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Mission

The Journal of Performing Arts Leadership in Higher Education is a peer-reviewed journal dedicated to the enrichment of leadership in the performing arts in higher education.

Goals

1. To promote scholarship applicable to performing arts leadership
2. To provide juried research in the field of performing arts leadership
3. To disseminate information, ideas and experiences in performing arts leadership

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FORGIVENESS, NOT PERMISSION

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Keynote Address

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Good morning, everyone. What an incredible honor it is to have been asked to address you today. This request comes with a level of trust and respect that I do not take for granted. I imagine there are some in the audience who heard me speak just a few weeks ago at the CMS Conference in Miami. Forgive me if I repeat a few points, as I believe they're still as important today as they were just a few weeks ago. For those of you with whom I've had the pleasure of standing before previously, you know that it's important to me to acknowledge that I am 100% a product of public-school music education. I salute those of you in the audience who have ever answered the call to teach music at the grade school level. I stand here as a testament to your tireless work and dedication. In this moment, and if you'll indulge me, I would like to take a moment to recognize my high school band director, Mr. Lloyd H. Ross, who passed away just 11 days ago.

Mr. Ross read my first attempts at composition with both the Newark High School wind and jazz ensembles. I had written a David Holsinger knock-off called "Accolades" (it was the 90s, mind you) that I still have to this day. He recognized and nurtured my leadership potential, placing me on podiums on both the football field and on the concert stage. He never kicked me out of the band room, where I found safety and refuge from hostile high school hallways, though he was well within his right to put me out. He laid the bricks along my path and paved the way to my life's passion, calling, meaning, and purpose. I know every one of us in this room had a Lloyd Ross, and even were and still are a Lloyd Ross. You all are actively paving the path to students' life's passion, calling, meaning, and purpose — either via one-on-one interaction and instruction, or in a more macro fashion, shaping their curricular paths and institutional culture in ways that optimize their potential for success. Know that however your work manifests, it matters.

I'd like to take a moment to tell you all a bit about someone else - my friend, Wendel Patrick. I met Wendel during my time on faculty at The Peabody Institute in Baltimore. Born Kevin Gift, Wendel majored in music and political science at Emory University and continued on to earn his M.M. in piano performance at Northwestern University. He is an accomplished and celebrated professor, composer,

producer, beatmaker, pianist, sonic architect, photographer, and videographer. He is equally at home on stage behind turntables as he is on stage performing a Mozart concerto. Wendel is the co-founder of the Baltimore Boom Bap Society which performs monthly improvised hip hop shows with hand-picked musicians and emcees. The group's collaborative performance with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra of Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du Soldat" was named "Best Mesmerizing Performance of 2016" by Baltimore Magazine. His photography has been exhibited in several galleries, including the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Ralph Arnold Gallery in Chicago. Wendel was a member of the faculty at Loyola University from 2003 to 2013, teaching piano, introduction to music theory, music history, and electronic music production. In 2019, he was the Loyola Department of Fine and Performing Arts Guest Artist-in-Residence. In 2022, he was named Renaissance Man of the Year at the Baltimore Crown Awards.

Wendel currently serves as an Associate Professor in the Department of Music Engineering & Technology at The Peabody Institute where he teaches "Hip Hop Music Production: History and Practice," the first course of its kind to be taught at a major traditional music conservatory anywhere in the country. He is currently a visiting non-resident Fellow at Harvard University's Hutchins Center for African and African American Research.

For me, Wendel represents the now. He is the moment and the future of what is possible for students who matriculate at our institutions. When reading his bio, I am overcome by two emotions: awe and curiosity. While I believe the former to be self-explanatory, the latter would benefit from some extrapolation. The curiosity comes when I attempt to reconcile all the facets that contribute to his artist citizenship: concert pianist, beatboxing, production, turntables, composer, professor, photographer, and videographer. When I lay out all these talents before me, I'm left pondering a bit of an uncomfortable question: did Wendel come across his talents and skill sets because of his academic music training, or in spite of it?

I believe a Wendel Patrick to be more of an exception than he should be. His skill sets and the multifaceted career he has been able to build for himself are current, contemporary, exemplary, relevant, and representative of a musical understanding that bridges and combines musical and cultural languages that exist both within and outside of the walls of music academia. How can we ensure that our institutional culture and curriculums help to cultivate this level of artistic and cultural fluency? I will be exploring that question deeper into our time together.

So often, many of us faculty operate as if what we are here to impart upon our students is the most important piece of their educational experience, when in actuality everyone's expertise and contributions are necessary in creating and nurturing artists and musical citizens such as Wendel. The piano professor is just as important as the theory professor, is just as important as the composition professor, is just as important as the history professor, is just as important as the jazz professor, is just as important as the piano tuners, who are just as important

as our facilities managers, who are just as important as our registrar coordinator (and on and on…) in creating polyglot artists. We must think bigger about the possibilities of the multitudes of points at which we can intersect and we must create a culture of collaboration that finds and fosters these points of intersection! This requires us to all be on the same page and to accept and stand in the fact that our jobs are not about us.

Two weeks ago, we were fortunate enough at UT to welcome two-time Academy Award- nominated, 14-time GRAMMY Award-nominated (15 as of 9 days ago), 5-time GRAMMY Award-winning trumpeter, composer, educator, activist, and artist citizen Terence Blanchard to our campus. Every moment our students and community were blessed to share with him included gems and pearls of wisdom. One such pearl is particularly relevant in the context of our discussion today; Terence mentioned that artists are never done.

Yes, "artists are never done" is what I call a Hallmark card statement. It is a reduction of the sum of the experiences of many that end up becoming condensed to a concise sentence of seemingly-generic wisdom, if that wisdom is received without experiencing the life journey that ultimately leads one to that same truth. However, there is something both liberating and affirming in hearing one of the greats arrive at a conclusion upon which we ourselves have also arrived, in the same way it's oddly reassuring to hear someone at the top of their field admit that they still suffer from imposter syndrome when faced with a new project.

"Artists are never done." I find this statement to be fairly non-controversial. The musical and sociocultural landscape continues to bloom, to stretch, to redefine itself. I think about the truth of the tireless pursuit of art and artistic growth every single day in the context of myself as an artist and artist citizen and in the context of my students, also as artists and artist citizens. Where I believe we run into a bit of an issue is that to be "never done" implies always striving — working our way to new discoveries — which also implies a good degree of failure, which in turn implies a release from fear. Someone once told me if you can't point to a pile of bad art, then you're not doing the work. If we agree that artists should continue to grow and learn as music evolves, are we creating a safe space for our music community to continue to grow and learn? Are we even cognizant of the roadblocks and pitfalls that are in place in our institutions, which prevent healthy failure due to fearlessly trying a new way of teaching a class, creating a new, unconventional ensemble, performing repertoire that's learned in a nontraditional manner, exploring new musical languages, or omitting a few "staples of the canon" in order to make space for newer, still relevant-yet-overlooked works, or newer, alive composers or genres?

To address these questions, we must plainly state some truths from our chest. We ask ourselves, "what drives the fear from faculty of not wanting to change anything and what drives the fear of not wanting to give anything up?" Well, I believe the answer is that the fear is not in change; the fear is in loss. The fear is in what must be given up. The fear is in losing the aspects of music study that held meaning

to the faculty member along the path of their own music educational experience. To remove certain works and certain composers from the curriculum feels like robbing their students of crucial information that will make them competitive in the market — the "market" pertaining to both postgraduate admissions candidate pools and professional work. The fear is also in loss of one's status as the expert and authority in their chosen field. What I find most fascinating about this fear is that it manifests by completely missing the point of what it is we are here to do in music academia: that point being that it's not about us. It's not about our greatness and it's not about our prowess and it's not about our status and it's not about our authority. Real harm has been done to our students, to our institutions, and to our field by those who have chosen to center themselves rather than center their students. They've erected roadblocks. They've caused pain, they've sown mistrust, and they've dropped anchor on progress all in the name of self-preservation. Ultimately, teaching is about rendering ourselves completely useless — taking our students as far as we can, offering them as much as we can, leaving them inspired to continue their individual work, and our collective work.

The fear is in the belief that the "quality" of programs will suffer if we implement too many changes. It's high time we have an honest conversation about through whose cultural lens we rate and judge ideas of "quality." Who is not accounted for in those fears is a musician like a Wendel Patrick, who represents the musical market and landscape as it exists now, and as it is trending in the future. Those fears are rooted in a musical landscape that has existed, from which we have shifted. This current musical landscape makes space for musicians whose interests and talents fit between set genres and cement them, creating new sounds and identities — new ways to reimagine musical lineage and creative ways to contribute to their longevity. And, if there persists an overwhelming fear of the "quality" (there's that word again…) of programs suffering due to change, it is time to reassess what are our institutional goals and metrics for success. If your metrics for success mirror, or rhyme with the metrics that existed 30 years ago, 20 years ago, 10 years ago, not only is your field of vision concerning the current musical landscape and music career possibilities detrimentally narrowed, but also, you've already missed the boat on what kinds of conversations and opportunities are being created and explored in this new reality. Do our current metrics allow the space for growth and evolution? Do they create space for us to take the necessary fearless leaps towards new ideas? Or do they keep us locked in the safety and familiarity of routine?

Another Terence Blanchard gem: "the best way to honor the past is to add to it." This sentiment is particularly important in the context of our conversations around fear and self-imposed stagnation. What Terence is reminding us of is that change does not mean replacement. Making changes to our institutional ways of operation and to our institutional offerings does not mean a complete dissolution of the past. It means being brave enough and creative enough to reimagine what a symphony orchestra or wind ensemble or choir can be moving forward.

How they can sound moving forward. What they look like moving forward. How they perform music moving forward. How they are in conversation with the community beyond the walls of our institutions moving forward. How we decenter these musical traditions and make space for our students to interact with and build upon these traditions moving forward. I say every time about my piece "Come Sunday" which brings the music of the Black church to the wind ensemble stage that nothing is novel about those notes and rhythms and harmonies that I wrote. What is novel is the space and the stages and the venues those notes, rhythms, and harmonies occupy. Black music has almost entirely been forgotten on concert stages and oddly overrepresented in the "spirituals" genre of choral works. There is at the same time an underrepresentation of Black music and an overrepresentation of Black pain on concert stages. After writing my own Black trauma piece, I felt it necessary to write music that was rooted in Black joy, Black triumph, and Black celebration. And that is rethinking the concert stage. And that is reimaging concert ensembles for today and tomorrow. There are some styles from which I pull—and my students are finding the same issue—where notation reveals itself to be painfully finite. Notation has historically been presented in music academia as being made of steel, but as space is being made to tell more and different stories, it is being revealed that notation is actually made from drywall — as sturdy as it is penetrable.

One of my graduate composition students at UT, Minoo Dixon, has composed a work, entitled, "The Songs of Shim Cheong," which will be performed at the Midwest Clinic in Chicago. This piece is rooted in traditional Korean music — in his own words as a reclamation of what Korean music is and a sort of pushback against "Arirang" as the full representation of traditional Korean music. He himself is Korean and yet still needed to do quite a bit of research on traditional Korean music, as Korea has been colonized several times by Japan, a large portion of their traditional music having been erased. It's a multi-movement work based on a Korean folk tale and each movement is inspired by a different type of traditional music. I've worked with him on this piece and we've had to get quite creative regarding our notation to accurately signal to the musicians what types of sounds and tunings are required in order to "pronounce the music correctly." There are also moments that require a tone and a type of intonation that would not constitute a "good sound" as we understand it in our current music academic spaces (where the idea of a "good sound" is used to speak to playing very specific styles from very specific musical traditions of music on very specific stages), yet it is integral to the accurate performance of this work. That is rethinking the concert stage. And that is reimagining concert ensembles for today and tomorrow.

Dr. Chuck Dotas, my undergraduate mentor and dear friend to this day, is the Director of Jazz Studies at James Madison University, and has been in that role for over two decades. Before he was at JMU, he taught in a similar role at McGill University in Montreal. Chuck taught the wind ensemble a piece by ear. How did he do it? First, he picked a piece that he felt would be possible to learn

by ear. In this case it was Matt Darriau's arrangement of a Senegalese folk song — the last track of the Orange Then Blue album of the same name. The first step was to give the musicians the recording ahead of time to listen to and to make a part of themselves. Besides the flute trio which begins the arrangement, since the piece is built in rhythmic hockets, he taught each section their hocket with his trumpet. For the flute trio (which he decided to arrange also for oboe and bassoon), he made individual cassette tapes for each of those sections and gave it to them ahead of time so they had time to learn it. They rehearsed, built an orchestration, and performed it at the concert.

This wasn't the first time Chuck had taught a wind ensemble a piece by ear and every time, he would have students thank him for opening up their musicianship and for teaching them a skill set that they will be able to apply to their music making and music communication moving forward. That is rethinking the concert stage. And that is reimagining concert ensembles for today and tomorrow.

Now, there's no denying that from the educator's standpoint, that's a good bit of work. But that is the work. That is rethinking the concert stage. And that is reimagining concert ensembles for today and tomorrow. At the end of the day, our large ensemble offerings are classes. We should be measuring our success in these ensembles not only by the standing ovations and the curtain calls after the final note, but also by the skills our students develop in creating communal music. And here's what I think we miss in these large ensemble settings: communal music is community music. Many communities. Not just the community that's been cultivated on the stages of our concert halls inside our academic music spaces.

What can we do as leaders of these institutions to inspire our faculty to think creatively and currently about how to use their specialties to connect our students to the world outside of our music schools? It's time to stop talking only to one another, and time to be in conversation with the rest of the musical world — the world in which our students will enter and hopefully be the leaders and drivers of creative conversation.

Teaching second-semester theory at Peabody which focuses on chromatic 4-part realizations — if I was teaching first-inversion secondary triads resolving up stepwise in the bass to diatonic chords (very specific, I know), I'll use the intro of "How Beautiful are the Feet" from Handel's "Messiah," alongside the intro to the title track of Toni Braxton's 2010 album "Pulse," which uses the same device. Teaching jazz harmony at UT, we look at the "Ode to Joy" from Beethoven 9, in comparison to the reharmonization created by Mervyn Warren of "Take 6" that was performed by Lauryn Hill in the climactic scene from the 1993 runaway hit "Sister Act 2" starring Whoopi Goldberg as a nun, as a current, relatable, and memorable example of how to take jazz harmony and use it to reharmonize. Beethoven and Lauryn Hill and "Take 6" in the same lecture on the same piece. Nothing was given up for that lecture to happen. What did Terence say? "The best way to honor the past is to build on it."

You want to quell your faculty's fears about having to "give something up"? You tell them what Terence said: "The best way to honor the past is to build on it." He didn't say to dissolve it. He didn't say to eradicate it. He didn't say to forget it. He said to build on it. Empower your faculty to think creatively about ways to build upon the lessons and the musical experiences that hold value for them. Wendel Patrick shows us that there is and there must exist space for old and new. The dexterity of his fingers as he brings to life a Mozart concerto coexisting with the same proficiency as when he plays an 808 drum machine is the point! Building upon the past is the future. Adding to what has already been done is the way forward.

Another difficult truth with which to wrestle: much of what we do in academia is habit. "Why are things this way? Because that's the way they've been." That's called generational trauma. The most detrimental aspect of habit is that it is comfortable. It is easy. It is familiar. It is predictable. And it is the antithesis of growth. How do we motivate our community to get comfortable with the discomfort that comes with change…with trying new things? Though this is a large task, I encourage you to give it a try: get to know your faculty's interests, passions, and skill sets beyond the title that appears on their office door or desk nameplate. And then I invite you to create a space where your faculty can pitch a "passion project" course that has been in their heart for some time. I was fortunate enough to have been given that space at UT and from that was born my graduate seminar, "The Post-Genre Era."

Am I an expert in genre? Not even close. However, I am an artist citizen who both exists and operates in a reality where my own music is at times difficult to neatly classify. I am also on faculty with someone who is an expert in genre…and you better believe that I reached out! I recognized that cleanly placing music into genre categories has become increasingly difficult as our world becomes smaller due to technological advances and I knew that our students had the same questions I did regarding the implications this will have on our artistry. In a way, I selfishly created the course so that I could also learn more about what it means to create art in a "post-genre landscape." I explained to my students on the first day that I am in no way an authority on this topic but that I will put in front of them people who are…and that's exactly what I did. This being a pandemic course that was piloted in the spring semester of 2021 and Zoom being our primary mode of "connection," putting specialists in front of my students was an easier task. In that way, you can argue this course was bred by necessity. I also let my students know that, since I am no expert in this topic, we will discover our answers together.

An aside: I think there is power in the fearlessness that comes with being able to say "I don't know. Let's learn this together." There is reward in the vulnerability that comes in your students watching you fumble and recover. There are lessons to be gleaned for both you and them and there is a grace that comes in our willingness to be imperfectly human in full view…if your academic culture provides space for that.

What resulted from this curiosity around genre was a rich, illuminating, and transformational class rooted in open discussion, words of wisdom from topic experts,

and healthy grappling with challenging articles. My course was bookended by a deceptively simple question: "What kind of music do you do?" It was a question no one was able to answer on the first day of class, myself included. Their assignment on the final day of class, however, was to re-introduce themselves to the group by stating their name and having spent a semester 1) defining frameworks through which we could discuss genre, 2) understanding the sociocultural, political, and economic implications of genre, 3) its implications for music academia and academic music study, and 4) in relating post-genre ideas to our own artistic pursuits, saying from their chest exactly what kind of music they do.

The course feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with more than one student mentioning that it was the best and most meaningful course they had ever taken. I'm grateful to UT for providing me an opportunity to possibly fail loudly. Fortunately, I was able to build my parachute on the way down. I challenge you all, if you haven't already, to get a sense of your faculty's passion projects and to also provide them the opportunity, the safety, and the insulation to fail loudly — to build their parachutes on the way down.

Well, we must address another factor that inhibits cultivating a fearless faculty: metrics. Data measurements. Though your faculty may want to relate to their students, and though they may want to curate their students' individual experiences, and though they may want to employ nontraditional materials and techniques into their curriculums, our metrics may not create space for that level of nuance. It's one size fits most. By this metric, you were successful. By this metric, you were unsuccessful. Are there ways to insulate your faculty who ask forgiveness, not permission, from potential institutional wrist slaps for implementing innovative ideas into their curriculum and teaching styles that either can't be quantified or for whom the metrics aren't suited to accurately measure the scope of their efforts?

How do we create a culture that supports the freedom to fail? It's day one of the fall semester. Your school of music community convenes in your auditorium or your concert hall at your "welcome back" reception. You prepare to give an address. You know what I've always wanted to hear from the dean or the director at one of those events? That it's okay to fail if the reason for your failure is that you tried, loudly. Encourage your community to fail and to fail because they tried loudly. "Trying loudly" means that our community members took full advantage of the fertile environment that is our institutions…attempting new styles, new musical languages, new ways of communicating through art, new ways of seeing and shaping musical and cultural conversations, new ways to organize and deliver their lectures, new ways of harnessing the power of the concert hall, new ways of exploring what it means to prepare for a life as a working artist citizen, new ways of preparing our students to be artist-citizens of tomorrow…and, if we believe in the changes that must take place in our institutions in the coming weeks, months, and years, we must be in agreement that they can only ever be achieved if we all try loudly. By welcoming this type of failure, we're inviting a level of humanity into our

institutions while greenlighting bold thought and innovative ideas. And there will be failure precisely because we tried loudly. And we will learn from those failures and use them to grow, as there is no greater teacher than failure. "If you can't point to a pile of bad art, then you're not doing the work."

You've heard me say the word "community" quite a bit. I do so deliberately, because the freedom to fail from reaching should not only be extended to the students.

The fear that is felt by our new students coming into our communities for the first time and facing competition amongst their peers and questions regarding their own preparedness, validity, and longevity is real. The fear that is felt by our well-matriculated students who are facing questions of career path and viability in an increasingly unforgiving socioeconomic landscape…that fear is real. The fear that is felt by our faculty members who retreat to safety and familiarity because it's what has worked in the past and has kept them within the bounds of the imposed metrics that guarantee their career longevity…that fear is real. The fear you all face as administrators—where "the buck stops"—the front-facing representatives of the institution; the pressure you face from a community of faculty, staff, and students whom you oversee, the pressure you face from provosts and boards and bureaucracies, the pressure you face from surrounding communities…that fear is real.

The common denominator here is fear. A culture of fear keeps us from evolving, from leaning in and letting go, and from taking the bold action we all need to transform. This brings me back to what I shared regarding day one of the semester, when your music community convenes in a shared space to hear your words which will set the tone for the year ahead. That is your opportunity. That is the chance to say to everyone that we will try new things together. And we will fail together. And we will succeed together. And we will grow together. And we will support one another. And we will figure this out together. And then you create space to be in active and ongoing conversation with your community members as you all collectively craft a bold vision for the direction of your institution.

Some of the richest, most impactful, and most impressive music we have in our society comes out of Black churches. It is a poorly kept secret. The keys player is doing the thing, laying it down with all the runs and hip substitutions and reharmonizations. The drummer is setting the entire congregation alight with their driving grooves and deep pocket. And the singers! Three- and four- part harmonies materialize out of a shared spirit and ring across the sanctuary. And then there's the tambourine — played by literally everyone. It's some of the most impressive syncopated, polyrhythmic, soul-stirring percussion playing you can imagine. And somehow just about everyone seems to own one. Most of these musicians (and when I use that term, I'm including the congregation) haven't had a formal music lesson a day in their lives, but make no mistake, they've received an entire education in music-making.

There are several "nonformal" outlets, such as churches or folk music gatherings, or other culturally-specific social and ceremonial settings, where high-level music

making takes place, and there is something profoundly important about the ways music information is transmitted in these settings. I think about this often in the context of our institutions and I often wonder about the roadblocks people encounter who have come to music via these avenues if they decide to matriculate at our schools of music. Do our entrance requirements make space for musicians who have not followed a path of formal music learning to the doors of our institutions and should they be accepted? Are our curriculum, lesson, and ensemble offerings designed to accommodate these different methods of music making, especially if the students in question do not come from a tradition of reading music?

De-emphasizing the importance of notated music in our institutions would be quite the paradigm shift and yet a great number of the world's most successful musicians don't read music. Yes, there are many skills that a musician who has come to and developed their art nonformally can gain from a formal, institutionalized music education. There are also many skills that our institutional community can learn from musicians who have come to and developed their art non-formally.

If you were to ask the performers in your institutions — be they students or faculty — to perform solo for two minutes with no music (not counting the jazz majors or professors) and you provided the stipulation that they were not allowed to play something that already exists, that they previously memorized, or that they previously worked up, you may or may not be surprised that most of them would have no idea what to play. What's fascinating about that to me is that we would all call ourselves musical beings with music being both inside of us and at the core of who we are. What we don't wrestle with enough in our institutions is the question of whose music is inside of us and if we are giving our students skills that will allow them to communicate with other musicians who have not followed the formal music-learning model. Are we cultivating individual artists with flexible musical skill sets that will allow them to be adaptable in their musical careers, or are we creating soldiers who exist in specific ensembles playing specific music in specific venues — only able to demonstrate proficiency through the ideas of others and unable to express their own musical thoughts?

Do we teach our music students how to develop their musical being? Are our curriculums set up to teach how to do that? Do our institutions prioritize that? Or are music students being taught to only be vessels and mediums and interpreters of others' musical ideas? Are we making space for non-formally-trained musicians? What roadblocks have we erected that make their matriculation into our institutions decidedly difficult, if not altogether impossible?

There is much to be learned and much information to be shared between musicians who have studied formally and those who learned non-formally. How can we create an environment that catalyzes an exchange of ideas, techniques, and musical languages between formally and non-formally-trained musicians?

A "simple" question for everyone: who do you want at your institutions? Please don't answer that out loud, but also be honest with yourselves. Because how you

answer that question will be the legacy of your institution. It will define how you approach recruitment, curriculum, degree offerings, ensemble offerings, mean socioeconomic status of your student body, delegation of resources, postgraduate career viability, community culture, and so much more.

Do only certain ensembles count towards degree credit? In doing so, you're sending a message to your community about whose music truly matters within the walls of your institution and what music outside of the walls of your institution is erudite enough to warrant a place in your curriculum. You're saying: "it's playing in these types of ensembles that will matter for your long-term success." Or more specifically, "it's playing in these types of ensembles that will matter for your success as a student at this institution, long term success be damned."

Are all your strongest players reserved for your symphony orchestra, or your top wind ensemble exclusively? Those kinds of decisions and hoarding of resources ripple outward and affect the very culture and attitude of your institution. Those musicians who are a part of your most resourced ensembles may deem themselves the best of the best, though there may exist musicians who have come to and make their music in a different way, who are guided by different, broader metrics of success, who can communicate musically in a way that those formally-trained first chairs could never…but, chances are, those types of students are slimly represented in your institutions, if at all, depending on your institutional priorities.

Last week, I was in residence at Illinois State University for the 5th anniversary of my piece, "Come Sunday," which they commissioned and premiered. In preparation, their director, Dr. Tony Marinello, in conjunction with a former member of the wind ensemble, brought in a drummer and keyboardist from the City of Refuge church right there in Bloomington, Illinois. Tony shared with me that these two musicians expressed intimidation when viewing the score of the piece, as they don't come from institutions built on traditional notated music practices. Tony expressed to them clearly and in front of the entire group that they had the best ears in the room. Thus started a beautiful exchange of ideas and cultural knowledge, where the ISU wind symphony would play for them and the church musicians would help with the interpretation and pronunciation of the phrases of the music. The session culminated in the church musicians performing for the wind ensemble (across the room from one another, mind you, due to where the piano was positioned on stage in relation to the drum set). I asked the students what they learned from this exchange and several of them mentioned realizing the power in the ability to communicate with another musician in real time while creating music on the spot. The students also took note of how the church musicians communicated chord and section changes, as it was unlike anything we do in our traditionally-rooted institutions. I expressed to the wind ensemble that the slow movement is Bach on the bottom and the Blues melodically on top. It was my concurrent teaching of chromatic 4-part realizations at Peabody while writing this piece that sparked that revelation within me.

What did Terence Blanchard say? "The best way to honor the past is to build on it." He didn't say to dissolve it. He didn't say to eradicate it. He didn't say to forget it. He didn't say to luxuriate in it. He said to build on it. Tony turned his programming of "Come Sunday" into a true educational experience for his musicians, giving them the opportunity to learn from musicians who developed their artistry in a different way and who's artistry is tied to culture and community. That is rethinking the concert stage. And that is reimagining concert ensembles for today and tomorrow. Nothing was given up, and everything was gained.

Are ensemble successes measured solely by length of standing ovations and number of curtain calls, completely neglecting whether students are developing skills in creating communal music, "community" music — the communities that exist outside of music institutions and not just the ones that the privileged few were lucky enough to have access to?

We were discussing recruitment in our most recent faculty meeting at UT a few weeks ago and I'd love to take this opportunity to gleefully misquote one of my beloved colleagues, Dr. Bob Duke, Director of the Center for Human Learning, with this beautiful bomb he dropped on all of us: "We can be an institution that coattails greatness, or we can be an institution that cultivates potential." I've not been able to stop thinking about that quote.

Rather than accept the students who are a 96 and polishing them up to a 98, how about we accept some students who are a 72 with promise, get them to an 87, and in the process equip them with the skills, tools, inspiration, and curiosity to take themselves further.

Who do you want at your institutions?

Institutions who don't have a robust traditional classically-rooted large ensemble culture, perhaps due to enrollment numbers or their student body coming to music via nonformal paths, may actually be at an advantage in this conversation, because those institutions have to think beyond the model that has been codified and legitimized over a century of routine and habit.

One of the guest speakers I Zoomed in to speak to my "Post-Genre Era" graduate seminar was a former student of mine at Berklee College of Music named Adam Calus. I had Adam as a student in my "Intro to Music Education" course a little over a decade ago. Adam graduated to teach in the Boston Public School system, where he built music programs from nothing, accepting donations and fundraising to find drum sets, keyboards, guitars, and digital audio workstations for his students. As his student ethnic demographic was mostly Latino, he would, for example, come up with creative ways of simplifying a montuno to teach his students so that they would feel a personal connection to and ownership of the music. The students would rotate instruments, learning by ear (notation came later), and always making music in a communal way. Near the end of the school year, he would find venues around town for them to perform and shared with my seminar a video of his students performing on a Boston Harbor Cruise boat, both playing

for and dancing with other cruise members. The students held a major stake in their own success and they were invested in their own learning. That is music education, holistically and in totality.

When you are unbridled from the expectation of wind ensemble and symphony orchestra as your anchor ensembles, you are free to consider the music that actually exists around you — the music that exists outside of the walls of music academia — the music that is a part of the stories and identities of your students and you are able to build ensembles and curriculums around cultural understanding and social need. And make no mistake, not having a traditional classically-rooted large ensemble anchor does not speak to the musicianship (or lack thereof) of the musicians in your institutional community. If your institution is a 4-year program, what pathways and partnerships exist for ease of matriculation for your students from 2-year institutions? And once they arrive, what support systems are in place to see that they graduate having had a rich, meaningful, useful, and affirming experience?

Who do you want at your institutions? Realize that you answer that question without saying a word. You answer that question with your course offerings. You answer that question with your audition requirements. You answer that question with the styles of music with which you engage. You answer that question with how many different methods of learning and sharing music you offer. You answer that question with how you delegate your financial resources. Whom do you want at your institutions? A more direct way to ask that question is: who are you as an institution? Who do you want to be as an institution? How do you define success as an institution?

These questions are massive. Easy to pose, difficult to implement. Admittedly, some more difficult than others. If only there were a body somewhere — a body who oversaw curricular requirements at the nation's music institutions - and if only that body were somehow in the same room at the same time. What would be even better is if there was some kind of conference that this body could attend for a few days, where they were presented with innovative ideas and methods for how to move our institutions forward. Sounds like a pipe dream, I know. But, if such a serendipitous conversion should ever happen, what an incredible opportunity that would be…to be in conversation with one another, to discuss what has worked and what hasn't. To share instances of creating the freedom to fail, to build the parachute on the way down. To be brave enough to make the kind of bold decisions that require asking for forgiveness and not permission. "This is the way it's always Been done" is the quickest way to an early grave. Institutional death. Artistic death. Creative death. Everyone in this room is still an artist and it is by keeping our fingers on the pulse of the changes that are manifesting in the greater musical landscape that we will be able to steer our institutions towards the center of these shifts, so that we can both participate in and guide artistic conversations and their great implications for societal change. So that we can prepare our students to profess, compose, produce, research, improvise, beatmake, turntable, beat box, Tuvan throat sing, and whatever

meaningful career exists at the nexus point of all those skills. The future lives in the in-between — in the building upon the past, not in the wallowing and luxuriating in it. The power to make the kind of change we all want exists right here, in this room. Be bold, be fearless, take the leap, and build the parachute on the way down.

…

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WORTH IT: THE INTRINSIC VALUE OF A PERFORMING ARTS DEGREE

Post-secondary music faculty often encounter students who dream of performing at the New York Metropolitan Opera, the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, or the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. They envision performing in the most outstanding opera choruses and symphony choruses in the world or gracing the stages of the finest recital halls.

Passion is a must to succeed in this field as is talent. But talent, passion, and dreams can propel them only so far. Education is the catalyst that can transform a student's dream into a fulfilling career. If they long to have a career as a professional classical vocalist, the reality is that a performing arts degree will equip them with the necessary tools, techniques, experiences, and connections necessary to flourish in this ever-changing industry. The typical path includes an undergraduate degree in voice performance, a master's degree in voice performance, an optional artist diploma, a variety of summer young artist programs, competitions, and many auditions.[1]

With exceptional sound and showmanship, legends like Luciano Pavarotti dominated the profession. But in today's competitive world, a successful career relies on more than a superb voice. Professionalism, mastery of one's craft, and expert musicianship are essential. With the influence of social media, the world of opera has evolved. Even someone with as magnificent a voice as Pavarotti might find it difficult to compete today because he…

> could not read music, and he routinely had difficulty remembering his lines, even to songs and arias he'd sung countless times. At a concert performance of Verdi's *Otello* with conductor Georg Solti, the problem was mitigated by setting the tenor on a giant, throne-like chair and placing a person underneath to feed him his words.[2]

Despite his celebrated voice, this type of performer may be no longer competitive today. The extraordinary world of opera has changed significantly, with productions taking place in smaller spaces, parking garages, and outdoor settings and in collaboration with contemporary artists and multimedia presentations.[3] These options create different demands on the singers, as audiences seek more than just a beautiful voice and stunning sets.

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[1] "Opera Singer." n.d. www.berklee.edu. https://www.berklee.edu/careers/roles/opera-singer.

[2] "Pavarotti Documentary Misses All the Right Notes." 2019. NPR. June 7, 2019. https://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2019/06/07/730363989/pavarotti-documentary-misses-all-the-right-notes#:~:text=Pavarotti%2C%20admittedly%2C%20could%20not%20read.

3 Reid, Rebecca. 2023. "Staying ahead of the Game: Why Opera Singers Should Invest in Their Skills." Medium. August 25, 2023. https://medium.com/@rebeccareidvocalstudio/staying-ahead-of-the-game-why-opera-singers-should-invest-in-their-skills-b385259e74b6.

Opera singers are not judged solely on their vocal abilities but also on their acting skills, stage presence, and versatility across various musical styles. The bar has been raised, and opera singers must rise to the challenge to meet these evolving standards.[4]

Because of the new and enlarged ability pool, including acting skills, versatility across musical styles, and expertise with physicality and movement, there needs to be new ways to study the art of performing. The performing arts degree for the individual who wishes to pursue a career in the classical vocal world affords the student the time for their instrument to mature, a structured path for learning, excellent instruction, and the opportunity to perform.

As universities, colleges, and conservatories work to recruit students, they are constantly modifying their curriculum to best serve the new requirements needed for the performing artist, including cross-listing acting classes to fulfill core requirements and electives such as dance, yoga, fitness classes, and weight-training.

Once this skill set is learned at the undergraduate level, singers are often required to have a master's degree in a voice-related field. They are encouraged and expected to audition and participate in a "Young Artist Program,"[5] usually sponsored by an opera house or a summer program frequently tied to a university. These programs are often pre-professional opportunities for upcoming opera singers to learn how to work in an opera house before fully committing to a contract.[6]

A myriad of skills is needed, including a trainable voice, curiosity, a love for self-improvement, the desire to practice, an ability to hear and integrate constructive criticism, an excellent ear, innate musicality, bravery, tenacity, confidence, imagination, physical strength, critical thinking skills, memorization skills, flexibility, and a bit of luck. Some of these abilities can be innate, such as an inherent sense of musicality or the gift of a naturally beautiful voice, but many can be learned through excellent instruction and intense dedication to the mastery of the art form. Classes in sight-singing and diction help develop the ear, theory courses provide students a foundation on which to understand their music, and piano class gives the student the ability to learn their music by accurately playing the notes of their melody. Advanced piano skills will allow the student to fully understand the harmonic language by learning how to play through the score. Conducting class is vital for learning to follow the conductor (a must for every vocalist!), but it also provides students with an appreciation for what their conductor is communicating to them and makes them a more well-rounded musician. In his article regarding the value

[4] Reid, Rebecca. 2023. "Staying ahead of the Game: Why Opera Singers Should Invest in Their Skills." Medium. August 25, 2023. https://medium.com/@rebeccareidvocalstudio/staying-ahead-of-the-game-why-opera-singers-should-invest-in-their-skills-b385259e74b6.

[5] The Young Artist Program can be a short-term program such as a summer to a much longer program at major opera houses that can last between one and three years. One of the more well-known sites for these programs is: https://www.yaptracker.com/

6 "What Can You Do with a Music Degree?" n.d. https://majoringinmusic.com/what-can-you-do-with-a-music-degree/.

of a college degree, Stephen Rose states, "If college does not lead to skill gains, it is difficult to argue that attending college will lead to positive economic effects after graduation."[7] Therefore, it is vital or students to do their homework before attending an institution to ensure the education they vitally need and to take advantage of every opportunity while attending school. For example, students can attend concerts and recitals by world-class musicians for free or for a nominal fee. Master classes are frequently offered following these performances where students can interact with the elite in their field.

Students can also take advantage of performing in a myriad of ensembles, including concert choir, jazz choir, madrigal choir, and a cappella choirs. This gives them many performance opportunities and exposure to a large variety of styles and languages, all of which work in support of their goal of performing at the professional level.

Being in a music program allows the student the time to master their instrument, which requires hours of dedicated study. Practicing technique, learning music, studying foreign languages and diction, and working on memorization skills are far more achievable in the supportive environment found in a post-secondary music program. Students must present their repertoire to their professors at the end of each semester at which time they receive feedback that keeps them focused on achievable goals and simulates the high-pressure experience of a professional audition. A certain level of mastery is expected at the undergraduate level with clear criteria to develop the students toward a professional career.

There are basic skills essential to learn and develop being a constructive member of society. These proficiencies include time management, problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, adaptability, creativity, decision making, organization, networking, collaboration, and confidence. Students achieve more when they are pursuing something that they love, and a performing arts degree offers students the opportunity to develop these vital skills while pursuing a degree that energizes and focuses their efforts.

The benefits and experience gained from attending a university or conservatory program can include a consistent, long-term relationship with professors; a knowledge of theory, music history, and perhaps the business of their industry; the skills required to learn and study new roles; and, in some cases, resources as the student moves forward: "As experts in their field, performing arts instructors serve as key resources in building your network with industry professionals."[8] Colleagues of university professors who are performing nearby are sometimes invited to give

[7] Rose, Stephen. 2013. "The Value of a COLLEGE DEGREE." Change 45, no. 6: 24–32. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44081602.

[8] "Is a Performing Arts Degree Worth It? | North Central College." n.d. www.northcentralcollege.edu. Accessed January 7, 2024. https://www.northcentralcollege.edu/news/2023/06/09/performing-arts-degree-worth-it#:~:text=Performing%20arts%20programs%20help%20students.

master classes, allowing the students to benefit from the expertise of the performing artist. Professors can advise their students to attend select graduate programs and young artist programs and to compete in appropriate competitions.

Perhaps most importantly, completing a performing arts degree can boost a student's confidence. A remarkable accomplishment by itself, earning a performing arts degree can bring expanded knowledge of the art form and add to a portfolio and experience, leaving young artists better prepared to enter the field as professionals.[9]

Robynne Redmon, who has sung at various houses, including The New York Metropolitan Opera, The Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Teatro alla Scala, and who now teaches at the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami, shared the following:

> Anyone aspiring to a career as a classical vocalist, must be prepared for years of training. Think of training for a marathon, rather than a sprint. The coordination of breathing, resonance, the perfection of languages, the development of imagination and communication are elements that can only be refined by time and mindful practice. The way to get the tools and training needed is best obtained through formalized music education in school.[10].

University of North Texas Professor Dr. Stephen Morscheck, who has performed at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, and Atlanta Opera, concurs:

> While the completion of performing degrees, artist certificates, Young Artist Programs, etc., do not automatically promise someone a performing career, it must certainly be true, that among any random grouping of professional singers in the United States, those singers will have received some, or all their training at these institutions. [11]

At most colleges and universities, the performance degree for voice offers the training required, including weekly voice lessons and studio classes, classes in English, Italian, French, and German diction, a sequence of theory and music history, performance opportunities in both a choral and solo setting, and the opportunity to participate in operas and/or musicals. Opportunities to not only hear and see professionals perform, but to meet them, work with them in a master class

[9] "Is a Performing Arts Degree Worth It? | North Central College." n.d. www.northcentralcollege.edu. Accessed January 7, 2024. https://www.northcentralcollege.edu/news/2023/06/09/performing-arts-degree-worth-it#:~:text=Performing%20arts%20programs%20help%20students.

[10] This quote came via a correspondence with Robynne Redmon on January 21, 2024

[11] This quote came via a correspondence with Stephen Morscheck on January 23, 2024

situation and receive feedback from those who are doing exactly what the student wishes to do. With all these wonderful opportunities, perhaps the most important aspect of the performance degree at a university or college is being surrounded by like-minded individuals all aspiring to excel and to be able to do so in a safe and supportive environment.

Dr. Morscheck sums it up succinctly:

> "The short cut has not yet been found for establishing a performing career. The path is still through sustained, diligent work, and years of training found in academic institutions."[12]

Yes, it takes work. And yes, it takes time. And dedication. But with a performing arts degree on their resume, students will find themselves one step closer to singing at the Met or performing in Paris. Or Milan. Or wherever their dreams take them. And that is worth it.

…

Brian Nedvin, tenor, is an Associate Professor at Old Dominion University where he is the Director of Vocal Studies, Studio Professor, and Professor of English, Italian, French, and German diction. Nedvin has appeared as the leading tenor in operas throughout the United States, Canada, France, the Czech Republic, and Germany. Nedvin has been involved with four world operatic premieres, and countless premieres of repertoire written specifically for him. He received his Doctorate from the University of North Texas, Master of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music, and a Bachelor of Music degree from Bucknell University. Nedvin continues to be active as a performer in recitals and his lecture-recital on Music of the Holocaust.

[12] This quote came via a correspondence with Stephen Morscheck on January 23, 2024

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION EXPERIENCE AND SELF-RELIANT CAREER INTENTIONS AMONG ARTS ALUMNI

The high rate of self-employment among artists compared to the U.S. workforce on average (NEA, 2019) highlights the distinct features of artists' careers, characterized by a lack of stable employment. It emphasizes the shift in higher education towards creatively addressing professional employment in the arts through entrepreneurship. The landscape of arts entrepreneurship in U.S. higher education has rapidly expanded, with 168 institutions offering courses, publications, workshops, and degrees related to arts entrepreneurship training (Essig & Guevara, 2016). While research often focuses on conceptualization and skill identification, there is a need to assess the impact of entrepreneurial training on students' choices of self-reliant careers. The Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) provides data revealing disparities and insights into the importance and impact of entrepreneurial skills among arts alumni, considering factors such as race, student loans, and family background.

As the recipients of the 2020-2021 SNAAP Fellowship, Wen Guo and David McGraw used 2015-2017 SNAAP survey data to investigate the skills provided by academic institutions and their relationship with the self-reliant career choices of 77,798 arts alumni from 193 different colleges and universities across the US. This article is intended to provide insights regarding the career development of arts students to the audiences of the *Journal of Performing Arts Leadership in Higher Education* by adapting two articles: "SNAAP Data Brief: How Does Skill Preparation in Higher Education and its Cost Influence Alumni's Entrepreneurship Career Choice?" (Guo & McGraw 2022) published by the SNAAP and "The Arts Alumni Have Spoken: The Impact of Training in Higher Education on Entrepreneurial Careers" (Guo & McGraw 2022) published in *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy*.

Research Inquiries

The SNAAP survey comprises questions designed for alumni to assess the perceived importance of skills acquired during their academic years and how effectively their alma maters aided in developing these skills, conceptualized as perceived preparedness in this research project. Analysis of survey results, as well as insights from prior SNAAP Data Briefs (Frenette, 2015), indicates the existence of a gap between alumni's perceived importance and their perceived preparedness in terms of skills conceptualized as the skill preparation gap in this research project. To delve deeper into this phenomenon, this study utilizes three logistic regression models to explore how perceived preparedness and skill preparation gaps are correlated with three distinct approaches to self-reliant careers of arts alumni: freelancing, founding an arts-related venture, and initiating a business in any field.

Additionally, the research delves into various factors, including family resources, race, and student loans, to understand their statistical relationship with the decision to embark on a new venture or pursue a career as a freelancer (Guo & McGraw, 2023).

Method

This paper draws on data collected during the 2015, 2016, and 2017 administrations of the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP). SNAAP is an online survey conducted across various institutions, with the goal of promoting the success of creative individuals and advocating for evidence-based enhancements in training. It underscores the importance of arts and design education. The survey involved a substantial sample size of 81,723 alumni, representing 202 diverse arts institutions, including 9 arts high schools, 108 undergraduate institutions, and 85 graduate schools (SNAAP, 2021). This research project centers on 77,798 individuals who completed either an undergraduate or graduate program at 193 colleges and universities in the United States. Among them, 53,503 exclusively pursued an undergraduate degree in the arts, and 24,295 pursued at least one graduate degree. The survey explored both the academic experiences and professional trajectories of these arts alumni (Guo & McGraw, 2023).

In this study, the assessment of perceived skill preparedness involves arts alumni providing ratings on the extent to which their educational institutions helped them acquire or develop 15 skills. This evaluation is conducted through the SNAAP survey, utilizing a Likert scale that spans from "1" (Not at all) to "4" (Very much). Simultaneously, the evaluation of perceived skill requirement entails arts alumni rating the importance of these same 15 skills for effective performance in their professional or work life. This rating is done using a Likert scale ranging from "1" (Not at all important) to "4" (Very important) (Guo & McGraw, 2023). Notably, participants were not given a specific definition of entrepreneurial skills. Therefore, beyond the skill explicitly labeled as entrepreneurship, the remaining 15 skills should be examined as integral components of entrepreneurial skills, along with their influence on the entrepreneurial experiences of arts alumni (Guo & McGraw, 2023). Therefore, four skills, critical thinking skills, leadership skills, business management skills, and arts specialty skills, were identified as latent factors through an Exploratory Factor Analysis (Table 1). The means of all the indicator variables of each latent factor are used to measure the perceived preparedness for the four skills. The difference between the mean scores of perceived preparedness and perceived career requirements of the indicator variables is used to measure the perceived preparation gap of alumni (Guo & McGraw, 2023).

Table 1

Factor Analysis Results of Entrepreneurship Skills

Column 1: SNAAP Survey: Skills received from degree-granting institutions	Column 2: LAtent Factors of Entrepreneurship Skills
• Critical thinking and analysis of arguments and information • Research skills • Clear writing • Broad knowledge and education • Creative thinking and problem solving • Persuasive speaking	Critical Thinking Skills
• Leadership skills • Interpersonal relations and working collaboratively • Networking and relationship building	Leadership Skills
• Financial and business management skills • Technological skills	Business Management Skills
• Artistic technique • Teaching skills	Arts Speciality Skills

Note. This table was created from "SNAAP Data Brief: How Does Skill Preparation in Higher Education and its Cost Influence Alumni's Entrepreneurship Career Choice?" (Guo & McGraw 2022) published by the SNAAP.

Findings

The Relationship between Perceived Preparedness of Skills and Self-reliant Career Paths

The outcomes of the logistic regression analysis revealed insights into how the perceived preparedness of skills may influence three distinct entrepreneurship paths: freelancing, establishing a general business, or founding a business related to the arts. Notably, the perceived preparedness in arts specialty, business management, critical thinking, and leadership skills emerged as relevant factors across all three entrepreneurial career options:

- Arts specialty and business management skills are positively associated with all three career paths.
- Critical thinking and leadership skills have a significant positive relationship with venture creation (arts or otherwise).
- The perceived preparedness of critical thinking and leadership skills has a significant negative correlation with freelancing, unexpectedly. This implies that inadequate training in these two sets of skills contributes to adopting a freelancing career.

The unexpected correlation between skill preparation gaps in business management and leadership skills and engagement in freelance work prompts several potential explanations. Freelancing may not always be a preferred career choice; individuals might resort to freelancing as a steppingstone to gain the necessary business management and leadership skills before transitioning to full-time employment or entrepreneurship. Additionally, the current approach to defining and teaching these skills may not align with the expectations of arts alumni, especially those inclined towards a flexible freelancing career rather than traditional employment or business ownership.

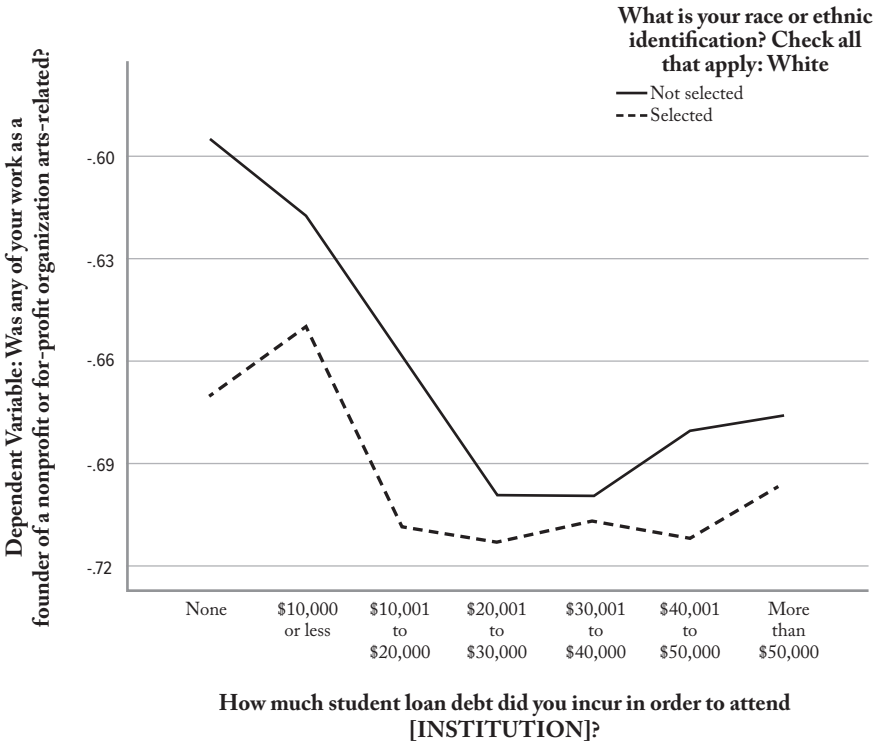
How do Race and Student Loan Contribute to Students' Choices?

The logistic regression models reveal the significant influence of financial, social, and cultural capital on entrepreneurial career choices, with a focus on racial identity:

- White alumni exhibit a 42% lower likelihood of founding an arts-related venture compared to alumni of other races.
- Student loan debt is inversely related to the probability of founding an arts-related venture and positively linked to the likelihood of engaging in freelancing.
- Considering the interaction effect of race and student loan debt, alumni with either a low level of student loan debt (None-$10,000) or a high level of debt (more than $40,001) across various races are more inclined to establish arts-related businesses (Figure 1). This suggests that individuals with minimal financial burdens can afford the risk. In contrast, those with substantial financial burdens may have less to lose, contributing to their willingness to take on the financial risk associated with entrepreneurship (Krishnan & Wang, 2019).

Figure 1

Interaction Effect of Student Loan and Race on Found Arts-related Businesses



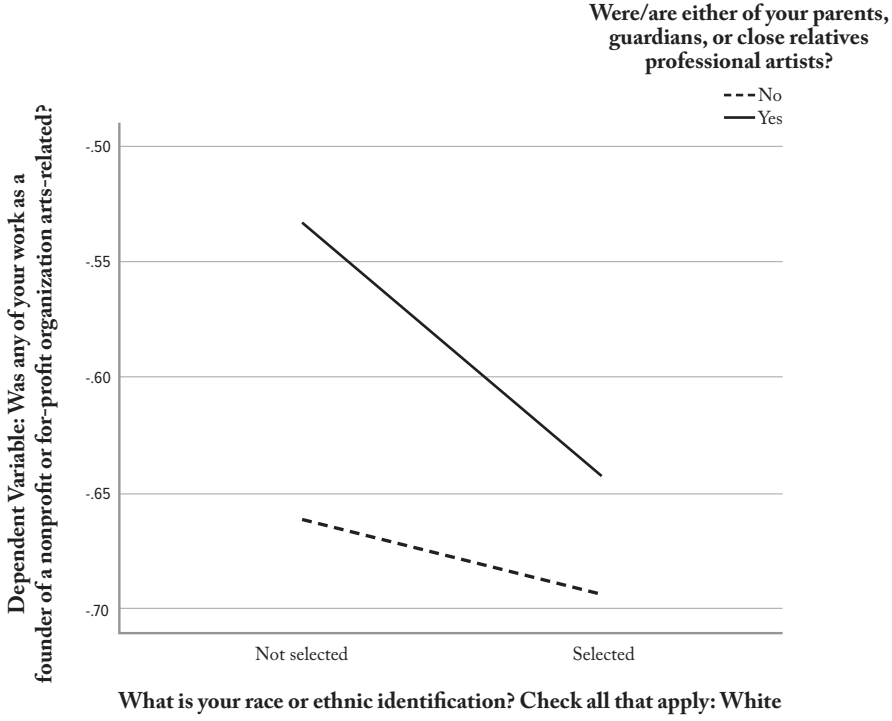
Note. This figure was created from "SNAAP Data Brief: How Does Skill Preparation in Higher Education and its Cost Influence Alumni's Entrepreneurship Career Choice?" (Guo & McGraw 2022) published by the SNAAP.

How do Race and Family Resources Contribute to Students' Choices?

The entrepreneurial choices of arts alumni—freelancing, founding an arts-related venture, and initiating a general business—are positively correlated with parental educational attainment. Additionally, the presence of family members with careers in the arts positively influences arts alumni toward these entrepreneurial paths. Moreover, an interaction effect between race and family member career path is observed. Specifically, identifying as white has a dampening effect on the likelihood of alumni being arts business founders, even among those with family members who were or are professional artists (Figure 2). This suggests that, despite familial connections to the arts, white-identifying alumni are less inclined to become founders of arts businesses.

Figure 2

Interaction Effect of Family Career Background in the Arts



Note. This figure was created from "SNAAP Data Brief: How Does Skill Preparation in Higher Education and its Cost Influence Alumni's Entrepreneurship Career Choice?" (Guo & McGraw 2023) published by the SNAAP.

Notes for Higher Education Leaders

Academic institutions are urged to examine the effectiveness of their training programs in preparing students for self-reliant careers. In addition to incorporating business management skills into curricula, undergraduate arts programs ought to explicitly emphasize the significance of fostering critical thinking and leadership skills. This focus is crucial for students aspiring to pursue self-reliant careers. The role of race, especially in conjunction with other factors, may influence alumni's likelihood of pursuing self-reliant careers. In addressing these considerations, academic institutions should explore ways to integrate training in both the arts and arts entrepreneurship without creating financial barriers for students entering artistic professions. This may involve incorporating more arts entrepreneurship training into arts curricula to reduce the need for additional tuition. Institutions could also design internship structures that actively promote and support entrepreneurial experiences.

Furthermore, institutions should focus on providing offerings and support tailored to first-generation college students and those without backgrounds in arts-focused families. This may include offering guidance and examples of sustainable careers in the arts and increasing networking opportunities specifically designed for arts alumni.

In a subsequent study within this research project, the authors delved into examining the correlation between the perceived quality of extra-curricular activities among arts students at their alma mater and their choices of self-reliant career choices. That study discovered the vital importance of community-engaged learning experience and a diverse campus culture in fostering entrepreneurial intentions of arts students. Building on the knowledge derived from this research project, future research in this domain can investigate the long-term impact of skill development on the sustainability and success of self-reliant careers of arts alumni. Furthermore, exploring innovative pedagogical approaches and program structures that foster the cultivation of these skills in diverse student populations would contribute to the ongoing enhancement of arts-focused higher education programs.

...

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BUILDING A CASE FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE MUSIC PERFORMANCE DEGREE

The climate of operational unsustainability in higher education today has put arts programs under increased scrutiny. With the ever-increasing cost of undergraduate tuition, stakeholders at every level (students, families, government agencies, media) are demanding that institutions of higher education provide proof of career placement and return on investment. Among the vulnerable programs, music performance stands out as a target for institutions seeking to make reductions in academic offerings that are viewed as lacking demand in the marketplace.

The undergraduate performance degree in music appeared in institutions of higher education in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century. Oberlin College and Boston University were some of the first institutions to begin conferring the Bachelor of Music degree, and by 1919, the number of institutions offering the Bachelor of Music degree had expanded to 77.[1] Responding to the inconsistent range of content and rigor across programs, the establishment of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) in 1924 was motivated in part by a desire to standardize the definition and content of the degree. Originally conceived as a broad musical preparation including composition, the curriculum evolved into a performance-centered degree, providing specialized training for classical musicians.

Purposes for the degree varied from institution to institution. Here is the description of the Bachelor of Music degree in the *Boston University Catalogue* from 1874:

> The necessity of a thorough preparation for the profession of music is becoming more apparent every year. Such a preparation should embrace not only a comprehensive knowledge of the science of Music, and a good degree of skill as an executant upon some instrument, or as a vocalist, but also a familiarity with two or three of the ancient or modern languages, mathematics, sciences, literature, and the fine arts. The knowledge and general intellectual culture acquired by such a course of study, are needed to give a correct view of the relation of Music to the other arts and sciences. They also enable students to more intelligently interpret and perform, the works of the masters, render their services as instructors more valuable, and qualify them to do far more towards elevating the art to its true position in the estimation of the public, than they could otherwise possibly do. Few begin to study for other professions, much less to practice them, until they

[1] Virginia Mountney, "The History of the Bachelor's Degree in the Field of Music in the United States" (DMA diss., Boston University, 1961), 228.

> have acquired such a general preparation as the above course of study affords; and if important for them, it is not less important for the musical profession. Nor is there any reason why young men or women of fine musical talent should turn their attention to other professions.
>
> The country is fast coming to realize the great value of Music as a branch of popular education. Seminaries, colleges, and even the public schools, are rapidly incorporating it into their regular curriculum of studies, and from all quarters applications are constantly received for teachers whose musical education and general culture qualify them to fill positions in such institutions.[2]

Of particular note in this description is the emphasis on the breadth of knowledge outside of music (the "general intellectual culture") that informs musical interpretation, as well as the growing focus nationwide on music within elementary and secondary education (where opportunities for employment were proliferating). As the culture in the United States grew more favorable toward music as a worthy pursuit, so did acceptance of music as a course of study in the academy.

Even today, descriptions of the purpose of the performance degree resonate with this earlier statement from 1874. The current statement of the purpose of the degree from NASM reads as follows: "Students enrolled in professional undergraduate degrees in music are expected to develop the knowledge, skills, concepts, and sensitivities essential to the professional life of the musician. To fulfill various professional responsibilities, the musician must exhibit not only technical competence, but also broad knowledge of music and music literature, the ability to integrate musical knowledge and skills, sensitivity to musical styles, and an insight into the role of music in intellectual and cultural life."[3] In the years since its inception, the Bachelor of Music in Performance became the standard for focused conservatory-level training at the undergraduate level as well as preparation for graduate study.[4]

Within the profession by mid-century, questions arose concerning the value and outcomes of a performance degree. There is evidence of a growing tension between the promise of the degree and its pay-off in the marketplace. Was the degree living up to its intentions to prepare students for a life in music, specifically

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[2] Mountney, "The History," 211-212.

[3] National Association of Schools of Music, "Standards and Guidelines for Accredited Institutional Membership," *Handbook, 2023-24* (Reston, VA, 2024), VIII.A.2. Structurally, NASM degree proportions for the Bachelor of Music in Performance are normally expected to provide studies in the major area (performance) and supportive courses in music at least 65% of the curriculum, with general studies rounding out the curriculum at about 25-35%. (NASM, "Standards," IX.A.1.a.(2).)

[4] Music performance degrees at the undergraduate level are frequently offered under the title of Bachelor of Music, but can be found under other degree structures, including the Bachelor of Musical Arts and the Bachelor of Arts. Titles are often shaped by local concerns.

gainful employment as a performing music professional? As far back as 1975, The Wisconsin Conservatory in Milwaukee was awarded a grant of $20,000 from the US Office of Education to study "Music Career Curriculum Development," concluding that institutions of higher education should consider changes in music curricula to better align with the realities of music employment opportunities.[5]

In 1995, dueling opinion pieces in *The American Music Teacher* debated the value of the place of the undergraduate performance degree. Beyond a cautionary opinion, the downright pessimistic viewpoint called for a critical reappraisal of the degree:

> The BM performance degree is an anachronism, and the conservatory has been rendered a *preservatory* populated by the hopeful and the hopeless. A pitifully low percentage of those who complete BM performance degrees find fulltime employment as performers. So limited is the performance job market that the major conservatories alone could probably more than meet the demand.[6]

As a professional organization that promotes the advancement of music in higher education, the College Music Society has had its finger on the pulse of this issue. A contribution to the *College Music Symposium* in 1988 cited the glut in the music marketplace and steady stream of graduates whose investment of time and money did not result in the prospects of fulltime employment; worse yet, there is the insinuation that faculty and institutions are filling studios and programs to meet enrollment goals without the best interest of students in mind.[7] Students and families are pouring resources in pursuit of a degree that seems to occupy a slim portion of the job market. Is it a disservice, or even worse, unethical to continue to produce graduates from these programs?

If we fast-forward to today, the metrics used to gauge program success do no favors for the arts. Within the academy, units are subject to measures such as the direct contribution margin (generally, a unit's revenue minus expenses) and the generation of student credit hours (SCH -- in many places, the "coin of the realm"), indicators that are bound to put music performance programs in a negative light. Studio lessons taught 1:1 are some of the most expensive pedagogy offered at institutions. The mentorship model in performance consumes large amounts of faculty time and does not generate a large volume of SCH. While they are the essential mode of instruction for the performance major, private lessons are not scalable

[5] Stephen Jay and Carol D. Smith, "Music Career Curriculum Development Study: A Study of the Relationship of Curricula to Employment" (Washington, D.C.: Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1976), 2.

[6] Steve Roberson. "Tradition and Change," *American Music Teacher* 44, no.1 (August/September 1995): 12-15.

[7] George L. Rogers, "The Bachelor of Music Degree and the Marketplace," *College Music Symposium* 28 (1988): 106-116.

like a large lecture class or an online course. A similar issue affects the performing ensembles. The ensembles are a "high-touch" environment, with faculty spending substantial contact hours with the students. In terms of student impact, the effect is enormous; but in terms of the accounting, it appears bad for the bottom line. For example, an ensemble that might enroll 100 students for a single academic credit (hypothetically rehearsing 5 hours per week) will only generate 100 SCH, despite the 500 contact hours. (And that does not even begin to include the time spent in performances, dress rehearsals, tours, etc.)

Add to the mix the overall decrease in the student population. Over the last decade, music enrollments in higher education have seen a decline nationwide. Data from HEADS-reporting institutions show an overall music enrollment high of 116,206 in 2011 to 98,085 in 2020, a decrease of 15.6%.[8] (Note the more recent number is still 172% higher than enrollments were in 1990, when music enrollments were reported just below 60,000 nationwide.[9]) However, if we examine enrollments of just the Bachelor of Music degree alone, enrollments nationwide have dropped over 33%, from 31,884 reported in 2010-11 to 21,260 in 2021-22.[10]

Given these demographic and financial realities, at some institutions programs in music have become convenient targets for cuts. Detractors point to the enrollment declines, program expenses, and the perceived value of the degree in the marketplace as reasons to cut programs for cost savings and reinvestments in majors that have a greater market appeal. These stories are replaying themselves at institutions of a variety of sizes and missions across the country. I choose to not cite here the list of schools nationwide that are undergoing painful downsizing and reorganization in light of current financial and enrollment realities; that information is readily available.[11]

Those of us at institutions of higher education can find ourselves at a loss for a response when confronted with these data and calls for cuts; however, there is reason for optimism. We can engage in fierce advocacy for the value of our undergraduate

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[8] Peter Witte, "The Performing Arts in the Next America: Preparing Students for Their Future," in *Futures of Performance: The Responsibilities of Performing Arts in Higher Education*, ed. Karen Schupp (New York: Routledge, 2024), 346. These numbers include students in all music programs (including doctoral and master's programs) from schools responding to the Higher Education Arts Data Services (HEADS) annual surveys.

[9] Witte, "The Performing Arts," 345.

[10] Higher Education Arts Data Services, "Music Data Summaries, 2010-11," (Reston, VA: Higher Education Data Services, 2011), Chart 1-2, and Higher Education Arts Data Services, "Music Data Summaries, 2021-22," (Reston, VA: Higher Education Data Services, 2023), 9-11. This calculation takes into account all reported Bachelor of Music degrees, including those that may not be performance degrees (such as composition). Music Education degrees were not included in this number, nor were performance degrees with different degree titles (such as Bachelor of Music Arts), even if they might have a performance emphasis (which is difficult to discern from the title alone).

[11] At the time of writing this, on March 1, 2024, my institution announced that it was considering discontinuance of our Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Music Therapy degrees, along with majors in Spanish, German, Philosophy, Theology, Actuarial Science, and Astronomy, to name a few. (It's not only the arts that have been subject to cutbacks, as even some STEM disciplines are not immune.)

performance degrees with support from three key areas: the marketplace, the demonstrated broad value of music study, and the potential for redesigning the degree to meet future needs. For those who are motivated by data in making decisions, the situation is not as dire as it might seem. There are data that show that an undergraduate music performance pathway is not a wasted investment when it comes to employment outcomes. Beyond the ability to provide a basis for livelihood, we must be able to articulate the intrinsic value in the pursuit of musical performance, reshaping and reclaiming a narrative that would discourage a career in the arts. Units should celebrate the study of music performance as an intrinsic good in its own right, and administrators should be ready to tout both music's quantifiable and non-quantifiable contributions to institutional good. Lastly, we should not assume the music performance degree that is needed now is the same as the one that has been historically offered and the one that is too often entrenched in our curricula. Fortunately, there is a groundswell among more and more faculty, administrators, and arts organizations to redesign the performance degree to be more equitable, inclusive, and relevant to the 21st Century needs of our graduating students. If the music performance degree is to remain relevant and make good on its promise to train musicians for current realities, we must be responsive to the need to innovate.

Positive data indicators

Despite the overarching narrative that denigrates the worth of degrees in the arts, there are studies which should give hope and offer a cogent argument for their value. The Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) uses its data-based research to foster change in the training of arts graduates as well as to advocate for the value of arts and design education. Since its initial surveys began twenty years ago, it has tracked graduates in the arts, providing important quantitative findings on the job satisfaction of those who have pursued arts degrees. Its survey from 2010 collected information about student experience as well as career and financial outcomes. Respondents who had completed an *undergraduate degree in music performance* reported securing a first job or work experience prior to leaving their institution at a rate of 33%; a further 22 % reported that achievement after fewer than 4 months following graduation. Nearly 31% of the total pool reported pursuing further education. Together, these numbers account for 86% of the respondents. Furthermore, again within music performance, over 70% indicated that this employment was a fairly close, very close, or a perfect match to their hoped-for career path.[12] It is also noteworthy from this study that while 26% of music performance alumni reported employment in a single job, 48% reported working two jobs, and 26 % reported working three or more jobs.[13]

[12] Peter Miksza and Lauren Hime, "Undergraduate Music Program Alumni's Career Path, Retrospective Institutional Satisfaction, and Financial Status," *Arts Education Policy Review*, 116, no.4 (2015): 180.

[13] Miksza and Hime, "Undergraduate," 181.

Employment in music is often tied to the gig economy, and we should be direct with students and families in advising at the onset that this remains a reality of work in the creative professions. As institutions, we can increase the effectiveness of advising and counseling programs that prepare students for the realities of the profession. Effective advising should not be limited to career counseling near the end of the degree, but should be implemented from the very beginning, as students navigate choice of major and music program. Graduates themselves are telling us that this is a gap in their undergraduate training. The 2022 SNAAP study (published 2024) revealed that only 22% of music alumni were very satisfied with their opportunities to network with career professionals; even fewer (17%) were very satisfied with access to alumni networking opportunities.[14] Only 18% felt they received excellent exposure to career options both in and out of the arts.[15] Other studies have borne this out as well. In a 2015 study of graduate students reflecting upon their undergraduate experience, nearly 65% of respondents indicated that they had not been offered music-specific career advising or a specialized music liaison.[16]

We have a key role to play in helping to sustain and improve the career placements of our graduates. Fortunately, within the changing landscape of the career marketplace, the creative sector of the economy is robust and poised to grow. In 2021, at $1.016 trillion it accounted for 4.4% of GDP.[17] Driven largely by the infusion of technology into creative fields, this segment is predicted to see significant growth over the coming years: "Today, the creative economy is estimated to be worth $985 billion with no signs of slowing down. G20 Insights predicts that the creative economy could account for 10% of global GDP by 2030, and Deloitte believes we will see up to 40% growth in creative sectors by 2030."[18] MajoringinMusic.com lists over ninety different jobs that are within or immediately adjacent to the field of music.[19] Given this good economic news for the performing arts, we should articulate the opportunities for jobs in this sector with our constituents while we continue to develop programs that prepare students for them.

It's not just national trends that we need to observe and interpret. In advocating for music performance at our individual institutions, local nuances of recruitment and retention (quantifiable data!) can provide strong arguments for our music

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[14] J.L.Novak-Leonard and S. Bigelow, "Reflections: Alumni Perspectives on their Postsecondary Experiences in Arts and Design," Strategic National Arts Alumni Project Report (Austin, TX: Arts + Design Alumni Research, SNAAP, 2024): 13.

[15] Novak-Leonard and Bigelow, "Reflections," 16.

[16] Jennifer Slaughter and D. Gregory Springer, "What They Didn't Teach Me in My Undergraduate Degree: An Exploratory Study of Graduate Student Musicians' Expressed Opinions of Career Development Opportunities," *College Music Society,* 55, no.15 (2015): under "Career Services and Advising Satisfaction."

17 Witte, "The Performing Arts," 354.

18 Igor Bogachev, "How the Growing Creative Economy Will Soon Devour the Real Economy." *Forbes*, May 16, 2023.

19 "What Can You Do with a Music Degree," accessed February 29, 2024, https://majoringinmusic.com/what-can-you-do-with-a-music-degree/.

performance programs. Music and the arts foster belonging, and it would be an asset for any unit to know how it contributes to the recruitment and retention of students at the institution. Many of our institutions provide music performance experiences for students outside of the music major. For institutions with smaller music major enrollment, involving students from a wide range of majors outside music becomes part of our service to the institution and its students. While the performance major may not seem relevant to these students (although a few of them in my experience have taken the extra semesters of schooling to complete both a music performance degree and a second major), the Bachelor of Music can anchor a music unit in providing high-performing ensembles. For schools where music is a pursuit that serves the entire campus, having a performance degree attracts dedicated performers to ensure that ensembles are playing at a high level, which in turn recruits students to the institution in areas outside of music. At my institution, we have found that music performance opportunities are a strong recruitment draw for students in our honors college (28% of honors students participate in ensembles) and engineering programs. Retention numbers are also critical data points to collect. For example, students who are enrolled in a music ensemble are retained at my institution at a rate that is 8 to 10 percentage points higher than the full cohort rate. If we are to build a compelling story for the place of music performance in higher education, local data such as these speak to the positive impact of our programs on the overall health and bottom line of the institution.

Broader values of music study

In one of the most memorable meetings I ever had with a parent and prospective student, the discussion took an unexpected turn -- a kind of role reversal. During the meeting, the student expressed concern that pursuit of a music degree might not lead to secure, gainful employment. Wouldn't an additional or different credential be prudent, she asked. To this, the father responded that she should follow her passion (looking to me for confirmation). This would likely be the single best opportunity to spend four years in concentrated, advanced study to become the best musician she could be. Regardless of her future vocation, she would be enriched for life by the experience.

At a visceral level, many of us know the intrinsic rewards that come from a life dedicated to the arts. This is a hard argument to make, given the investment that students put toward their college education. In response to Roberson's scathing indictment of the Bachelor of Music cited earlier, Gregory Pepetone offers a counterargument through the lens of liberal education, pointing to the intrinsic value of music study both for the individual and for the greater good of society, focusing on the opportunity to devote time to acquire skill and knowledge in an environment that provides a unique focus on craft. [20] As one of my undergraduate

[20] Gregory Pepetone, "Classical Music's Last Sanctuary," *American Music Teacher* 44, no.4 (February/March 1995): 26-27.

instructors told me, you are never going to have as much time to spend practicing and concentrating on music as you do in college.

From the 2010 SNAAP survey, in the category of job satisfaction, the highest rated categories for music performance majors (and also music education majors) were (1) the opportunity to contribute to the greater good: (2) work that reflects personality, interest and values; and (3) opportunity to be creative. Items like job security, income, and potential for advancement were rated at the bottom. This may have impacts for career advising -- students for whom music serves as a passion or calling have a greater chance of connecting to the aspects of the career that graduates report as most rewarding.

There are also data that show that alumni are satisfied with their decisions and investment in music study. SNAAP's most recent report (2024) of over 61,000 respondents indicates positive responses from graduates across arts disciplines. Within the area of music itself, 56% percent of alumni rate their postsecondary experience as excellent, and 34% report it as good.[21] 83% of music alumni were likely to recommend their *alma mater* to a similar student.[22]

Spending one's years in college in artistic pursuit can lead to lifelong satisfaction. Engaging in serious music study develops a broad skill set, including discipline, persistence, curiosity, precision, creativity, independent and lateral thinking, and the ability to collaborate and work in teams. These strengths are foundational for a life of meaningful work in any field, making music study a strong preparation for other career paths, including entrance into the fields of medicine and law. Tammie Walker, Director of the School of Music at the University of Iowa offers the following perspective:

> I don't believe that a performance degree prepares you just for a one-dimensional solo career. And I don't believe music students choose those degrees with that intention any longer. A performance degree brings a focus and opportunity for specialization that some other degrees do not, which - ultimately - can transfer into a lifetime quest for that level of deep understanding of many things. Musicians that have mastered their craft often have incredible discipline, humility, bravery, integrity, perseverance, grit and thick skins… these skills translate beautifully into many aspects of the arts world (like administration!). While I certainly understand the "fear" that may come with getting a degree that has performance in the name, I believe it's time we admit that our field has moved past the well-defined career lanes of the past. Students today are preparing for careers in fields that don't even exist yet… and the

[21] Novak-Leonard and Bigelow, "Reflections," 25, Table 1.
[22] Novak-Leonard and Bigelow, "Reflections," 21.

> skills they will learn in a performance degree will help shape the inquisitive, self-motivated mindset they'll need to be successful.[23]

While ideally we wish our alumni to find lifelong and fruitful employment in the field of music, we need to redefine what success on the job market looks like. The securing of a music performance job should not be the only measure of a successful career and solid degree investment. Music study does not only prepare students for careers narrowly defined within the realm of performance. For our students who do not find employment in music (through choice or circumstance), we need to acknowledge and celebrate the success of their paths outside performance.

Changes in the degree

Given the shrinking footprint of traditional performance jobs nationwide, the undergraduate performance degree cannot exist to serve the same purposes it did in the mid-twentieth century. We should reconsider the content of the performance degree, not just the specialized training that is the great hallmark of the degree, but also ancillary studies, to best equip students to leave our institutions with the tools to succeed in the widest possible market. One potential mission statement for our music performance degrees could begin with this formulation by Michael Stepniak and Peter Sirotin: Institutions of higher education should strive to "better enable and support the rising generation of musicians (including those who love the classical repertoire wholly or in part) to make the music that they have an aching to make and do all in our power to provide them with the best possible set of skills and knowledge appropriate for the music marketplace they will need to navigate."[24]

While the traditional performance degree carves out significant time for individual mastery in a specialized area (and indeed this is a luxury of the degree we would be remiss to lose), there are studies that show that having access to subject matter and coursework outside of music correlates to increased employment opportunities and even higher earnings later in life. In a statistically-based study of the long-term benefits of liberal arts education, Richard A. Detweiler uncovers some powerful data regarding liberal arts versus vocational education. One of the most revealing conclusions to come from this study is that students who take over half of their coursework outside of their major (regardless of major) were 24% more likely to report higher income as adults, and this impact was greater for those with lower standardized test scores or family income levels at the time of college.[25] Another compelling finding focuses on the correlation between specialized study versus a broader preparation:

[23] Tammie Walker, personal correspondence with the author, February 21, 2024.

[24] Michael Stepniak and Peter Sirotin. *Beyond the Conservatory Model: Reimagining Classical Music Performance Training in Higher Education,* CMS Emerging Fields in Music (New York: Routledge, 2021): 73.

[25] Richard A. Detweiler, *The Evidence Liberal Arts Needs: Lives of Consequence, Inquiry, and Accomplishment* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2021): 162

> The idea that there is no substantial relationship between having a vocational-oriented major and longer-term success is interesting, given that people ranging from students and parents to politicians and policymakers, have become increasingly concerned that college should result in a good job. Yet specialized study is not the predictor of longer-term success; our research findings emphasize the importance of breadth of study for all, especially for those who enter college from less economically advantaged families.[26]

In many institutions, the content of the music performance degree is already expanding beyond specialized study to include areas such as entrepreneurship, marketing, and audio production. The possibilities for additional content areas are nearly limitless. While they are all worthy pursuits, and students have indicated their desire for these skills and knowledge bases, it is not realistic to assume that all these objectives could be substantially achieved given the limitations of time and curricular space. Each institution has emphases it could bring to the degrees that address some missing components while playing to the existing strengths of the local situation. Institutions should seriously consider their mission and their own strengths in designing music curricula that meet the needs of their students. Doing so creates a unique identity and niche that could potentially distinguish one's program and provide a distinction within the crowded marketplace.

Our institutions might consider alternate curricular structures to allow for broader study without compromising the centrality of performance in the degree. For institutions that are members of NASM, the association provides flexibility within existing degree structures to create curricula that meet standards while capitalizing on local strengths. Take the Bachelor of Musical Arts, for example. The BMA is a professional degree with a minimum of 50% music content, but it further includes at least 15% of studies in an outside field that develops a competency (e.g., entrepreneurship, computer science, graphic design, or any of a host of areas.). Advising in the major is essential for assisting students in finding and developing these complementary areas.[27]

As we consider the curricular content, we should be looking at all our degree programs through the lens of equity and inclusion -- who is enrolling in our programs and who is being left out. Enrollments of music students of under-represented ethnic and cultural heritages increased 329% from 8,064 to 26,496 over the period of 1990 to 2020.[28] Yet it is important to note that these demographics lag behind the national averages significantly: at this rate, HEADS-reporting music units are on track to become majority minority around 2040, reportedly 26 years after the

[26] Detweiler, "The Evidence," 168.
[27] NASM, "Standards," IV.C.6.b.(5).
[28] Witte, "The Performing Arts," 345.

same becomes true in US public schools.[29] These degrees have long been luxuries accessible to those with resources and privilege, while those without these same advantages seldom get the opportunity. What do our degrees look like when we remove barriers that assume these preparations, such as the entrance audition or assumptions about music literacy? How do we create programs that acknowledge disparity and work toward equity? Fortunately, with conversations underway at many institutions and among many of our professional societies, hopefully future iterations of our curricula and policies will respond with programs that increase rather than limit access.

Final thoughts

While our efforts to counter the barrage of assaults on the arts in education often feels at times like fighting a lost cause, building a case for programs such as music performance is as important as ever if those programs are to continue and thrive. There are data and success stories that underscore the value of the degree, especially if we are alert to the need to recast it to meet the needs of our students now. Some of these stories are most effective when told quantitatively, where we can point to data at the national, regional, and local levels that demonstrate alumni career success, workforce fulfillment, potential growth in the sector, and lifetime satisfaction. Beyond the data, we must count as success our alumni's career outcomes adjacent to and outside of music. A livelihood supported exclusively by performing cannot be the only acceptable outcome for this degree. We may think of individual stories as anecdotes, but they go a long way toward showing the vibrant possibilities that exist for our graduates.

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[29] Witte, "The Performing Arts," 347.

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EMBRACING THE ARTS IN EDUCATION HOLISTICALLY: AS A PREPARATION FOR LIFE AND FOR *ANY* CAREER

In ancient Greece, the arts held a special importance as both a way of understanding humanity and the world, but also as a way to build a responsible citizenry. Through music, the Greeks understood their universe, the human body, human nature, morality, even crowd control.[1] It ranked among the four most critical fields of study (the quadrivium) alongside arithmetic, geometry, and cosmology. Music educated human understanding *before* it served as a way to create art for its own sake, to build a career, or to entertain. Plato, in his *Republic* asked: "And is it not for this reason, Glaucon, that education in music is most sovereign, because more than anything else rhythm and harmony find their way to the inmost soul and take strongest hold upon it, bringing with them and imparting grace, if one is rightly trained?[2] Plato saw music as the most important aspect of education because it trained the mind and spirit in the way of morality and right thinking. (Gymnastics held second place as it brought the body to a state of ideal fitness.)

Similarly, the Greeks saw drama as a way to investigate what it meant to be human: from Prometheus to Oedipus and Electra, the conflicts of human emotion, decision, and action (thought, word, and deed) were laid bare, and the catharsis derived from experiencing such drama was seen as pivotal to its impact and importance. In a manner similar to music, the lessons assimilated through drama were seen as elevating the morality of the listener, a key philosophical value beyond the mere entertainment value of a play. Drama educated, and as a result, it also contributed to a more responsible citizenry.

Through visual art, the human relation to the gods was made clear since the gods were depicted in the image of humans. Visual artists were esteemed because their work exalted human achievement alongside the gods as part of a thriving civilization. It reminded the citizens of Athens in particular that through their artistic and athletic successes they were not dissimilar to the gods. Visual art therefore imparted a dignity and pride to its owners simply for owning it.

The arts, therefore, were core to the citizens of Athens. They built an enhanced morality, trained critical thinking, and developed an appreciation of beauty, all of which augmented a civic awareness that contributed to the fundamental principles of a sophisticated democratic state. It may seem like a utopian reverie to teachers of the arts in 21st century America that 2,000 years ago our disciplines were so highly prized by a civilization. "If only…" we may find ourselves dreaming … how might budgets be differently appropriated in such a society? Arts teachers in our time might be forgiven for fancying that, if policymakers and administrators in current times saw the arts as critical to the complete education of a human mind, as essential to the rational understanding of our universe, as a prerequisite to human achievement and the moral education of humanity, their value might not fall under

constant scrutiny, and budgets might not need to be justified and fought for on an annual basis.

Modern America, however, has generally inverted the importance of the arts and sports both in education and in daily life. We find ourselves as artists in a constant struggle for support, and in a perpetual state of justifying the value of what we do. Do the arts have value? Is the *value* of the arts commensurate with the *cost* of its training? What career return on investment is possible or likely? Does one even need training if some of the most successful modern artists begin by producing their art in their garages, and on their own time?

In spite of budget challenges in modern times, research repeatedly shows that exposure to the arts, and training in them, contributes life skills of great value beyond the specific skills acquired within each art form. Nevertheless, that research seems repeatedly to fall on deaf policy ears as technology and the empirical sciences attract attention with a data driven hope for the future. If America sees value in the arts, that value orients principally toward entertainment, to the arts icon, the famous name, to the career and its attendant wealth or prestige. The value of the arts as a *central component of the complete education of a human mind* falls behind the entertainment, the show, the exhibit, the glitz and glamour. Since an education in the arts is not a prerequisite to attaining the glitz and glamour, the need to support it with civic expenditures feels less urgent. From the artists' perspective, it always seems that support is never enough, and always at risk.

A two-sided coin

The issue of the value of the arts in education is too complex to be addressed in any complete manner via a single article, or one journal edition. Volumes have been written on a decreasing prioritization of the arts as a focus in education over the past 50+ years, with suggestions as to why. State budget allocations, school district budget priorities, budget inequities across districts, underlying issues of race and ethnic inequalities, emphasis upon STEM disciplines in an era of global technological advance, No Child Left Behind and its increased focus upon successful standardized testing—all have been scrutinized as researchers look for causal connections.

Over a similar period of time, *other research* has drawn attention to the *benefits* of the arts in education. Young students who participate in the arts have been shown to manifest an increased tolerance for differences among people, greater collaborative spirit, better civic engagement, a broader understanding of history and culture around the world, lower truancy rates, and more.

Funding the arts is a two-sided coin, and both sides voice strong opinions. One voice shouts, "Cut the arts from limited budgets and focus upon STEM in a time of accelerating technological advances and global competition for technological and medical superiority," while another proclaims "The arts are a critical component not

only of a well-rounded and creative human being, but of a fully developed brain."[3]

Data, politics, and educational cost

In the data driven America of the 21st century, measurement has become central to decision making. If it can be measured, there is objective information upon which action can be taken. It requires no stretch of imagination to understand how the sciences are compatible with data driven research, while the more creative arts that often elude quantifiable assessment by their very nature, tend to struggle. With the support of data, budget decisions are clearer. Without that support, determining a budget priority includes at least two risks: 1) that money invested won't yield quantifiable gains, and 2) that politically the investment will come back to haunt those who supported it.

It is understandable that decision makers, many of whom may hold an elected office, prefer to support an educational paradigm that relies upon data. Data within the sciences naturally leans toward objective cause-effect studies. Data within the arts may point to value added, but often in less directly tangible metrics. If one can reference an objective data point, at least the appearance of impartiality prevails with the hope that objectivity will de-politicize the budget process. Often the result—political or not—is that science and technology remain clear winners, while the arts struggle to find the traction with their own data to compete. Nevertheless, as this article will illuminate, there is considerable data already available to support the value of the arts in education at all levels.

The politics of budget decisions gains more visibility as the costs of education rise. There is an ever-present challenge for policy makers and administrators to keep costs reasonable. And with constrained costs, schools must still offer a complete education that demands ever more content to meet current needs, all without losing too much sight of what has historically been deemed of educational value. Higher education grows in expense annually with decreased state funding and increased costs borne by students via tuition. This trend has caused students also to weigh in with a demonstrative voice asking, "Is higher education worth its cost in career payoff?" As universities listen to student voices, administrators urge 4-year degree programs to find ways to edge closer to 3-year durations, and "time to degree" becomes a touted data point of assessment for recruitment, retention, and academic marketing.

In part as a reaction to costs, the late 20th and early 21st centuries found students leaning toward a more objective and transparent "vocational" style of schooling across a wide spectrum of majors. They pushed for higher education to gravitate toward a space in which courses satisfied clear future career prerequisites, preferring to gain the minimum skills and knowledge necessary to become employable. A liberal education that broadened exposure to the process of inquiry and critical thinking—that built a better-informed citizenry—seemed less valuable to them.

We can likely agree that the arts in higher education need not be exclusively

about vocational training. Nevertheless, if budgets, policies, and student voices cause us to focus upon the vocation issue, we can end up skirting the broader value of an arts education that has already occupied a focal point in research at the primary and secondary levels of education in America. In short, studying the arts *might* yield a career, but it almost certainly yields a creative and open mindset that both employers and employees value across many fields of work, and throughout a lifetime. While there are certainly many diverse career opportunities in the arts, we also know how they enhance the quality of life, bring people together through collaborative efforts, connect us to history and to the present in creative ways, and even give us glimpses of a higher aesthetic experience. Graduates with degrees in one of the arts, regardless of their ultimate career path, indicate that they hold what they learned through their arts education—the creative experiences, artistic expression, teamwork, even their ability to think non-linearly and to make astute value judgments—as deeply valuable to them. As a result, they often remain involved in and supportive of the arts in their later lives.

Whether we focus directly upon training for careers or upon a more holistic human experience through the arts, it is an already decided argument that *the arts have value*. In spite of this, they continue to struggle, and education systems across America continue to sideline them. A companion article in this volume, written by Joseph Bognar, reveals that across a century the opinion of a music degree shifted from an 1874 perspective stating "the great value of Music as a branch of popular education" to a 1995 opinion that "the BM performance degree is an anachronism, and the conservatory has been rendered a *preservatory* populated by the hopeful and the hopeless."[4] Writing for the George Lucas Educational Foundation in 2009, Fran Smith wondered why the value of the arts in education remains in debate when "Years of research show that [arts education] is closely linked to almost everything that we as a nation say we want for our children and demand from our schools: academic achievement, social and emotional development, civic engagement, and equitable opportunity."[5] And in 2023, Ginanne Brownell wrote: "Arts education is still perceived as an add-on, rather than an essential field creating essential 21st-century skills that are defined as the four C's of collaboration, creativity, communication and critical thinking."[6]

The overall value of the arts in education

Research into the value of the arts in education and on the human condition is extensive, and part of the present article's intent is to share a few access points to some of that research (see the Endnotes, and Additional Reading). It has been shown that consistent exposure to the arts plays a critical role in brain and motor skill development.[7] It has also been shown that the arts build collaborative spirit, promote peace, help to reset aggression, and enhance primary and secondary

schooling.[8] In 2021, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences published a document entitled "Art for Life's Sake: The Case for Arts Education."[9] Written largely by Brian Kisida and Angela LaPorte, the table of contents lists the following section headings within a unit entitled *The Values of Arts Education*:

Arts Education Builds Well-Rounded Individuals;
Arts Education Broadens Our Understanding of and Appreciation for Other Cultures and Histories;
Arts Education Supports Social and Emotional Development;
Arts Education Builds Empathy, Reduces Intolerance, and Generates Acceptance of Others;
Arts Education Improves School Engagement and Culture; Arts Education Develops Valuable Life and Career Skills;
Arts Education Strengthens Community and Civic Engagement.

Each subsection explores the arts' impact upon young minds, including building historical empathy, indelibly connecting the past to the present through powerful impressions from specific works of art, encouraging critical thinking, building self-awareness, learning constructive self-criticism, and improving school engagement via creative ways to access educational content. Their findings across these areas of focus are supported by those from the Houston Education Research Consortium, which conducted a randomized, controlled trial involving over 10,000 students across 42 Houston-area schools and concluded that "arts-learning experiences benefit students in terms of reductions in disciplinary infractions, increases in compassion for others and improvements in writing achievement. Furthermore, arts-education experiences improve school engagement and college aspirations."[10]

Continuing this train of thought, Jay Greene, along with Brian Kisida and Daniel Bowen, found that even extra-curricular field trips to art museums increased critical thinking by 9% of a standard deviation, historical empathy by 6% of a standard deviation, tolerance by 7%, and interest in attending another museum in the future by 8% compared with a randomized control group. The percentages were higher among rural school children and disadvantaged children, who may not have experienced art in any meaningful way outside of school. They suggest that future policy decisions bear in mind that statistically meaningful increases in critical thinking, tolerance, and empathy result from exposure to the arts.[11]

Echoing this research, former President Barack Obama stated, "The future belongs to young people with an education and the imagination to create."[12] The arts in education contribute to the imagination and creative aspect of this statement. Additionally, the arts often exist in educational spaces that promote inclusive thought and behavior, that elevate acceptance of a concept or perspective, in contrast to specific hard facts. In the words of C. Miki Henderson and Elizabeth Lasley, "Unlike pencil

and paper assessments that assume only one particular level of knowledge, the arts can provide ways for children to showcase their own abilities." [13]

Translating an education in the arts to future support

Arts in education extends beyond directly impacting a person's holistic experience of history, diversity, collaborative work, and self-awareness. Research shows it additionally impacts a person's interest in and support for the arts later in life. Jay Greene, mentioned above, showed that students were more likely to want to attend a museum a *second* time after attending a museum once through a school-sponsored trip. His conclusion is supported by other studies as well. Nick Rabkin and E. C. Hedberg from the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago showed in 2011 that *arts attendance by adults* (attending at least one benchmark event in the arts within the survey year) rose dramatically when the adults had received *any* arts education either in adulthood or in childhood. Adults who *had* received arts education in either childhood or as adults showed between a 54% and 71% rate of attendance, whereas adults with *no* education in the arts attended arts events in the 24% to 31% range.[14] Their study also found that there was a direct correlation between the number of art forms studied and the likelihood of attendance, with attendance rates skyrocketing from 27% for adults with no prior arts education to over 80% for adults who had studied 5 different art forms at one time or another. The attendance rate reached 100% with adults who studied 5 art forms in the *prior year*. In other words, an education in the arts supports not only complete human development and civic responsibility as mentioned above, but that same education correlates to *support* for arts events through attendance in adult life.[15] The data supports the authors' statement that "Arts education has a more powerful effect on [future] arts attendance than any other measurable factor."[16]

There has long been a saying among my musician friends that "a concert with no audience is just a rehearsal." Performances, plays, and art exhibits without attendees resemble the tree that falls soundlessly in the forest. In a bid to keep future participators and attendees across the arts in America, perhaps we should embrace more purposefully the holistic "future quality of life" aspect of an arts education. People who have experienced arts in education know that essential quality to be true, enough so that they attend arts events at 3-4 times the rate of people without such an education. Keeping arts events attendance strong and an essential part of American culture will require continuing to educate both students and adults in arts disciplines.

Arts education as preparation for a career

If the research mentioned above (and additionally in the first "Further reading" section at the end of this article) emphasizes the arts' holistic value in education

and life, other writing focuses more narrowly upon the arts as a career. A number of web spaces and opinion pieces express the view that an arts education prepares its majors for careers in *both* the field of their degree as well as fields outside their arts degree specialty. One post, written by Molly Rubin on the Institute for Advanced Analytics site, steers readers toward the arts (in her case music) as a field that develops skills that are useful *outside* of music directly. She writes that music graduates are a "special kind of tough," and that her music training prepared her for a career in data analytics. "Composing four-voice counterpoint in music theory class prepared my mind for the world of programming. Public speaking is a cakewalk compared to the trauma of sight-singing in front of my aural skills class. Long and tedious processes such as code optimization don't phase me after my experience with making bassoon reeds. I know how to work as part of a team after years of performing in a 100-piece symphony. There is no creative, problem-solving challenge trickier than improvising a solo as your pianist suddenly changes key. Most importantly, the long hours in the practice room have trained me to have a personal demand for perfection, and I am learning to carry that into other aspects of my life." [17]

The initial employment of a former music major of mine supports these claims. Her first employment out of college was in the insurance industry, and the company that hired her specifically mentioned that, if she had the discipline to practice her music for hours each day, she also had the discipline they expected from their employees. The job-specific needs were trainable.

Differing opinion suggests that an arts degree is not necessarily worth the money unless the art that motivates a person is a *near single-minded compulsion* for them. Assessing the direct value of a college degree in music, a 2021 *US News and World Report* article entitled, "Is a Music Degree Worth It?" carries the subheading, "A music degree is only worth pursuing if you are passionate about music, experts say." [18]The article focuses directly upon musical career options and skills needed, with quotes oriented toward extensive practice and the "grind of incremental, systematic improvement for the sake of [one's] passion."[19] Following the *US News* line of thought, a Reddit responder to a query on the value of music from a prospective music major states: "For a music degree to be worth the money, you have to be extremely versatile." She continues that she has a degree in music history and theory, plays horn and piano, and sings in a local choir. [20] She is paid for her horn playing and her piano teaching.

A number of my former students have found that their music education in fact did give them the skill sets and knowledge base to be versatile. Some were band or choir directors in public schools who added music appreciation classes to their load and as a result more firmly established their value to their school. Others began in music, then found life took them in a different direction for a career, yet they found ways to remain versatile, staying involved in the arts as a joy in their life.

In an article focusing upon the *economic* value of an arts degree, economist

Dick Startz writes that, while a major in the liberal arts may yield a lower salary range across a career than might a major in a STEM discipline, graduates with a liberal arts major still dramatically outperform graduates with Associates degrees or high school diplomas. In other words, it all depends upon to whom one compares oneself. We often compare "up," with the potential result that we are dissatisfied; however, if we compare laterally or down, we see that a life in the arts has value in many ways, and is sustainable. Startz concludes by agreeing with earlier-mentioned perspectives, including Plato's, saying, "One hopes that students go to college for more than just the financial value of the degree—not just for their own sake but also because society needs a citizenry equipped to think broadly."[21]

Returning to data that support a degree in the arts as a pathway to both a career and to a meaningful life, a Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) survey from 2011 showed, in the writing of Caitlin Peterkin, that arts graduates "have also seen success with employment, with 67% working in the arts. Outside the arts, alumni are employed in a variety of fields, including law, management, computer science, engineering, and communication. Overall, 87% of arts alumni said they were satisfied with their primary job, and 81% had opportunities to create work that makes a difference in their communities…confirming that arts schooling is a good economic investment as well as a meaningful ladder to meaningful work."[22]

The upshot is that no degree or program can be everything to everyone, and students will find their way in life regardless of the degree they earn. Life may also intervene with variables that cannot be foreseen, or for which prior training is impossible. If 87% of arts graduates are satisfied with their career choices, though, it is still certain that 100% of those same graduates did *not* find work in performing in theatre companies, orchestras, and opera houses, or teaching in art, dance, and music classrooms. Nevertheless, whether they found employment in the arts or in a different field, they *all* received an arts degree.

The "add-on" is actually where students thrive in their schooling

In an unusual twist, one research study indicated it is the extracurricular "add-on" subjects—including both the arts and athletics—where *high school students* find themselves most engaged. Harvard educators Jal Mehta and Sarah Fine brought to light that "core" curricular courses in high schools were "teacher-centered, tasks were unchallenging, and students were frequently passive and often bored." When they asked students why they were learning what they were learning, their answers tended to be uninspired: "because we need it for college" or "because the teacher said so." Conversely, in after-school extra-curricular learning environments such as art classes, debate club meetings, newspaper, Model UN, athletic practices — these same students looked and sounded totally different. In these spaces, they were actively engaged and eagerly assuming roles as leaders.[23] This is the basis of connected

learning—allowing students to explore what interests them in an environment of support from peers and mentors, an environment that fosters creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration, and yields opportunities for the students as a result.

Mehta and Fine suggest that these extra-curricular spaces thrive as active and engaging learning environments in part because:

- They are often entered into voluntarily, rather than as a learning requirement.
- Students interact with peers as well as older and more experienced participants in their learning, whether the learning is a play, a concert, or an athletic event. This develops varying levels of peer leadership while learning.
- Work is collective and collaborative, not individual, building team investment in the products.
- The extracurricular work follows an "apprentice-teacher" model in which the teacher is both the main source of knowledge, but also a participant in the creative act. In a similar fashion to how Medieval shoemakers (or Baroque violin makers) learned a craft *alongside* a teacher and peer apprentices, all of whom were actively working as they taught and collaborated, many theater, music, dance, and art teachers are *actively creating* with the students *as* they also communicate to the next generation how to create.
- Mehta and Fine also conclude that these extracurricular activities—sports and the arts—are aligned with activities that Americans generally enjoy, such as attending similar events in adult life.[24]

Suggestions for modern higher education faculty and administrators

The takeaway so far is undeniable: the arts *have value* in education, both holistically and vocationally. Still, in an academic and cultural environment in which the arts are seen as "add on," and the cost-to-career value of a degree in the arts is debated, leaders in higher education have an opportunity to shape their educational message to align better with what students *say* they want, and with what policymakers currently support, *as well as* what research shows the arts do for human life in general. How departments in the arts not only market their degrees, but shape their course offerings and their departmental culture will be increasingly relevant to their future success.

In the British *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Nigel Tubbs writes: "Many undergraduate programmes in liberal arts in North America … are still organised [sic] around 'majoring' in a subject discipline…. But the inclusion of breadth alongside study in one major subject was never the original definition of liberal arts education. Liberal arts was not a 'general education' subservient to specialism. It was a very specific philosophical enquiry into the conditions of the possibility of existence."[25] Tubbs' words bring us back, for the moment, to the Greek ideals in which the arts

provided a window into humanity, morality, and civic responsibility. In a similar vein, Anusha Kav adds: "Yes, there are plenty of job prospects for arts graduates. But the degree's true value is more profound than practical."[26]American higher education is not likely to abandon its practical career focus on an arts education, and it shouldn't. But there may be an opportunity at this point in time to revisit how *completely* we emphasize career tracks in both our curricula and in our marketing.

If we are to revisit our degrees, our curricula, and even our purpose toward both a specific career preparation and the holistic education of humanity, then Gerald Klickstein suggests that "faculty might rethink course content and curricular requirements to foster [more of] the universal career readiness competencies validated by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).[27] NACE lists 8 competencies for career readiness: 1) Career and Self Development; 2) Communication; 3) Critical Thinking; 4) Equity and Inclusion; 5) Leadership; 6) Professionalism; 7) Teamwork; 8) Technology.[28] We can ask ourselves if we currently train these competencies, but more than that, do our students leave their degrees with *active awareness* of the training and exposure to these competencies they received while on our campuses? If they are not clear when, where, and how they learned these competencies, they will be less able to articulate how their arts degree made them career ready.

Continuing the idea that we train a greater holistic career readiness in our arts degrees, a 2020 survey by the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) asked music graduates "Is there anything that your [post-secondary institution] could have done better to prepare you for further education or your career?" The results from over 55,000 responses lacked mention of the need for more study in specific *subject* fields such as music theory, technique, score analysis, etc., and focused instead upon real world aspects of an arts career, including use of time and career management.[29] Music alumni didn't seem to wish for more training on an instrument or voice, or more history and theory during their collegiate years in order to find success. What they wished they knew more about going into their careers was time management, networking, entrepreneurial skills, and ways to keep the arts central in their lives, even as extra-career passions. Perhaps we already do teach these, in some cases specifically, and in others as an unspecified component of another aspect of our curriculum. Or, perhaps we need to find additional time outside of core classes to transfer this area of knowledge to our students. Either way, the content needs to be taught, and the students need to be cognizant that the transfer of knowledge occurred for them during their degree.

Promoting the whole spectrum of what the arts offer to life

Embracing the holistic value of the arts as well as specific career training aspects does not need to focus entirely upon curricular reform. College departments in

the arts can begin to describe and promote themselves specifically as "connected learning" spaces in ways that help them to stand out as unique against the national aggregation of college curricula. By actively communicating to interested students that an arts degree holds a wide spectrum of value, departments teaching the arts nationwide may begin to shift student perception of their value away from the more recent precise vocational training model and toward a model that includes career training with much more value added. By stating upfront that the training, the hours of practice, the creative/critical thinking, the self-discipline, the personal expression, the inclusive community, and the collaborative spirit that students will encounter over the degree are integral to success across many careers, the message can shift toward one in which the arts—by themselves, or perhaps combined with a second major in a different discipline—are truly marketable in the job world.

Murray State University's online website is moving in that direction with a page entitled "The Value of an Art Degree." The page emphasizes the nimble, creative thinking that will be necessary for future employment in a variety of fields, and it touts that art majors have a higher level of entrepreneurial thinking than many business majors. The page continues that art majors learn a wide spectrum of skills and attitudes that promote success in the job world. Included among them are: creative flow, resourcefulness, accepting and giving criticism, discipline and focus, research, and synthesis. It mentions that creative thinking was viewed by an IBM Global study to be one of the most important qualities of leadership. It continues that Bruno S. Frey (research director of the Center for Research in Economics, Management, and the Arts at the University of Zurich) states that "Of all arts professions, fine artists, writers, and composers were found to be the happiest, because 'the profession they have chosen gives them autonomy, and that makes them happy.'"[30]

Similarly, Dean College in Franklin, Massachusetts, has created a web page that asks, "Are Theatre Degrees Worth It?" It states that, in addition to training skills for a number of different careers that are critical to the success of a theatrical production, a theatre degree trains career skills that are useful anywhere. Some of the skills mentioned include public speaking, critical thinking, collaborative teamwork, and building a creative mindset.[31] Other web chat spaces concur, adding that a degree in theatre has helped forum contributors to build self-confidence, communication skills, knowledge of history, and writing and research skills.

One crucial message that appears across these chat rooms, however, is that college is a space where a student *should* pursue what interests them—their passion. Often the sense is that college may be the *last* opportunity for an uninterrupted and concentrated emphasis upon such a passion. Whether that period of time yields a direct 1-1 career from a field a study cannot be predicted, but that is not the emphasis of the commentary. Rather the emphasis is: one's passion will be nurtured, and *through that process,* one will also gain skills that will either translate

to a career, or to a fulfilling life outside of a career.[32]

Creative thinking, collaboration, and problem solving that grow through involvement in artistic projects are often labeled "soft skills." Soft skills were mentioned as critical for future employment success in a study done by Deloitte-Australia in 2017. It concluded that nearly two-thirds of Australian jobs would be "soft skill" intensive by 2030. Its authors wrote: "Soft skills"— communication, teamwork, and problem solving, as well as emotional judgement, professional ethics and global citizenship—are exactly the kind of skills that arts degrees train, while they also train their individual disciplinary skills."[33] The upside, they maintained, was potentially $90,000 in increased revenues for businesses as a result of these soft skills and that, in Australia at the time, demand for soft skills exceeded supply by about 45%.

If America similarly sees a future where the kinds of thinking and "soft skill" sets acquired in part through study in the arts will be in higher demand, now may be a good time for departments to build this aspect of training into their broader curriculum, while promoting it in their advertising and establishing ways for graduates to show they have acquired those skills. Such ways could range from departmental endorsements, certificates, or (if allowed) transcript addenda that are appended once a student has acquired the extracurricular content. Said another way, perhaps now is as good a time as any for arts leaders in higher education to re-envision and market their degrees as experiences that build life skills *at the same time* that they train arts skills; to emphasize soft skill development and the joy of creating that the arts provide so abundantly; to market arts degrees as holding value for many career fields both *in and outside* of music, while they also offer a collegiate experience that is holistically edifying, community-driven, and soul satisfying. "Holistic" is a term that holds great appeal in many areas of modern human life—health and wellness especially. Maybe the arts need to adopt the term for their use as well.

Conclusions

The arts *are* a career, and will continue to be across a multi-faceted spectrum of options from education and performance through management and administration to production and development. As research shows, the arts *also* provide a strong and valued basis for careers outside the arts directly, and a strong basis for a happy and fulfilling life. Where higher education may be able to be creative going forward is in re-envisioning aspects of its message and curriculum to *embrace* the add-on learning environment as one central to its mission and focus. The arts thrive as "add-on" activities in high school, as pursuits in which students learn alongside their teachers and peers in spaces that are inviting, engaging, vital, and collaborative. We should *embrace* that "add on" aspect of the arts and *promote it powerfully* to prospective students as a part of our own student experience. We should do this

for our students; we should do this for the arts as a field of study; and we should do this to sustain the arts into the future.

…

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[1]Aristotle, in his *Politics*, argued that moods were deeply affected by musical modes: "The musical modes differ essentially from one another, and those who hear them are differently affected by each. Some of them make men sad and grave, like the so called Mixolydian; others enfeeble the mind, like the relaxed modes; another, again, produces a moderate or settled temper, which appears to be the peculiar effect of the Dorian; and the Phrygian inspires enthusiasm." Boethius, in the 5th century, recalled a familiar story of his time concerning Pythagoras' use of mode to calm an adolescent's temper: "Who does not know that Pythagoras, by performing a spondee, restored a drunk adolescent of Taormina incited by the sound of the Phrygian mode to a calmer and more composed state…[when Pythagoras] ordered the mode to be changed, thereby tempering the disposition of the frenzied youth to a state of absolute calm?" Finally, Plato, in his *Republic* argued that the Ionian and Lydian modes promoted drunkenness and indolence, while the Dorian and Phrygian modes were more fit for war, and thus should be the only two musical modes allowed in Greek society.

[2] Plato, *Republic*, Book 3, 410c-402b, quoted in Jason Rheins, "Education in Plato's Republic, Part II: Music for the Guardians," *Montessorium*, December 29, 2021, Accessed February 23, 2024, https://montessorium.com/blog/education-in-plato-s-republic-part-ii-music-for-the-guardians

[3] As a place to start, with articles leaning to both sides of the coin, try a Google Scholar search using the following parameters: "Defunding the arts," "The arts and No Child Left Behind," "School budget priorities and the arts," "STEM to STEAM," "Racial inequity in arts education," "The arts and brain development," "The arts and peacebuilding," "Fund STEM in an era of global competition."

[4] Virginia Mountney, "The History of the Bachelor's Degree in the Field of Music in the United States" (DMA diss., Boston University, 1961), 228, and Steve Roberson. "Tradition and Change," *American Music Teacher* 44, no.1 (August/September 1995): 12-15, quoted in Joseph Bognar, "Building a Case for the Undergraduate Music Performance Degree: A Toolkit for Advocacy," *Journal of Performing Arts Leadership in Higher Education*, vol. 14 (2023) https://cnu.edu/jpalhe/

[5] Fran Smith, "Why Arts Education Is Crucial, and Who's Doing It Best," *Edutopia, the George Lucas Educational Foundation*, January 28, 2009, Accessed February 10, 2024, https://www.edutopia.org/arts-music-curriculum-child-development

[6] Ginanne Brownell, "The Mind-Expanding Value of Arts Education" *New York Times, Art and Design*, May 2, 2023, Accessed January 22, 2024, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/02/arts/design/arts-education-necessary.html

[7] A Google Scholar search for "Music and motor skills," or "Dance and motor skills," will yield another platform from which to pursue further research.

[8] For a deeper read into the arts and their effective use in peacebuilding, see my chapter "From Plato's *Republic* to Bill and Ted's Utopian Future: The Presence of the Arts in Peacebuilding," in *Building Positive Peace,* Simon Cordery and Christina Campbell, editors. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022.

[9] Brian Kisida and Angela LaPorte, "Art for Life's Sake: The Case for Arts Education," (Cambridge, MA: *American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Commission on the Arts*, September, 2021), Accessed January 28, 2024, https://www.amacad.org/sites/default/files/publication/downloads/2021-Art-for-Lifes-Sake.pdf

[10] "Investigating Causal Effects of Arts Education Experiences: Experimental Evidence from Houston's Arts Access Initiative" *Abstract from the Report of the Houston Education Research Consortium*, Feb 12, 2019, Accessed January 31, 2024, https://kinder.rice.edu/research/investigating-causal-effects----arts-education-experiences-experimental-evidence-houstons-arts

[11] Jay Greene, Brian Kisida, and Daniel Bowen, "The Educational Value of Field Trips," *Education Next*, Vol 24, no. 1 (Winter, 2014), Accessed February 27, 2024, https://www.educationnext.org/the-educational-value-of-field-trips/

[12] C. Miki Henderson, and Elizabeth Lasley, "Creating Inclusive Classrooms through the Arts," *Dimensions of Early Childhood* Vol 42, No 3, 2014, 11, Accessed March 7, 2024, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1045923.pdf

[13] Henderson and Lasley, 13, Accessed March 7, 2024, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1045923.pdf

[14] Nick Rabkin and E. C. Hebderg, "Arts Education in America: What the Declines Mean for Arts Participation," *National Endowment for the Arts, Report #52*, February 2011, page 28, Accessed February 24, 2024, https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/2008-SPPA-ArtsLearning.pdf

[15] Rabkin and Hedberg, 30.

[16] Rabkin and Hedberg, 32.

[17] Molly Rubin, "The Value of a Music Degree," *Data Column, Institute for Advanced Analytics*, February 27, 2019, accessed February 16, 2024, https://libguides.msubillings.edu/c.php?g=242157&p=1610540#:~:text=Author%20First%20Name%2FInitial%20Author,accessed%20Date%20of%20Access%2C%20URL.

[18] Ilana Kowarski, "Is a Music Degree Worth It?" *US News and World Report*, August 19, 2021, Accessed February 8, 2024, https://www.usnews.com/education/best-graduate-schools/articles/is-a-music-degree-worth-it-and-does-it-prepare-you-for-a-music-career

[19] Kowarski, subheading "How to Decide Whether to Pursue a Music Degree" (p. 2).

[20] HaneTheHornist, reply to "Is a Music Degree Worth the Money?" *Reddit*, 2018-19, Accessed February 16, 2024, https://www.reddit.com/r/musictheory/comments/a1h6hs/is_a_music_degree_a_waste_of_money/?rdt=59600

[21] Dick Startz, "Don't Knock the Economic Value of Majoring in the Liberal Arts," *Brookings Institute,* December 4, 2023, Accessed February 27, 2024 https://www.brookings.edu/articles/dont-knock-the-economic-value-of-majoring-in-the-liberal-arts/

[22] Caitlin Peterkin, "Good News about Going to College for a Music Degree," *MajoringinMusic.com*, n.d., Accessed February 20, 2024, https://majoringinmusic.com/good-news-about-going-to-college-for-a-music-degree/

[23] Jal Mehta and Sarah Fine, "Why the Periphery is Often More Powerful than the Core," *Harvard Graduate School of Education 'Ed Magazine online,'* January 8, 2017, Accessed February 22, 2024, https://www.gse.harvard.edu/ideas/ed-magazine/17/01/why-periphery-often-more-powerful-core

[24] The voluntary, collaborative, apprentice-teacher model is not exclusive to the arts either. At the university level, STEM disciplines frequently include, and often succeed best, when students work alongside professors in labs and on research projects. There is nothing passive about this kind of learning. It is active, engaging, asks questions continually, and answers are sought by *all involved*. The arts do this as well, but under different budgeting environments, and the blame for the budgets should not be laid at the feet of policymakers exclusively. Many STEM research projects have a huge time and effort commitment in grant writing. The Arts also seek grant support, and while there may be fewer (and often lower dollar amount) grants available, funding is still possible.

[25] Nigel Tubbs, "The Value of the Arts," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* Vol 47, no. 3 (August 2013), 441-456 (under subheading "Modern Liberal Arts"). https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12018

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[27] Gerald Klickstein, "Enrollment Growth Amid a Shrinking Student Population," *College Music Symposium*, vol 63, no. 1 (May 1, 2023), accessed February 19, 2024, https://symposium.music.org/index.php/current-issue/item/11586-enrollment-growth-amid-a-shrinking-student-population.

[28] National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), "What is Career Readiness?" https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined

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[33] John O'Mahony and David Rumbens, "Soft Skills for Business Success," Deloitte-Australia Access Economics, May 2017, Accessed February 26, 2024, https://www.deloitte.com/au/en/services/economics/perspectives/soft-skills-business-success.html

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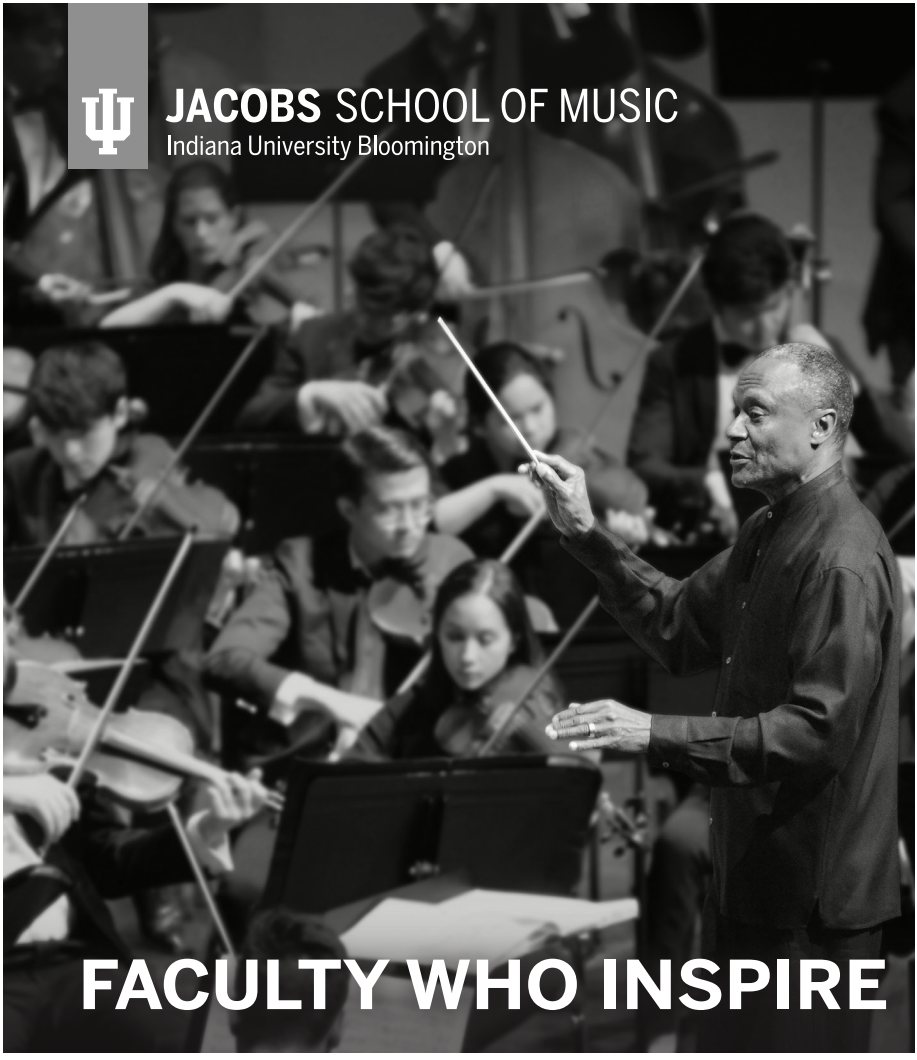

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