feel nervous identifying with the activity. Songwriting, however, has a very different connotation and is a label with which young women connect. Interestingly, I conducted my first all-state men’s choir recently and asked the same questions “How many of you compose your own music.” I wish I could say I was surprised, but I wasn’t—hands eagerly raised and quite a few of them—they see it as an activity open to them. (S. Snow, personal communication, August 2, 2015)

Finally, I would like to see research address the prevalence of non-performance-focused music classes in secondary schools and explore possible connections between those classes and who matriculates as undergraduate music majors in non-performance degrees. Do certain students view certain degrees as a possibility because of the opportunities that were afforded to them in high school or are other circumstances at play? More specifically, how many composition majors explore this degree following their enrollment in a high school music theory class?

Closing Thoughts

In the last few years of my life, I have had fewer opportunities to perform. While I love and relish the opportunities to do so, it simply has been less possible because of my new career in higher education and the schedule that accompanies that career. However, I have noticed that during this time of diminishing musical performance, I have created more. In the last five years I have written and arranged over forty pieces of music. These

songs have been shared via recording, informally for my students, as teaching examples, and as assignments for music teacher training courses. Most recently, I have asked my pre-service music teachers to create songs both for use with children and to further develop their musicianship. In one course, the students created a song in a vernacular style in small groups. This project is based on the curricular work John Kratus developed in the “Secondary Classroom Music” course at Michigan State University. The students share this song with their classmates and later share it in a public performance. Both to comfort my students and continue to develop my own creative skills, I created a song alongside my students. Sharing my music with my students has been both a humbling experience and a rewarding one. In particular, this last spring I shared a song that showcased a rather vulnerable side of my personality to my students. I am not sure I have ever been so nervous for a performance. I am used to sharing things of a bit more light-hearted nature. This was honest. It was about them. (Please note: I sometimes call my students “monkey children”.)

Just for My Students (<https://soundcloud.com/robingiebes/just-for-my-students>)

– lyrics and music by Robin Giebelhausen

Well hey there! How ya doing, monkey children?

I’m not sure I’ve ever been so proud to see you

Except for the other day when you did that thing

that thing you do every day, when you just appear.

Well hey there! It’s nice to see you, monkey children.

I know you’ve been working so hard this year

Please believe me when I say, “I know and I care”

You really do mean the world to me

You get me forever

No matter how many years you teach

No matter how many states between us reach

My friends, you are important to me

Never to forget

You get me forever

Well look at you, you got a job, monkey children

Now you're really getting into this teaching thing

But if one day you still have a burning question

I'm still here for you, you can call on me.

But just a thought, though I care, monkey children

I don't know it all and I'm far from perfect.

I'm not always on time though I promise I try

Just cause you graduated, doesn't mean goodbye

You get me forever

No matter how many years you teach

No matter how many states between us reach

My friends, you are important to me

Never to forget

You get me forever

You may never need me again.

If you don't. That's fine.

You may never want to see again my stupid face

That's cool.

But if sometime you want to reconnect

So do I

So do I

You get me forever

No matter how many years you teach

No matter how many states between us reach

My friends, you are important to me

Never to forget

You get me forever

After I finished the performance of my composition, I quickly thanked my students for their applause and moved to dismiss them as quickly as possible. My heart was pounding out of my chest. I had no idea what they thought. Over the next few days, several students approached me about how they really loved the song. Later when I performed it at the concert, more students and audience praised the music.

Perhaps it was because I was so vulnerable. Perhaps it was because I performed it

live for an audience. No matter the reason, after that concert I felt a little bit more connected to my participants. I felt like I understood those three women just a bit more. I knew how different it felt to be involved with a music performance versus a performance of one's own composition. Like my participants, my identity is still an emerging composer-musician. Despite some of my fragile feelings in this identity, I feel a bit more comfortable saying, "Robin Giebelhausen, composer."

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Pilot Study Consent Form

Consent form for

A qualitative examination of a female composer

-R Giebelhausen-

For this study you will be asked to interview at least three times with the primary researcher. These interviews may be done in person or over online video interfaces.

Interview questions will relate to personal musical history, personal music composition history, peer and mentor interaction, compositional choices, issues of gender in music and composition, and future musical plans. From this study, I am hoping to write a research article about your personal journey as a female composer and musician. If you wish, you will be provided access to all findings of this research.

The answers you provide will be kept completely anonymous. Your name or your school is in no way tied to your feedback. Your participation in this survey is strictly voluntary that you can stop participating at any time. You may also skip any interview questions that you are not comfortable with. All data will be kept secure.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact me, Robin Giebelhausen, by email: rgiebelhasuen@gmail.com or Dr. Cynthia Taggart, by email at taggartc@msu.edu or via office 209 Music Practice Building East Lansing, MI 48824, Phone: (517) 432-9678

X_____

Please print your name

X_____

Sign here if you agree to these terms and are willing to participate in this study

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

Consent form for

A qualitative examination of a three female graduate music composition students

-R Giebelhausen-

For this study you will be asked to interview at least three times with the primary researcher. These interviews may be done in any venue of your choosing. Interview questions will relate to personal musical history, personal music composition history, peer and mentor interaction, compositional choices, issues of gender in music and composition, and future musical plans. In addition, I will observe your studio classes and ask follow up interview questions regarding what took place in this class. These interviews will take place as a group or online via email. Finally, if possible I would like to observe one rehearsal and one performance of your original work and follow up with interview to ask questions about the interactions during this rehearsal process. From this study, I am hoping to complete my dissertation and create a separate article about your personal journey as a female composer and musician. If you wish, you will be provided access to all findings of this research.

The answers you provide will be kept completely anonymous. Your name or your school is in no way tied to your feedback. Your participation in this survey is strictly voluntary that you can stop participating at any time. You may also skip any interview questions that you are not comfortable with. All data will be kept secure.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact me, Robin Giebelhausen, by email: rgiebelhasuen@gmail.com or Dr. Mitch Robinson, by email at mrob@msu.edu.

X _____
(Please print your name)

X _____
(Sign here if you agree to these terms and are willing to participate in this study)

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form for Gwen Watson

Consent form for

A qualitative examination of a three female graduate music composition students

-R Giebelhausen-

For this study you will be asked to interview at least three times with the primary researcher. These interviews may be done in any venue of your choosing. Interview questions will relate to personal musical history, personal music composition history, peer and mentor interaction, compositional choices, issues of gender in music and composition, and future musical plans. In addition, I will observe your studio classes and ask follow up interview questions regarding what took place in this class. These interviews will take place as a group or online via email. Finally, if possible I would like to observe one rehearsal and one performance of your original work and follow up with interview to ask questions about the interactions during this rehearsal process. From this study, I am hoping to complete my dissertation and create a separate article about your personal journey as a female composer and musician. If you wish, you will be provided access to all findings of this research.

The answers you provide will be kept completely anonymous. Your name or your school is in no way tied to your feedback. Your participation in this survey is strictly voluntary that you can stop participating at any time. You may also skip any interview questions that you are not comfortable with. All data will be kept secure.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact me, Robin Giebelhausen, by email: rgiebelhasuen@gmail.com or Dr. Mitch Robinson, by email at mrob@msu.edu.

X _____
(Please print your name)

X _____
(Sign here if you agree to these terms and are willing to participate in this study)

Addendum for G. Watson

As we have done three previous interviews, I would like to include this information for this project as well. Please initial one of the following statements regarding these interviews.

X _____ Yes, I consent to the inclusion of the three previous interviews for this project.
(Initials)

X _____ No, I do not want those previous interviews used for this project.
(Initials)

Appendix D: Initial Interview Questions

Initial Interview Questions (expanded upon as interviews progressed)

1. What's your story? Music related, composition related? How did you get here?
2. Musical family? Who in your family was helpful in your journey? How?
3. Music teachers? Who was helpful? How?
4. Music composition? How did this happen for you? Were you encouraged by your K-12 education to compose?
5. What sort of extra curricular musicking have you participated in?
6. Other creative applications in your life? Relate to music?
7. For you, which takes a greater precedent: Performance vs. Composition?
8. As you have grown up, have you encountered any other peers that composed? Was it helpful? Did you socialize about creative musical choices?
9. Have you found yourself sensitive to any gender issues in composition? If so, what have you noticed?
10. What are your current future plans after graduation?

Appendix E: IRB Exemption Letter

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

April 19, 2013

To: Mitchell Robinson
208 Music Practice Building

Re: **IRB# x13-045e** Category: Exempt 2
Approval Date: January 30, 2013

Title: A Qualitative Examination of Three Female Graduate Student Composition Majors

The Institutional Review Board has completed their review of your project. I am pleased to advise you that **your project has been deemed as exempt** in accordance with federal regulations.

Please note, this exempt determination letter was reissued on 4/19/13 to reflect a change in PI. Dr. Krafus was replaced with Dr. Robinson.

The IRB has found that your research project meets the criteria for exempt status and the criteria for the protection of human subjects in exempt research. **Under our exempt policy the Principal Investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of human subjects** in this project as outlined in the assurance letter and exempt educational material. The IRB office has received your signed assurance for exempt research. A copy of this signed agreement is appended for your information and records.

Renewals: Exempt protocols do not need to be renewed. If the project is completed, please submit an Application for Permanent Closure.

Revisions: Exempt protocols do not require revisions. However, if changes are made to a protocol that may no longer meet the exempt criteria, a new initial application will be required.

Problems: If issues should arise during the conduct of the research, such as unanticipated problems, adverse events, or any problem that may increase the risk to the human subjects and change the category of review, notify the IRB office promptly. Any complaints from participants regarding the risk and benefits of the project must be reported to the IRB.

Follow-up: If your exempt project is not completed and closed after three years, the IRB office will contact you regarding the status of the project and to verify that no changes have occurred that may affect exempt status.

Please use the IRB number listed above on any forms submitted which relate to this project, or on any correspondence with the IRB office.

Good luck in your research. If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at 517-355-2180 or via email at IRB@msu.edu. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Harry McGee, MPH
SIRB Chair

c: Robin Giebelhausen



**Office of Regulatory Affairs
Human Research
Protection Programs**

**Biomedical & Health
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(BIRB)**

**Community Research
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**Social Science
Behavioral/Education
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**Initial IRB
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