The Experiences of Canadian Women in Popular Music:

“even on the worst sick no gas freezing canadian middle of january rockie mountain or halifax breakdown there is nothing better to do for a living”

by

Robbie J. McKay

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Queen’s University
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ABSTRACT

This study examined the personal and professional experiences of Canadian professional female popular musicians. The researcher gathered data in two phases. In phase one, 85 female musicians completed a 105-question on-line survey. In phase two, the researcher interviewed four musicians to expand and elucidate survey data. In keeping with a critical feminist approach, the researcher’s voice is prominent in the report. The study reveals a complex combination of personal and professional circumstances that both compel and impel women to become musicians, and then to cleave to or to abandon careers in the music industry. Families, peers, role models, and teachers all have some effect on personal and professional choices that musicians make. Gender stereotyping and sexual harassment prevail in both music education and the music industry, making these contested sites for women musicians. However, respondents’ identity as “musician” is a powerful force, in both personal and professional realms, making both education and industry also sites of triumph. Important findings include: respondents’ reflections on what makes for a successful pop musician; data revealed no essential biographical precursors for success in pop music; respondents’ opinions about the importance of music lessons are divided; and, along with credible technical music skills, musicians need to develop strong personal, social, and business skills.
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I have been a musician for more than 30 years and a music teacher for 20 of those. According to the literature I have been fulfilling my masculine musical destiny as a drummer. However, it was not until I began my graduate education studies that I encountered literature that suggested to me that, as much as I am fulfilling one gender stereotype by being a heterosexual, male drummer, I am breaking another stereotype by being a male music teacher; the former, stereotypically a man’s job, and the latter, a women’s. I have taught many, many students over the past 20 years, in very diverse settings: the hyper-masculine world of military drum corps; group pop music lessons, affectionately called “Rock Band 101;” new-age drum circles; and, countless private sessions. As a professional musician, I have logged thousands of hours of individual practice, group rehearsal, performance, recording, and touring (with both all-male and mixed-gender bands). Through these experiences, I have come to recognise that men and women perceive music and musical roles very differently. Despite these different perceptions, I have found, for both men and women, that gender identity implied musical roles. Most of the relevant literature supports this notion. Across age, ethnicity, and genres, researchers have found that most of us expect musicians to adhere strictly to gender-based prescriptions.

My experiences during my undergraduate education also inform my current perspective on music and gender roles. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, “identity politics” set the educational and social tones on campuses across Canada. While I wrote an exam at Queen’s University on December 6th, 1989, a man slaughtered fourteen
female students and support staff at L’Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal. Because of this horror, so close to home, in “safe” and “progressive” Canada, I began to reflect on my personal relationships, both with women and with other men. Many Canadian men began doing the same. It occurred to me then that I have always been aware of gender discourse.

Reaching further back further into my personal history, I recognise that my mother and father had very clearly defined gender roles in my family, typical of their era. My mom worked as a part-time emergency room nurse, all the while keeping our home loving, clean, and well stocked with homemade food and clothes. I noted that she worked outside our home and took care of our family – before and after work. My dad worked as a public school principal. Though not entirely free of domestic cares, like most of his male peers, he was always free to participate in service clubs and public functions after work. He also hunted, trapped, felled trees, and played drums in his band on weekends. Eventually, I gravitated away from “helping” my dad, who never really seemed to need help with projects to begin with, to supporting my mom more, pitching in with “her” domestic duties whenever it occurred to me to do so (I was a teen by then, after all). That seemed fair. My perception of complex gender roles and relations begins to make more sense to me when I consider the dynamics in my geographically-close extended family, and the parts played in my life by several hippy aunts and uncles, two of whom are gay.

Now, gender discourse pervades my teaching and learning. I am constantly critical of my teaching methods and my assumptions regarding my students’ personalities, experiences, and the role gender plays in our learning together – my students’ gender as well as my own. As I now begin a new chapter in my life as the father
of a little girl, it is vitally important to me to do what I can, in both my personal and professional lives, to mitigate the prescriptive effects of gender in my home, in my teaching studio and classrooms, and wherever else I find myself in a position to do so. I must do this to allow my daughter and all of my students to make decisions about their musical pursuits based on what feels right to them. They must be free to express themselves genuinely, rather than conform to personal and public pressures and gender stereotypes. How can I do this?

I have chosen a research and reporting style that combines critical feminist theory methods and self-reflexivity to help me tell the stories of female Canadian pop musicians. Critical feminist theory involves a quest for equity for all persons and a questioning of normalized thought and practice. Self-reflexivity informs my work as I constantly critique my motivation for this research and adapt my methods of inquiry and reporting accordingly. My research began with the question “Why don’t girls play drums?” and evolved into a broader examination of society’s perception of women’s role in music and women’s motivation for making music. I refocused my efforts on Canadian women making pop music, bringing my new-found understanding of women’s musical experience to bear on the Canadian music industry, with which I am very familiar.

People often question the motives and qualifications of men who invoke and employ feminist theory, and my experience in this field has been no different. I research and write the way I do because feminist principals of equity and academic honesty resonate with me, and because such methodology lends itself to the subject of my
research. My research and reporting bring out previously unheard voices. Thus, my research is in keeping with a feminist ideal which honours self-expression.

My own voice is also prominent in this report. I make this explicit statement in the acknowledgement that the report would be rife with the residue of my own experience and subjective interpretations of life as a professional pop musician even if I claimed objectivity and kept my voice “silent.” Acknowledging my own voice here is also in keeping with the feminist critical approach. It would be dishonest to imply that I am not the one filtering the relationship between my curiosity and others’ experiences. I cannot lay claim to any substantial objectivity when it comes to the business and experience of popular music because it has been such a prominent influence in my life, my participation in it having shaped most of my major life decisions. Thus, I own my opinions and biases and the effect they have on my research. Although my experience is not the focus of my research, exploring it in this context has helped me to engage in a “conversation” with respondents, allowing their voices to come through, to tell their very important stories. I made my pop music experience clear to my respondents and that revelation seems to have provided me the necessary capital to become somewhat of a research confidante with many Canadian musicians. They opened up in our conversations, and the data is stronger, deeper, and more meaningful as a result.

Purpose of the Study

My study examined the personal and professional traits of female pop musicians in Canada. The study offers new perspectives on the trials and successes of this underreported group in Canadian popular culture, perspectives that should give music
educators new insights into ways of helping young Canadian women express themselves with pop music. The questions that guided my research are:

- What factors influence individuals’ choices regarding musical pursuits?
- What experiences and traits are associated with individuals who become musicians?
- What experiences and traits are associated with individuals who choose a career in popular music?

My thesis research had two phases, designed to help me move from an overview to a detailed account of Canadian female pop musicians’ professional and personal traits: a survey, followed by in-depth interviews. The survey addressed issues that arose from the relevant literature. An analysis of the survey responses led me to the themes I used to construct an interview guide for in-depth, follow-up interviews with four pre-selected respondents. My method and research questions were informed heavily by similar research by Stremikis (1997), Wills (1984), Sloboda & Howe (1991), and Sicoli (1995). While the methods and focus of each of these researches pointed me in valuable directions, none of them dealt with Canadian female pop musicians. Wills surveyed adult male American jazz musicians. Sloboda & Howe interviewed aspiring, adolescent British classical musicians and their parents. Sicoli conducted discursive research with adult female American pop music singer-songwriters. Stremikis examined differences between professional and hobbyist adult female musicians in the United States and Britain. Her participants were primarily classical musicians and orchestral conductors. I modeled my survey and follow-up interviews loosely on the same methods Stremikis employed for her research.
doctoral research, except in scale, where she had many more respondents than me, and in focus, where she compared professionals to hobbyists, while I focused on professionals.

Terminology

A major difficulty in designing this research was establishing my terms of reference. The key definitions I used in this research are as follows:

Professional Musician

For the purposes of my research, I defined “professional” as a woman who makes her living entirely from music, or who aspires to do so. In my experience, success in pop music is extremely precarious. Thus, the aspiring professional meets my research purposes as well those who I consider to be the fortunate, “successful” professionals.

Pop Music

No accepted definition of pop music exists which does not beg several qualifications and exceptions. Like Roe (1987), I am coming to view popular music as a social phenomenon more than a musical genre. In addition (Garofalo, 2008) emphasises the importance of the marketing strategies employed by music industry. For example, Garofalo documents marketing’s critical role in Barry Gordy’s approach to building the Motown sound. In a similar vein, I define pop music as a complex combination of social and economic forces: marketing; communication; and a youth-centered aesthetic. As clarifying examples I offer Elvis, Celine Dion, and the Rolling Stones. I consider the early Elvis, marketed to the world’s youth, to be a pop musician. The later Elvis, the Las Vegas incarnation, was not targeted to a young market and so, in my estimation ceased to
be a pop musician. Whereas, Celine Dion has never been marketed to the youth, so she is
not a pop musician; and The Rolling Stones, despite their current senior citizen status,
have never moved away from targeting young people, so they were and are still pop
musicians. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, pop music is that music which
represents the largest world market for music, including genres known as pop, rock, hip
hop, and dance (together making up some 70% of global music sales), but excluding jazz,

Rationale

Why focus on Canada? What makes a Canadian popular musician’s experience
different from her or his American or British counterparts? First, I live in Canada and I
am a Canadian musician. My connections to the Canadian music scene helped me answer
my research questions. Second, the Canadian music business differs both qualitatively
and quantitatively from that in the U.S. or the U.K., chiefly because of our relatively
small domestic market, but also due to our political geography and because of a western
world perception of Canada as a bit of a cultural backwater.1

Music in Canada has a small domestic market. Moreover, Canadian musicians are
in direct competition with the larger American and British markets. Perceived potential
earnings for musicians working in each of these domestic markets differs to the extent
that a relatively unknown American or British musician could make a decent living

1 Barclay, Jack, & Schneider (2001), Ethier (G. Ethier, personal communication,
May, 2001), Graham (J. Graham, personal communication, June 2005), and Schafer
(1979) all made reference to international perceptions of Canada’s artistic deficit.
performing exclusively at home, while a successful Canadian artist typically travels to the
U.S. and to other global destinations to reach a sufficiently large buying public. As

Toronto musician John Borra put it:

It is quite a phenomenon touring Canada in the sense that you drive so far for so
little. You drive two days to get to Thunder Bay [from Toronto]. You can almost
get to New Orleans in two days. You can go to New York City and back twice in
the amount of time it takes to get to Thunder Bay. What’s better for your career,
getting to Thunder Bay or to New York City? (Borra, quoted in Barclay, Jack, &
Schneider, 2001, p.5)

As Canadian musicians have to work harder to make ends meet, many find that
opportunities open to their international counterparts, such as maintaining stable personal
relationships, starting families, or just pursuing other artistic endeavours or non-artistic
hobbies, are greatly diminished. No doubt, this notion has played a part in many
Canadian musicians’ decisions to flee our country all together. Many of the most
financially successful female Canadian musicians, such as Celine Dion, Shania Twain,
and Alanis Morissette, have emigrated south.

Musicians who stay in Canada must typically gravitate to large urban centres with
populations large enough to support a vibrant live music scene, such as Vancouver,
Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax. The great distances between these cities, combined with
miniscule travel budgets, mean that musicians spend a lot of time together on the road,
sharing everything. Such prolonged proximity can make things difficult for personal
relationships, but also for more mundane matters such as hotel rooms, when
accommodations must be made for men and women to travel together. The kind of
closeness that audience members rightly imagine exits between band mates often calls
into question the character of female musicians. They often ponder and opine, “Is she one
of the boys? Then she’s not particularly feminine.” Or, “Does she sleep with the boys? Then she’s a slut.”

Such suppositions about female Canadian musicians are bolstered by the notion that Canadian arts and entertainment simply lacks sophistication. Though many Canadian musicians bitterly joke that Americans have no opinion about Canadian culture because they are unaware of its existence (J. Graham, personal communication, June 2005), Ethier expounded on an international perception of the Canadian entertainment business as a rag-tag collection of base characters whose sense of aesthetics engenders a sort of “road side attraction” feel to our efforts (G. Ethier, personal communication, May, 2001).

Helping to perpetuate this notion of Canuck quaintness are Stompin’ Tom’s perpetual musical celebration of small-town Canada, Bob and Doug Mackenzie’s daft and wildly popular single “Take Off” from The Great White North, the very name of The Tragically Hip’s annual music festival, “Another Road Side Attraction,” and the down home-y, folk sound of musicians such as Sarah Harmer and Kathleen Edwards. On the other hand, Alanis Morissette, sophisticated, one-time Canadian bad-girl, bolsters the image of the uncouth Canadian musician. Morissette gained international notoriety with the blue lyrics of her song “You Oughta Know” (Morissette, 1995). Canadian radio and video broadcasters put the song in heavy rotation, gleefully beeping out her offending lyrics. The American Moral Majority was outraged (Ethier). The hostile reaction to the song reportedly inspired the song “Blame Canada” (Parker & Stone, 1999), a tongue-in-cheek movie anthem which blames all things Canadian for declining morals in the U.S. (Ethier). This situation exemplifies the “Madonna/whore” dichotomy, one of many challenges
traditionally faced by female musicians (Bernstein, 2004), and this dichotomy remains a challenge for women in the current Canadian music scene (Ethier). I address such challenges in this thesis, with a view to airing the previously unheard voices of professional female Canadian pop musicians.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Research in music education did not have a pronounced focus on gender until Abeles and Porter’s massive mixed methods study in 1978. In 1987, Koskoff released a volume of research and essays on women’s musical experience across cultures. These two works laid the foundation and set the tone for gender research in music education. Since their publication, researchers around the world have conducted various studies focused on gender and music, and the results show an overwhelmingly persuasive concordance of findings. Thus, in this review, where I offer no contested findings, this is because none so far exist. Generally speaking, across cultures and time, men and women have dramatically different musical experiences, with women’s place in music prescribed and greatly limited by social construct. This review focuses on four areas which inform my research question and methodology: what I call the “social climate” surrounding music; the professional experience of women musicians; the personal histories and experiences of female musicians, including childhood versus adult experiences, and the influence of parents, peers, and teachers; and, the role of self-image and sex-role adherence in musicians’ lives. From a synthesis of these four foci have emerged themes of gender-stereotyping, exclusion, the silencing of voices, and issues of identity.

Social Climate

The social climate surrounding musicians and the music business does not appear to be a positive one. Most people in the West do not consider “musician” to be a “real” job. Thus, few parents in the West encourage their children toward careers in music. If they encourage professional music aspirations at all, parents often insist that children
have “an education to fall back on.” (As previously discussed, in terms of Canadian musicians, this has generally shown to be sound advice.) Economic considerations aside, many people question the character of people who choose a life in popular music, and research consistently shows that women are even less accepted as professional musicians than men are.

Suspicions abound about the morality of musicians. In recent history, male performers such as Little Richard, Elvis Presley, David Bowie, and Antony Hegarty have staged performances that the public have found disturbing because their displays were not only overtly sexual but also highly sexually ambiguous. Regarding female popular performers, such as Bessie Smith, Dusty Springfield, Patti Smyth, Madonna, and Carol Pope, many authors refer to the public perception of a general “air of immorality about women musicians” (Costley, 1993, p. 202) who put themselves on public display. Several authors tackled this topic in the context of popular music. Auslander (2004), Gordon (2004), and Udovitch (1995) wrote about Suzie Quattro, Tori Amos, and k.d. lang, respectively, examining those artists’ battles with public perception about their sexuality and gender identity. People found Quattro and lang troubling because they are both too masculine. lang was more problematic still because she is a vocal lesbian. Amos’ performances are a troubling blend of aggressive sexuality and vulnerable introspection as she tells the story of her own rape at knife-point. Mosbacher (2002) helped founding musicians of the women’s music movement tell their stories of gender and sex-based discrimination at the hands of the music industry. Reynolds and Press (1995) theorized
about the public’s difficulty comprehending many female musicians’ tendency to shift personas: one day the Madonna, next day the whore.

Green (1997) examined women’s musical roles across genres. She concluded that the spectrum of a woman’s musical pursuits would affirm, interrupt, or threaten her femininity. According to Green, if a woman sings, she affirms her femininity with a body-bound activity. If she plays an instrument, the greater her virtuosity, the more she disrupts her femininity. If she composes music she is threatening her own femininity by engaging in cerebral activity. Thus, wrote Green, the further a woman strays from the corporeal toward the cerebral, the further she moves into domains traditionally reserved for and occupied by men.

Cross-culturally and throughout history, male performers have ultimately prevailed in the musical world with greater ease and frequency than women. Much of the research in this area examines how we privilege males in this way. Green (1997, 1994, 1993), Hanley (1998), Lamb (1990), Lamb, Dolloff, & Howe (2002) investigated this phenomenon in music education throughout Western culture, while Robertson (1987), Koskoff (1987), and Clawson (1999), examined other social/musical contexts, across time, genres, and cultures. All of this work supports the conclusion that women’s place in music is limited and prescribed.

Resistance to women’s roles in public musical spheres developed well beyond our place and time. Several essays have shown the difficulty women have had finding their public voices in many cultures and at many times. Neuls-Bates (1996), Petersen (1987), and Post (1994) reported that women’s musical roles are historically confined to the
private, or family sphere, as they provide vocal music in the forms of lullabies or laments. Babiracki (2004) and Post (1987) examined female performers in India, while Coaldrake (1987) and Hahn (2004) studied Japanese performers. All four researchers noted a current trend in these cultures toward devaluing the role of female musical performers as these women encroach on the public sphere. Fauser (2004) and Reich (2004) wrote about the prescribed and limited musical roles for Victorian and turn-of-the century women, while Upton (1886) championed that prescription, and Gergis (1993) conducted a study on the Ancient East, discovering ever-diminishing viable public musical roles for women in those cultures.

Moreover, we accuse many women who assume traditionally male musical roles of being lesbians while, paradoxically, we suspect that many male musicians are gay. Harrison (2001), Koza (1993), and Walser (1993) wrote about how this perception of males also works to limit their participation in various musical roles and genres. As Green (1997) describes, society ascribes emotions and expressiveness almost solely to women; hence, the suspect position of male musicians. She argues that while we permit a woman to express herself with her voice, female instrumentalists confound public feelings that women should not – and indeed cannot – posses “technical” skills, such as those required for competent instrumental performance. Many popular song lyrics and music chat-rooms, such as those on DrummerGirl.Com, make explicit the discriminatory and confused reasoning behind these kinds of assumption. In academic circles the issues of gender discrimination are dynamic and troubling as well. As Coates (1998) related of her experience on the e-mail list “Rocklist,” some male colleagues essentially excluded
her and many of her female peers from discussions, often with a brusque e-mail message alluding to a man’s assumption of ultimate authority on issues in pop music. If academics cannot even approach these issues with some sense of critical distance, how are impressionable, aspiring musicians of either gender to do so?

Clearly, there are many historical and multicultural precedents for society’s current confusion about women’s place in music. Many researchers have noted that studies of musical history have underrepresented, misrepresented, marginalized, and often completely excluded women. Boyce-Tillman (1993) wrote that women have creative ways of knowing that men simply do not comprehend and so cannot value. As a result of this ignorance of women’s work, Citron (1993), Lamb (1993, 1991, 1990), Lamb, Dolloff and Howe (2002), and Pucciani (1993) all critiqued the male dominated (often exclusively male) Western musical canon accepted uncritically by most musicians and educators. Further, Green (1997) argued that women are always personally excluded from their musical experiences because they have been conditioned to imagine only male musicians when they hear music. Mosbacher (2002) and Parmar (1998) interviewed many women who were stunned to find out that there were indeed popular female musicians, who write and perform their own music. Both filmmakers concluded that it was critical to show women that viable female role models do exist in popular music. No contemporary work argues an opposing opinion in print. Thus, it is clear that gender pervades questions about musicians in our social climate. Pressures exist for us to choose a “real” profession, one that has a certain future, that smart, morally-upstanding people
would choose, and the pressures to avoid a career in music are stronger for women because little historical precedent for women’s success in the music profession exists.

Conflicting messages regarding acceptable and expected behaviour bombard young musicians from all directions. Even if a woman can see beyond the messages about society’s expectations generally directed at her in the media, she may well still have to combat direct and personal criticism of her musical choices. Further confusing the influence of role models is a variety of opinions among women performers on issues ranging from choice of material to the nature of public personae. Will a young woman with aspirations to a music career express herself with punk or pop? Will she be a nearly androgynous waif like Sarah Harmer or a sexy party-girl like Lindsay Lohan? Lamb makes the point that we should not expect the music business to present a homogenous approach to making music, as that would lead (back to) to exclusive practices (R. Lamb, personal communication, June 6, 2005). Thus, despite what seems to be ubiquitous media representations of women in pop, from music videos and films, to magazines and the Internet, many women still lack viable role models in popular music. Yet, somehow, some young women are either finding the few role models who do exist, or are ignoring the fact that no one has yet adequately cleared women’s path to a music career. Their stories need to be told, and in very limited way, they are beginning to be heard, as some academic and popular writers are beginning to examine the professional and personal lives of female musicians.
Professional Experience

The literature suggested that the professional lives of female musicians share many common elements, most of them negative. Nearly every writer who reported on professional female musicians related women’s negative experiences pursuing musical goals. Many researchers reported on difficulties women have breaking into pop music roles traditionally held by men. Arnold and Dahl (1997) and Bayton (1997) wrote how the public assumes that women are incapable guitarists. Clawson (1999) and McDonnel (1997) reported difficulties faced by women taking up roles such as bass and drums, and Kolawale (1996) wrote about women fighting both racism and sexism while trying to break into rap. Gotlieb and Wald (1994) and Peraino (2001) recounted many Riot Grrls’ frustration surrounding the ghettoisation of women’s music. Mosbacher (2002), Parmar (1998), Stremikis (2002, 1997), and Udovitch (1995) reported instances of verbal, physical, and sexual assaults directed at women musicians. Reynolds and Press (1995) theorized about female musicians’ nearly constant need for personal and professional reinvention to avoid the very stereotypes that tend to inspire much of this gender-based mistreatment and abuse. In many cases, women have experienced major problems with record companies and managers who treat them as second class or novelty artists (Arnold & Dahl, 1997; Parmar, 1998; Sicoli, 1995). Typical comments from music executives include, “We already have a girl group on the label” and, “We don’t want women musicians; we just end up having to pay for their abortions” (Mosbacher, 2002).

Although a great deal of their common professional experience is negative, there is at least one positive commonality. Sicoli (1995) reports that female pop stars in the
U.S. and U.K. have the ability to make successful comebacks after periods of hiatus. This fact may be little comfort to women who never manage to build a career from which to take a break in the first place. However, as we can see in the cases of Celine Dion and Brittany Spears, a hiatus from performance need not mean slipping from media attention, and although the teenybopper “Alanis” did fade from public consciousness, the grown-up and super-hyped Alanis Morissette rose to take her place.

Sicoli (1995) also reports neutral, simple expository elements such as women’s proclivity to collaborate on musical projects, especially with men. Considering the dearth of collaborative projects between popular male solo artists or groups of otherwise unconnected popular male musicians, women’s musical collaborations may possibly come more from professional necessity than any inherently female instinct for cooperation. For instance, it would be interesting to discover Sarah Harmer’s motivation for her recent collaborations with Canadian male rockers The Tragically Hip or The Rheostatics. Were the projects particularly interesting or was it more that she was bridging a publicity gap while she was between solo projects?

Lehman and Davidson (2004) have identified four phases of skill acquisition through which they believe musicians pass. These are: playful interaction with music; guided instruction; full-time commitment to music; and, striving to make lasting contributions to the field. They postulated a possible fifth phase, through which possibly not all musicians pass: skill maintenance in the face of decline (possibly due to age) and a possible shift from performance to teaching. This taxonomy raises questions of whether or not all women who attain professional success need to move through each of these
phases as well. Several researchers report that men and women, and boys and girls, approach learning musics in some significantly different ways. Legette (1998) found that girls believe that effort is important in the learning process where boys subscribe more to a “you have it or you don’t” attitude. Thus girls persist with difficult instruments when boys often do not. According to Rife, Shnek, Lauby, and Lapidus (2001) girls are more likely to take private music lessons than boys are. In those lessons, Davidson, Moore, Sloboda, and Howe (1998) found that girls prefer a warm and nurturing environment where boys prefer to be challenged – findings that are seemingly at odds with Legette’s. Green’s (1997) report that girls tend to try to please teachers more than boys supports Davidson, Moore, Sloboda and Howe’s findings, as does Schleuter and Schleuter’s (1984) study, which found that in the primary grades, girls pick up movement to music much quicker and enthusiastically than boys do. The skill acquisition phases identified by Lehman and Davidson (2004) and students’ disparate, gendered approaches to learning music in the popular sphere are both notions consistent with my experience as a musician and music teacher.

Personal History and Experience

Reporting findings on childhood/adolescence and adult experiences separately most clearly summarises research on musicians’ personal history and experience. Adolescence is a problematic category in a brief review such as this one. Thus, for the purpose of this review, I have categorised childhood and adolescence essentially as elementary school age, while adulthood is secondary school age and beyond.
Researchers who studied child and adolescent musicians often focused on the influence of family and social circumstance. There are a few biographical details shared by successful female musicians, though some appear genre-specific. Across genres, most women were the first or second born, or only children in a family (Sicoli, 1995; Stremikis, 2002, 1997), many lived near a musical mecca (Sicoli, 1995), and many women displayed both musical precocity and steadfast musical goals, established early in life (Sicoli, 1995; Stremikis, 2002, 1997). Most of Stremikis’ (2002, 1997) classical musicians had professional fathers, while Sicoli (1995) reported that most pop musicians come from primarily lower and lower-middle homes. Further, Sicoli found that many pop musicians experienced some sort of early parental loss (Sicoli, 1995). However, many of these details are not particularly useful. Kirby insists that because we are terrible at changing peoples’ socioeconomic status – or their gender – educators should focus on manageable effects of family, peers, and teachers, areas in which we might develop some sway (J. Kirby, personal communication, March, 2005). Yet, socioeconomic status and gender are the primary focus of much of the research in this domain. The effect of sex role adherence on musical expression also engages researchers, and an examination of literature relevant to that topic concludes this review.

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2 Individuals are said to adhere to sex roles when they behave as society-at-large believes members of their biological sex “ought” to behave. In this context, a boy who prefers drums and a girl who prefers flute are both exhibiting strong sex role adherence.
Parental Support

Many researchers found that parents play a significant role in a young person’s choice to pursue music. Davidson, Howe, Moore, and Sloboda (1996) and Sloboda and Howe (1991) found that a parent’s positive attitude towards music generally, combined with a parent’s own musical skill, can be very influential to a child’s decision to pursue music. Green (2002) found the same, but also that parents effected children’s musical pursuits on more practical, logistical levels. She reported that parents often pay for instruments and music lessons and then shuttle students to and from those lessons and rehearsals.

Other research showed that parents have definite ideas about which instruments are appropriate for which gender, and that these opinions can greatly influence children’s choices. Abeles and Porter’s (1978) was the first large-scale, mixed methods study which included an examination of parents’ gendered perception of music, how they were very likely to assign both instruments and musical roles according to gender and then to pass these stereotypes onto their children. Subsequent mixed method and quantitative studies by Porter and Abeles (1979), Pickering and Repacholi (2001), Sinsel, Dixon, and Blades-Zeller (1997), Stremikis (2002, 1997) and qualitative reports by Ainley (1996), Davidson (2002), and Neuls-Bates (1996), supported Abeles and Porter’s original findings.

However, some researchers, Conway (2000) in particular, recognized that though parents do strongly influence their children’s choices, this impact was not necessarily consistent with stereotyping. Research found that parents both encourage and discourage continued musical efforts and adherence to gender-stereotypes.
Several articles also point to the importance of parents’ supporting role in encouraging practice and, in many cases, active listening and helping during practice times (Davidson, Howe, Moore, & Sloboda, 1996; Green, 2002; Sloboda & Howe, 1991). However, findings do not show that having a parent with a musical background is essential for a young musician’s success (Sloboda & Howe, 1991).

**Peers**

Conway (2002) and Pickering and Repacholi (2001) found that parents are not likely to be as influential to young musicians as are peers or professional-musician role models. Most research reports and several film documentaries show that peers are a major influence on musical pursuits, either as role models or simply as critics. Again, Abeles and Porter’s (1978) research was first to quantify the powerful impact peers have on a person’s musical choices. And again, several similar studies have been conducted since which support Abeles and Porter’s original findings (e.g. Pickering & Repacholi, 2001; Sinsel, Dixon, & Blades-Zeller, 1997; Schwartz & Fouts, 2000; Zervoudakes & Tanur, 1994). North and Hargreaves (1999) and North, Hargreaves, and Tarrant (2002) provided qualitative research that demonstrated the power of peer influence in this area, and there are numerous popular accounts by pop musicians that related friends’ influence on their musical choices (e.g. Hart, 1990; Keidis, 2004; Pope, 2001). Examples of potentially discouraging peer feedback pervade the literature, such as “Why is such a little girl playing bass?” (Conway, 2000, p. 9). Several researchers commented on the tendency for groups of peers to wield even more persuasive power. However, as with parental pressures, research shows that the effects of peer pressure are not consistent.
Legette (1998) and Pickering and Repacholi (2001) found that peers both encourage and discourage continued musical efforts and adherence to gender-stereotypes. Several other researchers reported similar findings (Ainley, 1996; Carol, 1996; Harrison, 2001; Kolawale, 1996). Dai (2002) reported that young girls, in particular, felt strong peer pressure not to excel in many academic domains, including music, because excelling meant standing out, and standing out is often very undesirable for girls looking to fit it.

**Popular Role Models**

Many popular authors and academics have researched and documented role modeling in popular culture. There is no consensus, of course, whether popular role models are a positive or negative influence, but rather that, as with all the social pressures related to musical roles, subjects make of role models what they will.

Walkerdine (1998) reported on the hotly debated influence of pop music video shows aimed at children, such as Minipops:

> On the one hand, little girls sing and dance to pop songs all the time and [Minipops] is no bad thing because they can use their talent, get selected and become famous, on the other their very selection takes away their childhood, by introducing premature sexuality and leaves them open to the abuse of paedophilia (Walkerdine, 1998, p.162).

Walkerdine (1998), Kaplan (1987), Pegley (2000b, 1992) all investigated the concept of the objectifying male gaze as it applies to music video and found that the mediated medium does nothing to diminish the masculine, objectifying power of the gaze. Carol (1996) examined the gaze in the context of live performance and promotional material. Though she acknowledged her role as the gazer, “consuming” the male rock star, the act put her squarely in the role of consumer, historically, the familiar role for
women. Where Walkerdine’s assessment of the effects of performance in music videos was ambivalent, Pegley and Caputo’s (1994) is very positive:

The personae of the female artists became a sight of empowerment rather than conformity . . . [seeing] the women as aggressive/strong figures that were able to successfully carve out a niche for themselves in a male-dominated world of recorded music (Pegley & Caputo, p. 308).

Arnold and Dahl (1997) quoted several successful female musicians on the presence of female role models in their lives. The following quotations make it clear that women either accepted the few safely-marketed female pop performers available to them, actively sought out “underground” role models, or, in the absence of viable role models, concluded that rock and roll was simply not a space for women, except as consumer.

The only women you saw [on MTV in the mid-eighties] were singing—like Cyndi Lauper—and they all seemed really corny to me. I liked Duran Duran a lot. I loved Andy Taylor. But I never thought I could play guitar because I thought you had to be perfect as well as male. – Erin Smith, guitarist of Bratmobile (Arnold & Dahl, 1997, p. 436).

Girls today, they’re raised on MTV. Well, name one woman guitarist you see on MTV. So they don’t even think of doing it now. I was lucky because of the era I grew up in because of women’s lib. I just thought, ‘Women can do anything.’ I was influenced by Suzi Quatro and Joan Jett and Patti Smith showing me that I could do it even though I was a girl. That’s been my reality, and I’m just sick of other girls in this world who don’t feel the same way. Because gender is the last thing in the world that has to do with music. The very last thing. – Kim Warnick, bassist and sometime guitarist of Seattle band the Fastbacks (Arnold & Dahl, 1997, p. 436).

Growing up in Ohio they didn’t have girls in bands. Ohio was Loverboy, Night Ranger, .58 Special. The girls were the groupies. In Ohio, you’re a girl, you want to be involved in music, you go see your boyfriend’s band. Period. It was weird, it really was. It’s not like that at all any more, it’s not a problem. Now you’re not even a cool band unless you have a girl bass player – named Kim! – Kim Deal [bassist for The Pixies and The Breeders] (Arnold & Dahl, 1997, p. 437).
Kelley Deal put it most concisely, in typically caustic Riot Grrl parlance: “‘If you were a girl [in an Ohio band in the seventies and eighties], you fucking played keyboards or you sang and shook your ass’” – Kelley Deal, twin sister of Kim and guitarist of The Breeders and The Kelly Deal 6000” (Arnold & Dahl, 1997, p. 437).

One gets a sense from these quotations that the availability of viable role models has not been a steady march forward since the birth of rock and roll, but that their numbers wax and wane with trends in popular music. Many would argue that Canadian girls and young women have never had more musical role models than they do today. But, while there is no disputing Sarah Harmer’s national presence and the international success of Nellie Furtado, Avril Lavigne, and Leslie Feist, these women do perpetuate gender stereotypes in that they are all singer/songwriters who are not known as instrumentalists. As has been the case since the appearance of pop music in Canada, with very few notable exceptions in the recent past, there are currently no widely known Canadian female pop instrumentalists. Thus, it appears as though some girls and women find positive role models no matter what, and maybe that others need to be shown.

*Teachers*

The music teacher’s power to affect her or his students’ ideas about musical performance is a theme common to many gender-related music studies. Many reports pointed to the teacher’s obligation to expose and combat gender- and culture-based inequity in the music classroom (Koskoff, 1987, introduction; Lamb, 1993, 1991, 1990; Lamb, Dolloff, & Howe, 2002; Pegley, 2000a), particularly because many other studies reported that teachers often unwittingly perpetuate gender stereotyping in music.
Stremikis’ (2002) adult participants repeatedly cited educator and mentor influence as reasons for or against choosing music as a career, often relating negative experiences of gender discrimination. Griswold and Chroback (1981) found many cases of post secondary teaching faculty unwittingly (or otherwise) supporting gender discrimination. Green (1997) reported cases wherein both students and teachers considered boys generally more successful than girls in music class, despite evidence to the contrary. Other researchers’ work supported Green’s findings (Elliot, 1995; Hanley, 1998; Lamb, 1993, 1991, 1990; Pucciani, 1993). Some studies pointed to the benefits of teachers’ positive reinforcement and encouragement, acknowledging that male and female teachers often use quite different approaches, and that the same teacher will treat boys and girls differently. For instance, Pegley (K. Pegley, personal communication, spring 2005) and Green (1997) noted that teachers often give boys time and opportunity to explore music and “jam” early on, but expect girls to keep things simple and adhere to tradition and rules. Green (2002) and Pegley referred to the vital importance of young musicians’ opportunity to “hack” at music, and that this opportunity is often denied to girls and women. Armstrong (1987), Burnard (2000), and Douglas (1996) wrote about how creative play (a formal term for “hacking”) is critical for self-expression, and other researchers’ work supported this notion as it applies to limitations put on women playing popular music (Clawson, 1999; Kolawale, 1996; MacKay, 2004).

Researchers have conducted several studies to examine the effect of role models, instrument presentation, and teachers’ efforts to offer counter-stereotypes in music. Bruce and Kemp (1993) hypothesized that after seeing a concert in which both males and
females performed, boys would prefer masculine instruments when they were played by either gender, but would choose a feminine instrument only when it was played by a male player. They expected girls to have a broader range of instrument selection, but still generally to prefer instruments demonstrated by women. Their hypothesis was supported when the results showed that the attractiveness of the instrument to both boys and girls changed when the gender of the player changed. Even the flute, thought to be the most feminine of the instruments rated, attracted boys when a man played it. After the concerts, the children were asked to draw a picture of an instrument they saw. Boys drew boys playing and girls drew girls, but the instruments they chose to depict did not necessarily reflect the instrument they chose to examine after the concert. Interestingly, the majority of boys drew flutes. Bruce and Kemp assumed that this is because the flute is easier to draw than the trombone, for example. While the leap between “difficult to draw” and “difficult to play” is a big one, Bruce and Kemp’s point regarding boys’ response to difficulty seems clear. This idea of boys choosing the easier path is consistent with Legette’s (1998) previously cited findings regarding boys’ reaction to difficult-to-play instruments. Sinsel, Dixon, and Blades-Zeller (1997) cited evidence showing that educators can influence students’ choices by “biasing the manner of initial instrument presentation” (p. 400). Similarly, Pickering and Repacholi (2001) found that children exposed to counter-examples were less likely to choose gender-consistent instruments. In fact, fourth-grade boys were the only ones to display significant preference for gender-appropriate instruments even after counter-examples were given. Pickering and Repacholi warned, however, that “counter-examples” run the risk of gender-stereotyping
in the opposite direction to that which children are now exposed. On this same theme, they also noted that there is further study needed to determine how long the effects of the counter-examples will last. In some initial investigations, Pickering and Repacholi noted that kindergarten-aged children are less susceptible to counter-examples (i.e. that they hold very tightly to their gender stereotypes). Boys, because of their general inflexible opinions, need repeated exposure to counter-examples, if those examples are to have their desired effect. Sinsel, Dixon, and Blades-Zeller also confirmed that boys hold stereotypes more firmly than girls, and thus concluded that boys need more help to broaden their potential musical choices.

The music teacher’s efficacy plays a particularly important role because the classroom may be one of the most effective environments for combating sexism in the music business. The classroom remains available to educators as one of the few settings where they can moderate the often hostile and confusing messages we direct at children. Given the reports of the effects teachers have had on students’ progress and their continued reassertion of gender inequity in music study, researchers have given much thought to methods educators might use to begin to undo the damage of years of male domination in music (Koskoff, 1987, introduction; Lamb, 1993, 1991, 1990; Lamb, Dolloff, & Howe, 2002). Lamb (1990) outlined the ideas of compensatory and challenging music teaching practices, practices which educators must use in tandem to be effective. Compensatory practices, also known as the “add-women-and-stir phenomenon,” essentially take the form of (re)discovering and acknowledging the musical contributions of women and other marginalized groups, and adding them to the
curriculum. At the same time, we must provide boys and girls with equal opportunity to continue to contribute to this body of work. Whereas, at the root of challenging practices lies the recognition of the classroom as only one of many places that people learn about music. This idea pulls formal pedagogy down from its place of distinction and forces teachers to address social influences that affect and are affected by classroom learning (Lamb, Dolloff & Howe, 2002). Boyce-Tillman (1993), Costley (1993), and Delzell and Leppla (1992) called on teachers to recognize their roles as role models as well as educators. They asserted that teachers must be aware of their own biases and reassertions of stereotypes, as well as being aware of those same tendencies in others.

Adulthood

As was the case in childhood, female musicians also share several biographical details in their adulthood. Again, many appear genre-specific. Across genres, many women have experienced problems establishing and maintaining relationships with men, and many have fewer than the average number of children (Sicoli, 1995; Stremikis, 2002, 1997). While Stremikis’ “classical” respondents felt that they were less conforming to gender stereotypes than music hobbyists were, for instance, Sicoli reported that pop musicians lack a strong identification with feminism (Sicoli, 1995). Many of the pop musicians in Sicoli’s study left home prior to age 19, engaged heavily in charitable pursuits, and had a tendency for mental disorders, including substance abuse, anxiety, and depression. Many of these differences between classical and popular musicians, including access to instruments and formal lessons, and exposure to a variety of musical styles, are likely attributable to socioeconomic status.
Davidson (2002) conducted in-depth research on the solo performer’s identity, in which she examined both a classical and a popular musician. She wrote that, for a musician, “participation in music had become the key determinant in self-concept” (p. 103). In addition, for these women, making music was an activity perceived to have positive physical and psychological benefits. In fact, “music had become a critical means of self-expression” (p. 103). This is a critical point in the focus of this review because if a musician’s self-expression represents not “self” expression, but rather some other expression, mitigated and directed by external and internal pressures to conform to some gender norm, a player’s music will surely become insincere, unsatisfying, and ultimately abandoned.

Self-image and Sex Roles

Music-making is self-expression, a way of “making the private public” (Eisner, 2003). The concept of self-image is integral to the study of how an individual makes the move from private to public expression. Further, an individual’s self-image mediates and is mediated by external, social forces, such as those discussed in the preceding sections, which shape the form and content of self-expression. Implicit and explicit assertions of self-image appear to influence heavily the form that a person’s musical expression takes. Specifically, self-image influences an individual’s choice of musical roles (singing, playing, composing) and their choice to continue to make music. For instance, Stremikis (2002) observed the explicit self-image as an important factor for older, established

\footnote{In this thesis, the term "instrument" includes the voice, unless a distinction must be made between the two.}
musicians. She noted that successful female musicians took pride in their determination, and that they perceived themselves as highly self-directed and less conforming to gender stereotypes than hobbyists. Nehring (1997) described how punk and grunge performers channel genuine anger into their sometimes nihilistic performances, and O’Neill (2002, 1997) reviewed personality-driven performances across musical genres.

Many of these same researchers identified an individual’s adherence to a particular gender type, also known as sex role adherence, as a strong influence on self-image. Boldizar (1991) employed a sex role inventory[^4] with children and concluded that children are attracted to pursuits consistent with their internalised sex roles. In their Sex Role Inventory study, Sinsel, Dixon, and Blades-Zeller (1997) did not ask students directly to assess their gender orientation. However, through a series of questions, each student’s orientation was established, and through a subsequent series of questions, the researchers found that the same students made gender-consistent choices in the instruments they elected to play. Self-image can also play a role in contradicting stereotyping. In Conway’s (2000) study, many of the stereotype-breaking musicians saw themselves as rebellious characters. Many of those students who were playing gender-inconsistent instruments reported that they chose those instruments in a conscious effort to be different. Conway quoted one female trombone player, “Well, I knew that I just didn’t want to play the flute. I didn’t want to do like every other girl in the grade was

[^4]: The Children’s Sex Role Inventory assesses children who score high on the masculine scale and low on the feminine scale as “masculine sex-type.” Children who score high on the feminine scale and low on the masculine scale are said to be “feminine sex-type.” Those who score high on both scales are “androgynous,” while those who score low on both scales are labelled “undifferentiated.”
We can view this rebellion as an attempt to confound society’s long-held notions of the essential characteristics of men and women: that men are rational, intellectual, and creative; and that women are emotional and bound by their physical natures.

From the late 1970s well into the 1990s, researchers who addressed the issue of sex-role adherence in musicians and in other creative people concluded that the happiest and most successful persons were those who possessed a sort of psychological androgyny (a term coined by Heilbrun, 1973). Though not all of these researchers used the term, they saw these psychologically androgynous individuals as persons who did not adhere too strictly to ideals of either masculine or feminine behaviour but who appeared to be “somewhat better adjusted across the total range of competence and self-worth measures than either masculine or feminine sex-typed [people]” (Boldizar, 1991, p. 511). General findings pointed to the benefits of an individual not too tightly lashing their sense-of-self to a typically feminine or a typically masculine ideal. Kemp (1982) observed that “whereas the highly sex-typed person struggles to keep his or her behaviour consistent with an internalized sex-role stereotype, the androgynous person exercises a freedom which [researchers] Bem and Heilbrun have maintained to be an important ingredient for psychological health” (p. 106). Kemp (1982) and, more recently, Dai (2002) maintained that creative people exhibit more of the characteristic traits of the opposite sex than we usually considered “normal.” In the realm of pop music, in particular, many musicians have manipulated the idea of androgyne, both psychological and physical, as a tool for crafting personae geared to appeal to specific audiences or for tapping into the perceived
strength of a different gender. Auslander (2004) wrote about Suzie Quattro’s musical androgyny and how this self-image enabled her to perform a variety of pop music roles typically ascribed to one or another gender. Other writers have discussed similar approaches taken by other pop musicians. Walser (1993) discussed malleable gender performances by metal musicians, and Reynolds and Press (1995) discussed gender performance across pop sub-genres. Both Walser and Reynolds and Press suggested that a flexible approach to gender performance can be freeing for musicians, but is often problematic for audiences, who find it difficult to maintain a stable connection to an artist whose persona may be always in flux.

Thus, given the myriad obstacles in their path, there appears to be some tenacity or stubbornness, some uncommon sense of self-efficacy and personal resilience that coalesces for some Canadian female pop musicians that brings on success. Some combination of personal and professional traits and experience allow some women to be fit enough to survive in the music industry. My research sheds some light on the nature of those elusive traits and experiences.
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Purpose

My study examined the personal and professional traits of female pop musicians in Canada. The study offers new perspectives on the trials and successes of this underreported group in popular Canadian culture, perspectives that should give music educators new insights into ways of helping young Canadian women express themselves with pop music.

The research project had two phases, designed to help me move from an overview to a detailed account of Canadian female pop musicians’ professional and personal traits: a survey; followed by in-depth interviews. The survey addressed issues that arose from the relevant literature. An analysis of the survey responses led me to the themes I used to construct an interview guide for in-depth, follow-up interviews with four pre-selected respondents.

General Overview of Phase 1

After identifying potential respondents in conversations with colleagues and using various Canadian Music Internet search sites\(^5\), I e-mailed roughly 300 invitations to participate in my anonymous survey, hoping to be able to work with data from roughly 100 participants. The e-mail invitation contained a link to a page on my research web

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\(^5\) After mining the major Canadian music sites Canehdian.Com, Canoe.Ca, Maple Music, and Monkey-Boy.Com, my search became redundant, as I was finding no new potential participants.
site, which itself included links to: a Letter of Information for survey respondents; the survey itself; a research results page; and, my personal home page.

The survey combined both quantitative and qualitative questions, designed to gather biographical and attitudinal data. I organised and analysed data from completed responses using Microsoft Excel, SPSS, and Atlas.ti, depending on the nature of the data.

I aimed my analysis at discovering both trends and inconsistencies in the data. I generated descriptive statistics with Excel and SPSS, and combined these statistics with trends I identified using Atlas.ti. Further to this analysis, I conducted correlation tests on the quantitative date using SPSS, to see if such tests would suggest trends that my previous analysis had not. I used a Pearson CoEf, 2-tailed correlation test because that method is useful for non-parametric statistics such as mine. I paid close attention to correlations significant at both $p < .05$ and $p < .01$. I employed my findings from Phase 1 to develop an interview guide for Phase 2, questions designed to help me make more sense of Phase 1 data.

Participants

I received completed responses from 85 professional female Canadian pop musicians. Initially, I predicted that I would have 100 survey responses, but I was prepared for far fewer. As it turns out, 85 participants represents an uncommonly robust 27% response rate, with which I am very pleased.

I hoped to have a broad representation of ages, geographical regions, sub-genres, genders, and cultural groups in my survey respondents, but recognised that it was probably going to be difficult to achieve such diversity with only 100 participants.
Because I designed much of Phase 1 to determine “who” plays pop music in Canada, there are too many participant descriptors to include in this section. Chapter 4 goes into these data detail, but a brief and broad overview for the purposes of this chapter shows that participants were between 18 and 54 years old, more than 80% of whom self-identified as white Anglophones, of Western-European decent. Nearly all are multi-instrumentalists and nearly all sing. 25% live on their earnings from music, with an average yearly income from music of $15,000, 37% earning less than $5,000 per year and 2% earning greater than $80,000 per year.

**Contacting Participants**

I used convenience sampling to find and recruit participants. The Canadian music scene is tightly knit, and so my own experience as a professional pop musician and my continued contacts within the Canadian music business provided me with a sufficient starting point. I combined my personal contacts with “snow ball” introductions, via the Internet, e-mail, and in a few instances, the telephone. For those instances in which I relied on second-hand introductions, I limited my contact to musicians recommended to me by three independent sources, because I inferred that such notoriety identifies musicians recognised as professionals by their peers. My sources included performers with whom I had direct contact, links pages on performers’ websites, and general Canadian music sites such as Maple Music and Canoe.ca. After several weeks of searching for participants, I was finding few new names, my search having become almost completely redundant.
Beginning August 21, 2005, I sent introductory e-mails to potential participants to introduce my research and myself.\textsuperscript{6} The e-mail invited recipients to participate in my study and asked them to identify other musicians to whom they believe my research might be of interest. I instructed willing participants to click on the hyperlink, embedded within the e-mail, which directed them to my research abstract, the letter of information, and the survey.\textsuperscript{7} A completed survey served as consent to participate.

\textit{Avoiding \textquotedblright Spam\textquotedblright Filters}

On the advice of Rick Pim, Queen’s Information Technology Services systems manager, I e-mailed the invitations in “bundles” of 25 to avoid having my e-mail identified as “spam” (junk e-mail) by most recipients’ e-mail programs (R. Pim, personal communication, June 2005).

\textit{Indirect Contact}

In many cases I did not have direct contact information for invitees but needed to rely on the good will of artist representatives such as management and booking agencies to forward my e-mails appropriately. Although I am sure that many gate-keepers intercepted and deleted my requests before they reached the intended artists, I was pleasantly surprised by several encouraging and helpful responses from artist representatives.

\textsuperscript{6} See Appendix D for the text of the introductory e-mail.

\textsuperscript{7} See Appendices F, G, and H for the on-line letter of information, research abstract, and the survey, respectively.
Anonymity

Survey respondents appear to have relished the opportunity to share personal information and experience with anonymity. The 27% response rate and the fact that all but one of the 85 respondents completed the entire 105-question survey speak volumes about the power of anonymity in gathering vast amounts of possibly sensitive data. However, as I discuss on page 51, with respect to interviewees’ identities, sometimes neither anonymity nor confidentiality are desirable in research. Where I was able to establish a personal rapport with interviewees, no such opportunity existed with the web-based survey. Thus, establishing some basic trust with survey participants using a guarantee of anonymity was very effective.

As a starting point for keeping participants’ identities anonymous, I “blind-copied” the invitees’ addresses in my mass e-mails to hide the e-mail recipient list from each recipient.

Survey respondents remained anonymous because the submitted survey form generated an e-mail to me, which included no information I could use to identify the sender. As a test of this anonymity, I requested and received several completed forms from friends and colleagues, representing users from several Internet servers and various software platforms, in Canada and the United States. The test confirmed that the process consistently and effectively hid the sender’s identity from me.

Pim informed me before I began the process, that a submitted survey would generate a log entry at Queen’s, which would record the sender’s IP (Internet Protocol) address and server name on a Queen’s database (R. Pim, personal communication, June...
2005). Although several Information Technology Services personnel have access to that log, they could only use an IP address to identify the computer used to submit a survey, not the person who completed the survey. Pim asserted that it is extremely unlikely for Queen’s ITS personnel to have the resources or the inclination even to discover the location of a respondent’s computer, let alone trying to identify respondents, themselves. Comparing the security of e-mail and e-mail attachments to the use of web forms, in Pim’s opinion, “anonymity is slightly better with a web form” (Pim, personal communication, June 2005). Thus, with confidence, I was able to assure respondents that submitted surveys contained no identifying information.

Follow-up E-mails

Between August 21 and October 15, 2005, I sent each invitee three e-mail invitations to participate, explaining in second and third invitations that, because survey responses were anonymous, I could not know who had and who had not responded. Each follow-up e-mail also contained a dynamic list of the names of musicians I was having difficulty contacting. All follow-up e-mails I sent generated more survey responses and more contact information for “missing” invitees.

Tools

The survey combined both quantitative and qualitative questions, designed to gather biographical and attitudinal data, using the Internet as the delivery source and data gathering tool. I chose to use a web-based survey rather than a paper survey primarily

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8 See Appendix E for e-mail correspondence on this matter.
because of its convenience for respondents and the expected better response return rate as a result of that convenience. I expected that most, if not all, of my intended respondents, were familiar with the process of completing such surveys, using “radio buttons” to answer true-false and Likert-like questions, and dialogue boxes for open-ended questions to be answered with text. I received no questions or complaints about the survey format.

Another benefit of this web-based approach was the ability for potential respondents to follow links I provided on my research site to check on my credibility. Beyond my letter of information and the research abstract, there were links to my entire personal website, including my CV, which indicates my status both as an academic and a professional musician. To include all of this possibly persuasive information in hard copy would exacerbate the already prohibitive cost of copying and mailing some 300 invitations to participate, to which I would have needed also to affix return postage.

In terms of my own convenience, the on-line survey was relatively simple to design and post to my research website, and then to disseminate with the Internet. Since completed surveys generated e-mails to me, the data was already electronic when I received it. This saved data entry time and undoubtedly reduced data-transcription errors. The time saved in sending and receiving surveys using the Internet rather than standard post is also apparent. Because I conducted this survey in the late summer and early fall, known to be prime touring time in Canada, I imagine that artists were more likely to receive my e-mail invitation to participate than those sent by standard post. Standard post itself presents difficulties for a survey of this nature since most artists appear much more
willing to provide and maintain current e-mail contact information than standard mailing addresses.

**Possible Considerations for and Limitations of This Web-based Survey**

There are several important considerations inherent in using the Internet as a data-gathering tool. The primary considerations I had were the technical implications of guaranteed anonymity, my lack of control over who received the invitation to participate, and proper access to letters of information.

As I reported earlier, anonymity was a concern for me. Because I wanted the most complete, honest answers I could get, I felt that I needed to reassure respondents that their identities were safe, even from me. This was particularly important, I thought, in terms of asking very personal questions on issues such as drug use and eating disorders. From a technical perspective, the guarantee of anonymity ultimately meant losing the opportunity to create a more convenient, save-able web form. Therefore, respondents had to complete and submit the form in one on-line session; they could not answer some questions and save those answers to complete the survey later, or even use backward and forward navigation buttons on their browsers without clearing their responses. I included a notice to this effect in bold, red letters at the beginning of the survey. This limitation results from Internet technology that did not permit such file saving without the use of a program on my end of the system that would save data and respondent ID for future use. Such a program obviously compromises respondent anonymity. Thus, I opted for the non-saveable form instead, counting on the respondents’ engagement with the research to compel them to complete the 105-question survey in as much detail as they were willing.
From the seeming thoroughness of most of responses I received, my optimism was well founded.

Another major consideration was my inability to control the dissemination of the invitation to participate. It became apparent very early in the process that participants forwarded my original e-mail invitation to colleagues. I anticipated this problem, so, initially, I asked respondents to send me names and e-mail addresses of colleagues who they considered potential respondents. I hoped that this tactic might allow me to keep the survey going only to musicians who met my eligibility criteria and let me keep reasonably accurate records of who received the survey invitation. The latter concern was particularly important for follow-up invitations and for the point at which I will notify all of those who received the invitations that I have posted my research results on my web site. When it became clear that many musicians were not following my instructions, I asked in follow-up e-mails that respondents simply notify me when and to whom they forwarded the invitation to participate. I recognised that I could not really control who received the invitation, but I might still keep reasonably complete records on recipients. Finally, when many respondents were clearly not following even my amended instructions on forwarding the invitation, it became that much more important for me to screen completed surveys for those which appeared not to meet my criteria. In the end, I rejected only one from a musician who appeared to be a country-music hobbyist.

My inability to control survey dissemination also ultimately affected the power of the statistics my survey produced. For example, with control over who received the survey, I might conceivably have achieved a random enough sample to provide my data
with some statistical power. As it is, with so many respondents seemingly distributing the
survey invitation to band mates and other like-minded musicians, my sample can in no
way be considered random. This musician-to-musician transmission of the survey has
undoubtedly also skewed my descriptive statistics. Women in bands have sent the survey
to band mates, who are often all female, and on to other women in bands, causing my
picture of Canadian bands to appear much more gender-integrated than it actually is.

Finally, like any ethical researcher would, I wanted to ensure that my respondents
were well informed about my research before they completed surveys. However, the
“linked” nature of the Internet allows non-linear progress through documents, making it
possible for respondents to skip my letter of information and proceed directly to the
survey. My best effort at ensuring that respondents would read necessary information
before proceeding with the survey was to offer several links around all pages to make
navigation within my research site as simple and direct as possible. Because I recognise
that recipients of paper-based surveys are equally liable to gloss over preliminary
information, I feel as though my efforts to provide easy access to relevant background
information on my research were sufficient and as effective as possible.

I believe that the benefits of this web-based data collection method outweighed
the deficits, for the nature of this particular study. I cannot imagine a better way to gather
as much high quality data as this design ultimately provided.

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Both the literature and my findings show that women who are instrumentalists in pop
bands most often play in all-female bands.
Analysis

My analysis of survey data formed the basis for the interview guide I used in Phase 2 of this study. At this point, I referred back to my original research questions to ground my analysis (see page 5 of this thesis for those questions). Next, I organised and analysed quantitative data with SPSS and Excel, providing descriptive statistics such as frequencies and means. Because much of the data are parametric, I did not expect normal distribution, and so many standard descriptive statistics, such as average respondent ages, are relatively meaningless in this context. Nonetheless, the valid descriptive statistics I generated provided quick access to information on trends and outliers. I used Atlas.ti software to organise the qualitative data for analysis. The “Reporting and Analysis” section in Phase 2 contains more on my use of Atlas.ti.

As I discussed previously in this chapter, the use of statistics in analysing this survey is problematic. Some descriptive stats are valid because they represent a summary of the data. To ascertain the value of these statistics, I needed to be cognisant of the issues that probably skew the picture, such as response bias, and note that effect in my analysis. As described by Heller and O’Connor (2002), recognising and drawing attention to issues particular to my data will make the study stronger. Further, while I recognise that my survey does not represent the kind of random sampling required for genuine statistical power, I chose to run correlation tests on quantitative data in order to identify further points of interest. This sort of “data mining,” once dismissed as uninformed investigation without hypothesis, has gained validity and is now “not only permissible but necessary” (Bartel & Radocy, 2002, p. 1120) in a discovery approach to analysis.
This process highlighted possible trends in the data which would otherwise have escaped my notice. The scope of my study does not permit the opportunity for statistically-based confirming procedures with what I call my “soft correlational data,” but my findings may lead future research in new directions; and, the purpose of the interview phase of the research was qualitative inquiry to expand and explore survey data, in a way that further quantitative analysis could not.

General Overview of Phase 2

In Phase 2, I interviewed four Canadian female pop musicians to provide depth to the broad data I gathered in Phase 1. Many themes emerged in my analysis of Phase 1 data, and these led to questions I used to create my interview guide for Phase 2. I conducted an interview with each participant, each interview lasting about one and a half hours. I e-mailed participants interview transcriptions for their approval, and included in those e-mails some follow-up questions.

Participants

I chose four women who would provide critical insight into my research question, each of whom offered a unique perspective on the Canadian music business. The rationale for my choice of interviewees fell somewhere between what Patton (2002) would call extreme or deviant case sampling and critical case sampling. These are “selecting cases that are information rich because they are unusual or special in some way” (p. 231), and selecting cases “that can make a point quite dramatically or are, for some reason, particularly important in the scheme of things” (p. 236). My four
interviewees were Kris Abbott-McNeil, Sarah Harmer, Kasia Hering, and Lorraine Segato. These musicians are special because each one has attained national and sometimes international success, a significant achievement for any Canadian musician. These women are important “in the scheme of things,” not simply because they or their bands have been so acknowledged by their peers and by the media (Barclay, Jack, & Schneider, 2001), but because they can offer insight into several pop sub-genres and movements, from cities across Canada, at several different periods in recent Canadian music history. Further, there were sufficient artifacts, in the form of audio and video recordings and popular media coverage of each of these women’s careers, to give me a solid information foundation on which to conduct interviews with them. Thus, I was an informed interviewer, able to focus the interviews without having to spend time on biographies and other details, which, from the interviewee’s perspective, may have seemed trivial and even boring.

*Kris Abbott-McNeil*

Kris plays rhythm guitar and sings backing vocals for the Toronto band, The Pursuit of Happiness (TPOH). She joined TPOH in 1987 and enjoyed a five album-long career of touring and recording. She has played in a variety of independent bands on the side, and released a solo multimedia project for children. TPOH had been her focus and priority for music until she left the band after 15 years with it. TPOH gained a reputation as a hard-edged rock band, essentially “alternative” before the term came into use. Their material includes the Canadian rock anthem “I’m an Adult Now” and other notable tunes such as “Hard to Laugh.” While the band no longer tours or releases new material, they
do occasionally reunite for shows as they did in December 2006, with Kris on guitar, always to critical and popular acclaim.

While she still loves music and plays in a county-punk group, The Strap-Ons, with her partner, Kris came to disdain the music industry and left her recording contract with TPOH. In her own words, “I love music, love the relationships and the learning processes with the people but strongly dislike and mistrust the industry. Now I work as a tech manager at a software development company, play music for fun and have very little to do with the industry.”

Kris brings to my study many years on the road, and a determination to play music in spite of an industry she mistrusts. As a self-identified lesbian, Kris also sheds light on gender politics and sexual harassment from the perspective of one not so liable to be the target of aggressive male pursuit, but rather its witness.

Sarah Harmer

Sarah is a folk-rock solo artist, formerly the leader and lead-singer of the alternative Kingston band Weeping Tile. She has been active in the Canadian music industry since the late 1980s. Sarah has many recording credits, including four solo albums and several collaborations with other Canadian musicians. Harmer comes from a family heavily steeped in music and has a university music education. Her personal history provides engaging research potential, as does her blending of musical genres.

Sarah’s most recent CD, I’m a Mountain, is primarily an acoustic-roots record. The album’s lead single, “Escarpment Blues” bemoans the excavation of the Niagara Escarpment. Sarah donated profits from the promotional tour to the group “Protecting
Escarpment Rural Land Protecting Escarpment Rural Land” (PERL), an organisation she formed to protest the destruction of the escarpment. She produced a Juno-winning DVD chronicle of the “The Escarpment Tour.”

A good part of my interview with Sarah focused on her presentation of self, and her battles with promoters to keep her image “real,” in spite of their obsession with the airbrush. Sarah’s waif-like, sometimes almost androgynous presence, starkly contrasts video air time she shares with many other female performer’s hypersexual representations.

Kasia Hering

Kasia was the accordion player for the indie Montreal alternative/ska band, Me, Mom & Morgentaler. The group’s popularity peaked in the mid-1990s, and it disbanded not long after. Hering has left music behind and become a mother and a veterinarian, having not played her accordion at all for several years. Her reasons for abandoning a musical career and her reflections on being an accordion player in a pop band provided valuable data. Even more important, perhaps, is our exploration of her complete disinterest in playing accordion today.

While popular information on Kasia and Me, Mom & Morgentaler is not nearly as readily available as it is on the other three interviewees, Kasia lent me a very complete file of clippings, posters, and other band memorabilia, including a video documentary of the band’s reunion at the Montreal International Jazz Festival in 2000.
Lorraine Segato

Lorraine is a singer-songwriter and guitarist, best known as the lead vocalist for 1980s world-beat group The Parachute Club. The band’s single “Rise Up” has become an international queer anthem, and a staple of Canadian radio. Prior to the inception of Parachute Club, Lorraine was a founding member of Mama Quilla, another “pre-alternative” band, and V, a world-beat band also ahead of its time. Her projects are almost always mixed gender and mixed race.

Since Parachute Club’s break-up, Lorraine has released two solo albums, and become a filmmaker, event producer, lecturer, and social activist. Her work on Queen Street West, The Rebel Zone, a documentary of the Queen Street West art scene from 1975 to 1985 has been widely acclaimed and has garnered her other production work including several presentations of the National Aboriginal Awards. Lorraine loves performing best of all, but says that at heart, she is essentially a “creator,” and as such is always striving to express herself in positive, socially beneficial ways. She is now back in the studio working on a new album with Parachute Club and works with several community projects focused on homelessness in the Toronto area.

Contacting Participants

E-mail was my formal method of contact with the interviewees. We conducted the formal research paperwork via e-mail and through my research site. Formally, however, Kasia is a friend of mine who agreed to an interview several months before I
wrote my thesis proposal, and Sarah is an acquaintance who agreed to the interview when I met up with her during Women’s Music Week at Queen’s in the spring of 2005. I was able to conduct face-to-face interviews with both Kasia and Sarah. Kasia was my first interviewee, and we spoke at her home in Ottawa. I caught up with Sarah while she was on tour in Ontario and she graciously agreed to come to my home for an afternoon conversation.

Serendipity led Kris and Lorraine my way. Both musicians contacted me about completing my survey, word about which they received from colleagues. Both e-mailed me after I began analysing survey data, but before I finalised participants for Phase 2. With very little persuasion from me, they both agreed to telephone interviews.

Tools

The primary tool for Phase 2 was the interview guide I designed using my analysis of the Phase 1 survey responses. To make interview questions more thought provoking, I framed them in the style of narrative inquiry, introduced to me by Rebecca Luce-Kapler at a workshop on employing narrative devices in research (personal communication, February 2, 2005). An example of one of my narrative questions is: “If you can imagine a spectrum of indulgence which includes Iggy Pop, Cheech and Chong, and the Flying Nun, how would you say that tobacco, alcohol, and drugs fit into your life and your career music?” Using humour and metaphor to elicit responses to serious topics has proven to be very effective. I provided interviewees with my interview guide several

\[10 \text{See Appendices 10, 11, 12 for the Invitation to Participate in interviews, the Letter of Information for interviewees, and the Letter of Consent for interviewees, respectively.}\]
weeks before our scheduled interviews and they all responded very favourably to the narrative approach. Generally, they found the technique novel and refreshing, and very useful for retrieving and reframing memories and generating ideas.

For my own further preparation for each interview, via the Internet I accessed artifacts such as audio and video recordings and popular media coverage of each of the musicians’ careers.

I transcribed interviews and e-mailed the transcriptions to the interviewees for them to check for errors and any information they would have me exclude from my report. In the same e-mail, I solicited clarification on points as necessary. I informed each respondent that she could delete or otherwise alter any information in the transcriptions she wished. No one made substantial changes to transcripts, but any information they asked me to delete does not appear in my analysis or reports.

Anonymity vs. Confidentiality

Because the Canadian music scene is very small and intimate, and because a detailed discussion of a Canadian musician’s career would be meaningless without reference to details which would necessarily identify the musician, such as song lyrics or band names, I could not and did not offer to conceal interviewees’ identities. Both Queen’s Faculty of Education Ethics Review Board (EREB) and the school-wide General Ethics Review Board (GREB) normally do not allow researchers to publish results which reveal or could reveal participants’ identities. Considerations of confidentiality focus on

11 See Appendix L for the interview guide.
whether or not participation in a particular study puts respondents at more risk than that to which they are exposed in the normal course of their personal or professional lives. I made a strong case to both EREB and GREB to permit me to identify interviewees, and neither body objected. This permission is novel and important, in that allowing celebrities the opportunity to use their own voices in academic research may make for stronger and more meaningful scholarly research on popular culture in the future.

It is often the case too that potential research participants will decline to participate in studies in which their identities are not concealed. However, as I expected, this seemed to pose no difficulties for any of the four interviewees; questions of anonymity and confidentiality are different for people in the public eye versus those who are not. I made it clear to respondents that they may withdraw from this study at any time without pressure or consequence of any kind, and happily, none did. I am confident that each woman gave me very honest responses answers to my questions, as complete as our limited time allowed.
### Table 1

**Research and Thesis Completion Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Phase 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August – October, 2005</td>
<td>- Solicited survey respondents and collected responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>- Finalised literature review chapter of my thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Analysed survey responses and begin to construct interview guide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 2</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December – January 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>February – April</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2006 – May 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2006 – April 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
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<tr>
<td>June – October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reporting and Analysis

Survey responses were complete. In all but one instance, respondents answered nearly every question on each survey. Only one respondent left the qualitative questions unanswered, but she completed all of the quantitative questions. This notable for a survey of this length and breadth, and it indicates respondents’ genuine engagement with and concern for the research.

I contemplated my research questions during my data organisation and analysis. Through this process I generated a great deal of data, much more than I could include in one Masters thesis. Therefore, I focused the data through the original research questions. As a result, this thesis excludes data that did not relate directly to respondents’ early exposure to music, music choices, or career decisions.

I used Atlas.ti to organize the qualitative data analysis. I chose it both because I have previous experience with it and because several members of Queen’s Faculty of Education faculty and students recommend it. Atlas.ti offers several features that make it a valuable tool for a qualitative study of almost any size, such as automatic coding label changes, easy personal memo retrieval, and concept map drawing. Further, in the event that I use these data again, having the data already in Atlas.ti will make a larger study much more manageable.

Where I quote participants’ written responses, such as in the survey, or in interviewees’ responses to my e-mail messages, I have left the quotations intact, not

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12 I recognize that secondary uses of my data will need separate GREB approval.
correcting for spelling or grammar.\textsuperscript{13} Where I cite a quotation from a survey response, I use the letter “r” and the respondent’s data file number to identify the respondent, for example “r14.”

I have written two separate reports of my results. One report is this thesis, which meets the guidelines set by Queen’s School of Graduate Studies and Research, and the other is a condensed version for my participants, which will include the results and discussion chapters of my thesis. The condensed report will be available to respondents on-line, soon after my final thesis submission.

It is important to note here that, throughout this report, I related women’s current perceptions of other’s attitudes. For example, in the case where singers perceived their friends’ to hold gendered views about music performance, or where instrumentalists believed that their music teachers did not, it is not so important that friends or teachers did believe “this or that,” but that respondents recall particular beliefs. It is impossible to tell, after all, what their friends and teachers did think, but it is very clear what respondents believe they thought, and those beliefs and their effects are the issues at hand.

\textsuperscript{13}While I acknowledge that some readers will be put off by respondents’ many typos and hyper-casual grammar and syntax, it is important for me to honour respondents’ efforts to type their often lengthy responses to my questions, and to acknowledge that we live in an age in which e-mail and text messaging has changed our written language a great deal.
Finally, the organisation of this thesis into sections and chapters dealing with specific topics from respondents’ personal and professional experience suggests that I conceive of a person’s experience as discreet parts to be reported and analysed separate from other discreet parts. I do not believe, in fact, that any one element from a person’s past can be understood as existing apart from any other element. However, I surrender my concept of complexity in human experience to the interests of a coherent research report.
CHAPTER 4: SURVEY RESPONDENTS’ PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DATA

This chapter reports primarily on the results of the on-line survey related to respondents’ biographical and professional data. It shows a relatively homogenous Anglo-European group of women who are highly educated and make very little money from their professional musical pursuits. Most survey respondents sing, even if some are primarily instrumentalists, and a great percentage are multi-instrumentalists.

Biographical Data

Though trends in biographical data cannot be generalised to the whole population, there is doubtless a portrait drawn here of adult women, most of whom are highly educated, with well-rounded interests. It is also a relatively homogenous portrait in the context of race, or ethnicity, in that the vast majority of respondents identify as white “Canadian,” Anglo, or Western European.

Respondents’ Ages

Respondents’ age ranged from 18 to 54 years old. As Canadian music websites clearly show, there are certainly professional female musicians in Canada who are under 18 years old, but I did not have ethics clearance to include them in this study. Generally, as age increased so did the respondent’s income from music last year, as did the number of children a respondent had. The older the respondent, the more likely she was to consider herself to have been a tomboy when she was young, and to report that her school music teachers expressed clear opinions about which instruments were appropriate for women.
Education

Figure 1 shows that 33 of 81 (40%) of survey respondents have university degrees and that another 16 of 81 (20%) have degrees in progress. More highly educated musicians in this study tended to have lower incomes from music.

![Bar chart showing level of education](image)

Figure 1. What is your level of education? (n=81)

Cultural Background

Responses to this question showed an overwhelming representation of Anglo-Europeans in this survey. However, because people used a variety of terms to identify themselves culturally, ethnically, or racially, it is difficult to get an accurate picture of
respondents’ cultural backgrounds. Those who used the terms “Canadian,” “WASP,” or “Western European” numbered 71 (83%). There were five (6%) French Canadians, and the remaining nine (11%) respondents identify from a variety of other backgrounds. As much as this picture is incomplete, two respondents captured the general “look” of this group quietly succinctly, if a bit facetiously: “whitey white white! Canadian” (r18), and “Canadian, Anglo-Saxon, caucasian Honky” (r85).

Hobbies

Most respondents reported some engagement with hobbies, the majority were involved in several different ones. Writing and reading appeared most frequently, followed by peripheral musical projects, other creative arts, sports and athletics, and intellectual and spiritual pursuits. Only two respondents of the 85 reported that they played sports that are necessarily team-oriented.

General Musical History

Almost every survey respondent (81 of 85) reported that her interest in music began in childhood. Many respondents reported that there have always been musical instruments in their homes and that parents enrolled them in music lessons early in life. Importantly, though, 17% (15 of 85) of respondents have had no formal music training, and 70% (60 of 85) report that they have done some self-teaching. Data show that most women’s professional music aspirations have been consistent and that they tend to enjoy group projects more than individual efforts.
Forty-three (51%) musicians had instruments in their childhood homes from birth, and by age seven, 60 (70%) had instruments at home. The earlier a respondent had an instrument in her home: a) the more likely it is that she believes that music was important to her family; b) the more likely she had music lessons early in life; and, c) her parents were more likely to have exposed her to a wide variety of musical genres. These same women were also likelier to report that they listened to and made music with their friends when they were younger.

The average age at which respondents began music lessons was 7 ½ years, but 20 (17%) respondents report no formal training at all. Most respondents began music lessons between the ages of five and eleven years.

Two responses in particular, speak to respondents’ perception of the positive effects that early involvement with music had on their lives. “I do believe that getting instruments into the hands of kids as young as possible is the best thing for everyone. All teenagers should be able to play five chords on a guitar and write sad songs” (r10). “I think that having music in my life from a young age has helped develop my very strong self confidence. I think this is due to the fantastic, encouraging teachers I have had as well as my early experiences on stage”(r73). However, as shown in Figure 2, respondents’ beliefs about the importance of music lessons are very divided.
Musical Roles and Other Professional Data

Data on musical roles points to a possible marginal shift away from the gendering of music roles in pop music. While many respondents do conform to the “traditional” pop mould of singer, or singer-guitarist or singer-pianist, also many who do not.

The results showed that many respondents focus much more on singing in performance than on playing instruments, in that nearly one third do not perform on instruments at all, and fewer than one third are primarily instrumentalists. Respondents who focus more on singing than playing instruments often reported that: a) they were

Figure 2. I believe that music lessons are important. (n=85)
aware of female musical role models when they were young; b) childhood friends had
definite ideas about gendered musical roles; and, c) they consider themselves to be
traditional women. Those whose focus is instrumental are more likely to play more
instruments, and most musicians reported that they are multi-instrumentalists.
Respondents who play more instruments often reported that they and their friends were
unaware of female musical role models growing up. Those who played more instruments
were less likely to see themselves as traditional women.

![Chart](chart.png)

**Figure 3.** Place yourself on this range from performing always as an instrumentalist to
always singing. (n=85)
Table 2

*Most Reported Instruments*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guitars</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basses</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percussion</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drums</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flute</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin/Fiddle</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandolin</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accordion</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n = 85)

Where her voice was the “primary instrument,” most vocalists played more than one instrument, most often piano. Where musicians were primarily vocalists, after piano, guitar was most popular. Table 3 shows the most common primary instruments.

Table 3

*Primary Instrument Frequencies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guitar</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano/Keys</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drums</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percussion</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin/Fiddle</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n=85)

As shown in Figure 4, 42 (45%) respondents play exclusively or primarily in bands, and another 26 (30%) play with bands at least half the time. More than half of those musicians were lead singers. Respondents who played more often in bands were: a)
more likely to perceive their personalities as very flexible; b) more likely to earn less money from music; and, c) less likely to find physical fitness important.

![Bar chart showing music performance preferences](chart.png)

**Figure 4.** Place yourself on this range from performing always as a soloist to always in a band. (n=85)

As Figure 5 shows, 32 (41%) respondents earned less than $5,000 per year. Respondent 74’s comment reflects a common concern.

I certainly don’t do it for the money, or I would have had to give up long ago. My day job supports my ‘habit’. Although I’m not what most would call ‘successful’, I feel very satisfied with the level I’ve attained and judge my success more on the musical friends I’m able to collaborate with because of the joy I get from that (r74).
On the other hand, 25 of 72 respondents (35%) were entirely dependent on their income from music. Another musician felt so strongly about her “play for pay” philosophy that she wrote a message directly to my potential audience:

Always get paid! Ask for lots of money and negotiate. Never take the $50 and a meal gig. If you don't value yourself as a professional, no one else will. People who hire you for less will treat you with less respect. Have a contract for every transaction, even a basic, minimal one. It will get you better treatment (r9).
Higher earning musicians were more likely to report that they enjoy working on projects alone, and that they have more children. Higher earners were less likely to have higher education, and were less likely to consider themselves “traditional women.” 14

Figure 6. What percentage of your income comes from music? (n=72)

Discussion

A great deal of my data support previous findings, in particular about continued gender-stereotyping in pop music and about the benefits associated with musicians’ early and varied exposure to music. Complimenting other, more recent research, I have also gathered data concerning women’s self-perception that suggests that stereotypes.

14 See survey question number 73, in Appendix H.
regarding musical opportunities may be weakening somewhat. To the best of my knowledge, the data on professional musicians’ hobbies and income is the first of its kind. I am also pleased to discover that so many respondents are multi-instrumentalists, thus refuting general impressions that women are not capable are inclined to be instrumentalists.

*Biographical Data*

**Age**

Respondents’ ages themselves do not tell us much beyond the fact that no one younger than 18 was supposed to respond to my survey and that few older than 50 did. It would be very interesting to conduct a study on pop musicians younger than 18 to compare their perceptions to responses in my survey. Equally interesting would be determining how many working pop musicians there are in Canada, male or female, over 50 years old. While I am aware that there are many all-male, Canadian bands such as Trooper and Prism, whose members are well past 50 by now, who have returned to touring, I wonder how many women are doing the same. The idea that rock and roll bad “boys,” The Rolling Stones, all of whom are passed 60 years of age, speaks to the fact that pop music and youth music are not necessarily the same thing anymore, but I suspect that there are, per capita, many more active “aged” men than women in the pop music scene, globally.

It is notable that older respondents were more likely to recall that their school music teachers expressed clear opinions about which instruments were appropriate for women. It leads me to wonder if teachers expressed these opinions more frequently in
the past, or if older musicians have just had more time and experience to recognize a gendered approach to music teaching.

_Education_

Education data show a highly educated musical population. This is not consistent at all with Sicloi’s (1995) findings, but he was researching the lives of female pop musicians well back into the 1950s when the whole population was not as likely to have post-secondary education as it is now. Canadian women’s focus on education may be related to a more conservative outlook on professional musical prospects, or it might be an indicator that these women come from a higher socioeconomic status, in which post-secondary education is an expectation, and is “something to do” while one works at professional music.

_Ethnic/Racial Background_

This is a very white-looking, English-speaking group of respondents; this homogeneity is consistent with my examination of international pop music charts (MacKay, 2004) and with undergraduate students’ findings on pop music charts in the course that I teach at Queen’s on the social history of pop music (MacKay, 2006). This population is also self-consciously “white,” as many of the respondents indicated in their choice of words, such as “honky” and “whitey-white-white-white.” Data in this section are skewed somewhat in that the survey was not intended for Franco-Canadians and therefore not widely distributed among them because I am insufficiently fluent to analyse
data in the French language. Data included from the cosmopolitan population of Montreal alone would likely have painted a less white, Anglo picture of Canadian pop music.

**Hobbies**

The clearest way I found to classify these hobbies is in the context of performers’ work schedules, into two groups: activities relatively easy to do while – or activities essentially prohibited by the logistics of – touring, or within the constraints of erratic, late-night schedules.

I found no literature on female popular musicians’ hobbies to suggest that my results are typical, but these results are consistent with my own experience. Solitary, or at least individual, past-times are simply easier to manage on a working musician’s schedule. Often, one jumps at the opportunity simply to do something “quiet” and alone. In my own experience, writing in one’s journal and reading books are the most common on-the-road activities (after sleeping and smoking cigarettes). Even in down times, my own band mates and I rarely had the energy to do more than read or watch television, though watching television was rarely reported by survey respondents. This leads me to wonder if men and women use their down time differently.

As I noted in the instrument-frequency section of this chapter, musicians often get involved in musical projects peripheral to their musical “jobs.” Into this category, I fit respondents’ activities such as practicing new instruments, collecting music, broadcasting, performing voice-overs, and other working on other recording projects. New towns offer new opportunities for music collectors, and the chance to meet and
collaborate with other musicians. I have often found it very refreshing, and sometimes lucrative, to work on someone else’s musical project for a change.

As for creative arts, respondents listed photography, fashion, painting, and knitting among the most popular. Again, new environs may inspire novel visual and musical self-expression, and many hours in a tour van can be whiled away clicking pictures or knitting.

Many respondents are concerned with physical fitness. Whether working out or playing sports, 75 (88%) reported that physical fitness is important to them and that they regularly engage in some physical activity. On tour, (aside from performing) walking, hiking, and running are the easiest ways to stay fit, but travel in Canada does offer musicians many fitness opportunities, including biking, swimming, skiing, and snowboarding – dependant, of course, on available funds. While walking is typically free, ski-lift passes rarely are. Biking, skiing, and swimming, among others, could be both competitive and team sports, but there is, in the data, a notable under-representation of sports that are necessarily team-sports. Reports of volleyball and basketball are almost nil, and the two most popular Canadian sports, hockey and soccer, do not appear in responses at all. My first thought was that respondents are more collaborative than competitive, or maybe are simply not interested in team-sports. While this may be the case, it was these data (or the lack of it) that first suggested to me the difference between activities either promoted or prohibited by touring. While biking, skiing, and swimming

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15 In subsequent chapters, I relate reports of substance use and abuse, and the data may seem dissonant with respondents’ respect for fitness. It is notable that while few respondents smoke tobacco, 64 of 85 (75%) use soft drugs such as marijuana and hashish regularly.
can be solo pursuits, fit into an individual’s schedule as time permits, team sports are quite the opposite. For most touring musicians, or even stay-at-home players with late-night schedules, it is difficult to commit to a team sport. This point made, there may also be a gendered approach to sports at work here too. It is a point of pride among many Canadian male musicians that they are always able to play pick-up hockey on the road. At one time, The Tragically Hip, for example, rented ice-time wherever they traveled, for games with their families, crew, supporting musicians, and interested local NHL players (Bidini, 1998). Perhaps these men play hockey on the road because they have always played hockey, and the women do not because hockey may not have been prominent in their lives. The current trend toward women playing hockey and soccer very likely predates the childhoods of survey respondents.

Finally, where hockey is the major Canadian religion, respondents often engage in more traditional spiritual pursuits such as meditation and yoga; as reported by one woman, her primary hobby is “existential crisis” (r65). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was certainly a trend toward spiritual contemplation associated with popular music, and many conflate heavy metal with the occult, but my own experience with pop music has been exclusively secular.

These data on hobbies may be analysed in other ways. I might have classified most respondents’ varied hobbies with dichotomous labels such as creative/non-creative, passive/active, traditionally male/traditionally female, such categorisation turns out to be meaningless. What these data really suggest to me is that respondents are well-rounded people with various outlets for self-expression, both musical and otherwise.
Musical History

Early Exposure to Music

Researchers have dedicated whole volumes and myriad essays to the positive effects of early exposure to music and to music instruction on children, so a lengthy discussion of these results in this context is unlikely to be fruitful. It is no surprise that most respondents come from families to whom music is important, and that parents exposed participants to a wide variety of musical genres, or that the younger they were when instruments came into the home, the more likely they were to get formal instruction. These data make sense on an intuitive level as well. Early on, at least, children are very likely to show an interest in those things apparently important to their families. My partner and I sing around our house all the time, and now our daughter does too. My brother-in-law is a sports fanatic and so now, his son is one too. Further, one would expect that respondents grew up listening to and making music with family and friends. Pegley (personal communication, September 2005) and Green (2002) both noted that pop musicians need to “hack” at music to become good at it. Because there is still relatively little instruction available to young people on learning and performing pop music, the pursuit becomes a very personally driven one.

Two points from these data are especially notable. The first is that not every respondent comes from a musical family or had encouragement with her musical pursuits. This finding points to the idea that while familial support is common and (probably) helpful, it is not critical to a musician’s success. This conclusion is consistent

The second notable point is that respondents who were exposed to music early on and encouraged to pursue it (and this is the overwhelming majority in this survey) were more likely to call themselves “feminist.” This finding may be an indicator that this sample of musicians, whose average age is thirty-something, may be more inclined to adopt the feminist “label” than some of their younger colleagues, whose personal and social development occurred more during feminism’s third wave, or the “post-feminist” era. It may be too that the longer these musicians have been involved in professional music, the more they have found in themselves a set of survival traits one might associate with the term “feminist.” I discuss feminism and social action further in Chapter 7 (Identity).

Music Lessons

It is important to note that 17% (15 of 85) of respondents report that they have had no formal musical training. This speaks to Pegley’s and Green’s notions about the importance of hacking and how young pop musicians typically learn in independent and individualised settings. However, 83% (70 of 85) of respondents have had formal training, and I would suggest that this training very likely came on either “non-pop” instruments such as strings or brass, or that piano and voice lessons taken were probably not pop-oriented. Most musician also report that they are self-taught, having had formal instructions on one or more instruments, then embarking on self-teaching on one or more different instruments. Perhaps this finding speaks to the efficacy of music lessons in
developing a musician’s capability in learning to learn and a drive to learn more. On the other hand, perhaps self-teaching inspired musicians to seek out formal training later. In any case, many respondents do believe that music lessons are important, and that is an important finding for this thesis.

Adult Musical Roles

Multi-instrumentalists

That most survey respondents are multi-instrumentalists runs contrary to the bulk of the literature on women’s roles in music, but it is consistent with my own experience of pop music. Players find it difficult to avoid interest in unfamiliar instruments, and most musicians I know dabble with a variety of instruments. Many musicians, myself included, sing and play several different pop instruments well enough for jamming, and we are better musicians as a result. When we began with these new instruments, most of us probably did not set out with a goal of general improvement, but rather to have fun. This “hacking” leads us to a better appreciation of others’ skills and musical roles, often convincing us to change our approach to music, for the better. This phenomenon may also speak to the relatively steep learning curves for pop instruments, discussed by Clawson (1999) and MacKay (2004). Where we might not expect a classical cellist to dabble with double bass, quickly ready for a performance with her orchestra, we might reasonably find a guitarist playing relatively simple-to-learn basic drum kit lines, quickly eager and ready for a jam session.
Pegley’s notion of “hacking” bares consideration here in that she suggests that musicians who do not have the opportunity to explore musical avenues informally, in a fun atmosphere, are less likely to achieve musical success and are more likely to abandon music all together. In a related issue, a musician who plays a relatively quiet instrument or one that is difficult to transport, such as the acoustic guitars and pianos played by most respondents, are less likely be invited to jam with the loud and portable instruments typically preferred by most young male musicians. Thus, women musicians are often denied critical opportunities for hacking.

On Roles and Role Models

The statistics on the primary instruments point to many women still enacting “traditional” pop roles, while a great number also seem to be breaking free of these stereotypes. The literature shows that piano has been a “safe” and appropriate instrument for women for hundreds of years, secure in its role as a domestic instrument – played by women in the home, for family (performed on in public by virtuosic men). Playing the guitar, in this case, reinforces the female singer’s role as folk-y singer-songwriter, a mould Pope (2001) claims was cast by Joni Mitchell in the 1960s, one from which society seems reluctant to allow most female pop performers to escape.

Several writers have suggested reasons for women’s exclusion from the ranks of electric guitarists. According to Green’s (1997) theory, playing electric guitar is too far removed from woman’s expected body-bound music performance, such as singing. Pegley (2000a) reports that women are simply made unwelcome in technological domains, such as that occupied more and more firmly by the electric guitar and the sound
effects and amplification devices no longer peripheral to playing it. Turkle (1998) notes that society has traditionally viewed women as phobic of machines or lacking in ability with them. Pegley (K. Pegley, personal communication, January 2008) also notes that women may wish to avoid the overtly sexist performance of the electric guitar, typified by male guitar heroes such as Jimi Hendrix and Slash.

The percentage of women who play bass (31%), percussion (24%), and drums (14%) (though not as primary instruments), is consistent with previous findings (Clawson, 1999; MacKay, 2004), and supports the notion of steep learning curves being important in pop instrument selection. With very few lessons or hours of practice, bass players, drummers, and percussionists might perform several sub-genres of pop, including grunge and punk.

Percussion, tambourines specifically, have long been a domain of female lead and back-up singers. Non-Western hand drums have risen in popularity, and the public’s heightened interest in these drums has manifested itself in pop music. Once again, rudimentary skill on these drums is often passable (and prevalent!) on stage. While I do not mean to suggest that all bassists, drummers, and percussionists live lives of marginal musical skill, the fact remains that it is easier to “get by” playing these instruments than it is to play passable lead or rhythm guitar lines. This is another reason that these roles are opening to woman in pop music. Few expect technical proficiency from female musicians, and so allow them entry on these “easy” instruments. Clawson (1999) suggests that job-queuing theory is in operation in here, in that woman are not
supplanting men in these musical roles, but that woman move in to fill vacancies left by
men who are in search of more glamorous pursuits, such as lead guitar.

Flute (14%) is a rarity in the pop world, and while it shows itself strongly in the
tally of all instruments played, it does not appear in the list of primary instruments. Its
presence on the comprehensive list is likely indicative of its ubiquitous place in school
band programs. The fact that many respondents play flute is consistent with all the
gender-stereotyping data since Abeles and Porter’s (1978) study. Trumpet, saxophone,
and trombone are traditional soul and funk instruments but we do not often see them
played by women, despite their equally strong presence in school music programs.

Traditional instruments such as the fiddle and accordion also find a place on the
comprehensive instrument list (vs the list of primary instruments). The appearance of
violin/fiddle (11%) on the comprehensive list is also likely due to the violin’s traditional
place in women’s hands in school music programs.¹⁶ Mandolin (9%) shares the violin’s
tuning, and is, therefore, a natural extension for a violinist, while keyboard accordion
(6%) shares enough similarities with piano to be a natural extension from that “feminine”
instrument.

I wish I had asked respondents to distinguish between electric and acoustic
guitars, double bass and electric bass, piano and keyboards, and among percussion
instruments. The “electric” component speaks to women’s affinity for and comfort with

¹⁶ Many educators will scoff at the notion that school music programs include string
programs. While it is certainly the case that many provinces now have virtually no instrumental
music programs in place, many respondents grew up during a time when these programs were
available and prevalent.
technology, as per Green (2002), Pegley (2000a), and Turkle (1998), and percussion can be drums or not, drums being the less traditional choice for female percussionists. Some did distinguish between these two guitars, but not enough respondents did to give an accurate picture. The distinction may have been important to the musician, or they may have simply been trying to give me their most accurate data.

It is interesting to note that those women whose focus is more instrumental were less aware of female musical role models growing up. Being unschooled in woman’s traditional pop role as singer and the myriad models who reinforce that role may have spared the multi-instrumentalists the conclusion that they were not “supposed” to be playing instruments. Further, those participants who see themselves as untraditional may consciously seek out untraditional musical roles.

On Vocalists

At some point in their careers, most pop musicians sing during a performance, but my experience is that a far greater percentage of women sing than do men. Tradition reinforces the idea that singing is a woman’s primary role in pop music; her male band mate gets to focus on his guitar solos, not to be bothered with the nuisance of a microphone.

Respondents who focused more on singing than playing instruments often reported that: (a) they were aware of female musical role models when they were young; (b) childhood friends had definite ideas about gendered musical roles; and (c) they consider themselves to be traditional women. It seems likely that these women learned from role models and peers, primarily singers themselves, that singing is what women do.
Soloists and Band Members

My data indicate that more than half of respondents play mostly in bands. This finding seems inconsistent with data I have previously collected, which shows that most women are soloists, not members of bands (MacKay, 2004, 2006). However, data from that same research show that women who are in bands are typically lead singers, and that most women who are primarily instrumentalists are members of all-female bands. Two factors lead me to believe that my current findings on Canadian women’s musical roles are consistent with my previous findings on international music charts. First, I had word from several respondents that they received my invitation to participate and immediately forwarded it to female band mates. I suspect this happened more frequently than was reported. Moreover, it is likely that musicians passed my survey around within several all-female bands. Second, my casual tally of gender in bands’ promotional photos on the Internet while I searched for potential participants left me with that impression that relatively few bands are gender-integrated. This tally was necessarily casual because it was not always possible to identify the sex of a musician in a photo, even with a list of performers’ names. Thus, Canadian women are probably as poorly represented in bands as their international counterparts are.

I enjoyed finding out that respondents who play more often in bands were less likely to find physical fitness important. I suspect that this is a simple case of peer pressure. Perhaps many of these women are just like me: if even one person in a band I am with is lounging on a couch or opens a bottle of beer, the likelihood that I am going to
be persuaded to leave that torporous company in favour of a workout or even a low-key game of hacky sac is very low.

Income

Canadian folk-music icon Garnett Rogers has compared life as a Canadian folk musician to participation in a witness relocation program. I expect he has found, just as participants in my survey do, that the pay is commensurate with the obscurity. I found nothing in the literature about women’s income from playing music, and so this analysis comes mainly from my own experience. The data show that respondents who play more often in bands were likely to earn less money from music. In my experience, it is easier to make money as a soloist, to a point. Many bars and other small venues have fixed budgets and pay soloists the same rate as a “full” band.\(^{17}\) For example, when a musician agrees to play for a percentage of the “door,” admission or “cover” charged to patrons, fewer people sharing the “door” each make more money. However, a soloist, unsupported by a backing band, would have a very difficult time arranging shows in larger venues, where the bigger money is to be made, because such venues are geared toward “shows” more spectacular than a soloist is likely to provide.

That the older women are typically able to make more money troubles assumptions that pop music is a young person’s job. I do not know this for sure, but I would suggest that this income rate is a matter of experience, in that the older one is, and the longer one has been “at it,” the more one can negotiate good contracts. It is no

\(^{17}\) In venues where this is not the case, there are typically payment schemes in place that leave musicians receiving even poorer wages than normal.
surprise, either, that higher income earners are more likely to have more children, since they are the ones in the better economic position to provide for the children, and are more likely to have careers stable enough to withstand a hiatus from performing during the very earliest part of their children’s lives.

As to higher earners having lower levels of education, this may be again due to more time spent on the road earning, and less time spent in school not earning. Moreover, that these same women consider themselves untraditional speaks to the fact that they are aware that they are blazing new trails as higher-earning female pop musicians.

Summary

Women blazing new trails seems to be what quite a lot of my data is about. Despite the fact that many women in Canadian pop music are enacting stereotypical roles for women in pop music, also many are not – and they are very aware of the fact. The next four chapters tell some new stories about women’s musical experience with family, peers, and teachers, and about the identities that music has helped them shape. Unfortunately, particularly in the gender issues chapter, there are stark reminders that women in pop music still have a long way to go toward gender equity, and that there is often simply no place made for them in the corporate boy’s club of popular music. The final findings chapter is on traits respondents feel are critical for a musician to possess. I founded each of these next four chapters on data gathered in the survey and then expanded them with information and attitudes provided by the four interviewees.
CHAPTER 5: THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILIES, PEERS, OTHER ROLE MODELS, AND TEACHERS

The literature shows that the opinions and actions of families, peers, and teachers heavily influence young musicians. This chapter tells the story of respondents’ families, when they were growing up, and then into adulthood; of musical relationships with friends; and relationships with music teachers, both school-based and private. As might be expected, analysis of the data showed no deterministic influence on musicians’ lives, but rather a social system of pushes and pulls away from and towards their professional goals. While many respondents reported that parents, peers, and teachers were supportive of respondents’ musical goals, such was not always the case, and yet respondents persevered.

Family’s Influence

I portray family life in two stages, the young musician growing up with her parents and siblings, and the adult musician, possibly with a family of her own. Because parents are still a major decision-making force in adolescents’ lives, I have included adolescence in the portrait of the young musician.

The Young Musician

There is no consistent tale of the young musician’s family life, but several stories that show musicians coming from an array of circumstances: small or large families, financially secure or not, with parents and siblings who were supportive about musical aspirations or quite discouraging.
Family’s Financial Security

Slightly more than half, or 52 of 85 (61%) of survey respondents’ families were financially secure. More fathers than mothers were professionals, and slightly more than half of respondents had professional parents. Respondents who reported greater financial security: a) were more likely to report that their relationships with parents were distant; b) had more years of music instruction; c) had parents who encouraged musical opportunities; and d) enjoy a greater variety of music. Those whose mothers were professional were more likely to report that their parents exposed them to live music and female music role models.

Relationships with Parents

Very few respondents (12 of 85) reported that their relationships with their mother were distant. The closeness of fathers and daughters was more mixed; roughly half of respondents reported a closeness to dad and half reported a distance. There was no suggestion that parent’s status as professionals affected family relationships.

The more distant respondents felt from their mothers, the further they felt from their fathers. Those who were further from mom and dad reported that their parents: a) were more likely to have definite ideas about musical roles appropriate for women; b) did not understand their daughter’s music; and, c) were less likely to encourage music opportunities or expose children to a wide variety of musical genres.
Parental Encouragement

A great deal of data point to heavy parental support of respondents’ musical aspirations and families’ strong engagement with and aptitude for music. An overwhelming majority of respondents reported that their parents encouraged musical opportunities, listened to them practice, exposed them to live music, a variety of musical genres, and female musical role models, and did not express strong opinions about gender-appropriate musical roles. Of the most influential experience that brought her into professional music, one woman wrote:

The day my Father passed away, I spoke to him that morning not knowing that those were his last hours on earth. He took my hand and spoke as if he knew…and he kind of gave me his blessing regarding my decision to pursue a career in music. The only thing he said after that was, “Just don’t play those clubs” (r19).

Some musicians conveyed other kinds of emotional and economic support: “My father’s passion for music was nurtured in me” (r49); “My parents had me record an album of my own original material at 16, and it received radio airplay” (r24). Kasia related a scenario of her embarrassingly proud parents, all too familiar to many music students:

When I was a kid, when they had their friends coming to visit for dinner, I’d be hiding in my room, dreading to hear, “Kasia come and play your accordion!” – Oh, my god! – I’m going to have to sit there and play the Blue Danube waltz, or whatever – anything that was going at the time. They clap and “oh!” [She claps and makes goofy noises].

Even when her CGEP marks started to slide because of her time commitment to her band, Kasia’s parents did not grow unsupportive, knowing as she did, that professional music was a passing phase in Kasia’s life. She said, “Well, they didn’t know about [sliding marks] right away. I kept . . . well they knew [music] wasn’t going to be a
career for me, so they weren’t too concerned about me throwing my life away and being a poor musician.”

When her own confidence flagged, Kris’ family supported her and encouraged her to continue playing, even if she chose not to become a professional musician.

There were lots of times when I would say “I can’t do this” or “it’s too hard,” you know? I mean, there were lots of – certainly the years before the Pursuit of Happiness thing came around for me that my mom would say to me “no matter what don’t sell your guitar” . . . She just always encouraged me to be myself. So, I don’t have any kind of dramatic family experience. They just really supported my music.

Even so, Kris also received some of the less welcome prompting of which Kasia spoke.

She insisted, “I don’t perform around my family. That is probably the only dramatic part. They would like me to be a little bit more extroverted than not. So there were lots of Christmases where I stormed off to my bedroom crying because I didn’t perform, and it caused a big family fight.”

Sarah spoke about some of the logistical support that parents of young musicians often feel compelled to provide. Unlike Kasia’s parent’s confidence in her to make the “right” choice regarding her music career, Sarah’s parents were confident that while Sarah would certainly play professionally, they could count on her to make other, wise life choices. She reflected,

Growing up in the country, your parents have to drive you everywhere. My parents drove me to Hamilton all the time to go to choirs, children’s choirs, and you know, soccer practice and all that. There’s been so much support over the years . . . people ask me when I started playing – when I was 17, when I was playing in bars, you know – how your parents must really want you to do something else, or . . . and they never did. I think they definitely put enough trust in me so that I thought “Oh I’ve got their trust, I better not let them down” . . . And by the time I was 17, I kind of remember my mom saying “We’ve taught you what we can,” sort of thing, and “we trust you to make the decisions for yourself.”

85
While most respondents reported that parents did not discourage their musicianship, 17 of 85 (20%) did meet with at least some discouragement. In this survey, such discouragement is often associated with musicians’ inconsistent musical aspirations. This same discouraged group received fewer years of formal music instruction than did their supported peers, and the formal instruction usually came from a paid instructor. Those who did not even get that support are self-taught.

In one enigmatic tale, a woman reported that a significant musical event in her life was when “my dad told me i couldn’t sing beside him when i was 4. i was determined to sing with my dad. (a jazz musician) and went out on my own to learn how to do it well” (r64). Another reported that “the most troubling stories usually revolve around my parents or someone trying to scare me out of doing this by pointing out how hard it is” (r45). A particularly traumatic event occurred for one woman “playing a personal recording for [her] family that [she] loved, to have it rejected” (r61). Another’s bad musical memories revolve primarily around “[her] mother and father! no patience, cruel, intolerant of beginner” (r26).

Along with many other Canadians at the time, Kasia’s family was not happy with her band’s choice of name, Me, Mom, & Morgentaler, which invoked the controversial Montreal women’s rights activist and abortion provider. On that subject she said simply, “They didn’t really understanding why we were using it in our name. They think . . . it’s a touchy subject; don’t go there.” Kasia did say that her bandmates meant the name to attract attention to the band.
Family and friends discouraged Lorraine’s aspirations, but she managed to ignore their misgivings. “I remember there being a lot of doubt in the beginning, from parents, and friends or whatever. And I think I was driven – I was driven, so I wasn’t really paying attention to those doubts.” She went on to try to account for her parent’s fears in the context of her parents’ immigrant status and her mother’s genuine support for Lorraine’s music, if not necessarily her professional goals:

They’re Italian . . . so they’re hard working immigrant people. So this whole notion of me being 11 years old and saying, “I wanna be – oh I’m gonna make records when I grow up,” and my mom went out and bought me a guitar. A nice guitar, ’cause my uncle basically owned a music store and gave me lessons, you know. But they never ever thought that – my dad wanted me to be a banker or something.

Even when Parachute Club was at the height of its popularity, Lorraine’s father was afraid for her financial well-being.

It was just kind of comedic and almost tragic in that really – like in that dramatic way that Italians are – “What do you mean you’re gonna? I don’t – I can’t imagine, how you gonna make a living?” . . . I remember there was an incident where we were playing Expo in Vancouver when we had 2 nights sold out, thirty-thousand people every night, you know, for two nights. And I flew my parents out, and my father said to me “Lorrie, what if nobody comes?” You know, even at the peak of our success he always had this fear that somehow we would be sent back to Italy or something.

Family’s Musical Aptitude

Most respondents (62 of 85) reported that their families had a sense of tune. Ten percent (9 of 85), however, did report that their families were “tone deaf.” Respondents who reported “tone deafness” in their family were more likely to have had a paid professional as a first music teacher. Children of “tone deaf” families were also more likely to receive instrument lessons, and subsequently became primarily instrumentalists.
Sarah’s first solo release was a present for her father, with whom she associates many fond musical memories, and with whom she has performed on CBC radio.

*The Adult Musician’s Family*

Adult family life takes many forms for both survey respondents and interviewees. Fully 81% (68 of 85) of respondents are in committed relationships and 15 of 79 (19%) have children. Table 4 shows respondents’ “marital” status.\(^{18}\)

*Table 4*

**Respondent’s Relationship Status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dating seriously(^{19})</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living common-law</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with partner</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced or separated</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n=85)

At least one survey respondent sacrificed her marriage (and her relationship with her father) to pursue music. She related an event and that happened “after leaving [her] first husband to pursue a music career and [her] dad disowned [her] because of it” (r63). Several respondents noted their husband’s support of their music careers. Both Sarah and

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\(^{18}\) The total percentage (107%) exceeds 100% because some respondents put themselves into more than one category.
Kris note that relationships with band mates can be worthwhile. Sarah said, “I think about the whole relationship thing – you just gotta like go out with someone in your band – That’s worked for me;” and Kris spoke about the band she plays in with her partner: “We have a hobby band that we play in called The Strap-Ons [laughs].”

Regardless of their relationship status, 81% (64 of 79) of respondents do not have children. The 19% who do have children are more likely to have agreed with survey statement number 72: “I spend a lot of energy making my appearance traditionally attractive.”

Kasia has a young daughter and we spoke about whether her aspirations for her daughter included professional music. She said, “We want her to be surrounded by music, but Jose [Kasia’s partner] is more into sports . . . I definitely want her to be surrounded by music – and if that’s what she wants to do then . . . [shrugs].”

Peers’ Influence

Like “family life,” I portray peer influence in two stages, the young musician growing up with friends, and the adult musician, interacting with friends and colleagues.

*The Young Musician*

The picture of respondents as young musicians, interacting with friends, is as varied as the picture of the young respondents themselves. However, the data show that most respondents began playing music independent of their friends, but eventually played music with their friends regularly.

19“Dating seriously” is vernacular many respondents used which typically means a relationship in which no formal commitment has been made, but that such a commitment may be desirable and seems imminent.
One quarter (23 of 85) of respondents began playing music about the same time their childhood friends did. That group reported that they prefer nearly always to collaborate on musical projects. Most reported that they and their friends were aware of musical role models, but that friends did not have definite ideas about gendered musical roles.

A slim majority of respondents’ reported that male and female friends were supportive of their musical aspirations, though 38 of 85 (45%) report that they never listened to music with their friends. Although many respondents did play music with their friends, many reported that they also frequently sought out “strangers” to play with. This group reported a great deal of encouragement from school music teachers who encouraged broad exploration on instruments and exposed respondents to female music role models. One respondent notes that a critical musical moment occurred for her “playing in various ensembles in high school and realizing I could actually make a living (hopefully) playing/talking about this stuff!!” (r42). Respondents in this group who seem to have played all the time, with whomever was available, considered themselves to have very flexible personalities. Reflecting on her burgeoning professional aspirations, one such a respondent wrote

There wasn’t one major life-changing experience. I was lucky enough to grow up in a city with an all-ages club. I hung out there seven nights a week during my teens. Seeing people my own age getting onstage and playing music, whether or not they did it well, was a huge motivator. Then I just got addicted somewhere along the way (r31).
The Adult Musician

The picture of respondents as adult musicians, interacting with friends as musical colleagues becomes much more homogenous. Most respondents reported that both male and female friends are supportive of their musical endeavours, and that few friends had definite ideas about gendered musical roles. Most respondents also reported that they do not view other female musicians as competitors.

Some respondents communicated a very positive tone about personal interaction with other musicians. One wrote, “It is an exciting time to be a female musician...there are still not too many of us, but I find the underground community to be very accepting and encouraging to female musicians” (r75). Kris noted that personal loyalties in the business could be very long-lived. She said,

The kind of people that wanted to work with us were the kind of people that we wanted to be around. So, even in the band’s retirement, we’ve – an old friend of the band, came to the forefront of – kind of, helping us end off the last chapter of the band’s history in a nice way, taking whole loads of time . . . good people stick around.

However, Kris did talk a bit about the kind of woman who becomes a backing vocalist and how she is bound to have aspirations to be a lead singer, aspirations which are likely to make her more competitive than other musicians might be. Kris was also willing to put that competition in the context of gender: “you know, girls do tend to compete in ways that guys don’t.”

Role Models’ Influence

One of the first questions asked in a typical pop music interview used to be “Who are your influences?” It seems as though interviewers have abandoned that question of
late, opting often for a more titillating opener, but the question of musical influence is still very relevant to those of us who want to get a more complete sense of a musician. Some few respondents acknowledged role models without specifically referring to gender, as did this respondent, noting an important musical experience from her youth at band camp,

the summer before grade 12. the opportunity to play with and learn from some of the best musicians in the city. the opportunity to realize that there were, in fact, other people who, like me, wanted to pursue music and who, like me were scared and excited and thrilled that they had something that they loved this much (r55).

However, the overwhelming majority of respondents cited other female artists as primary influences, either by their presence or by absence from the scene. Several respondents noted inspiration from particular musical quarters, such as “I am inspired by a number of women like Lucinda Williams who are thriving musicians well past their 40’s” (r15) and “listening to new wave bands in the 80s, lots of female performers and musicians in those acts (r17)”. It is notable, though, that inspiration did not always come from musicians: “When I was about 10 or 11 years old I had the opportunity to work with a professional female actor in a musical at our city playhouse. She really influence me because she was someone who was living her life as an adult doing what she loved and making it work” (r43). But, despite several indications that there were several female role models to choose from, most respondents bemoan the absence of viable musical role models. As one woman put it simply, “I feel the lack of positive female role models slowed down my development as an artist” (r6). And clearly, it is not just the musicians themselves looking for role models: “There were no role models to follow of other
women music producers, so I jumped ship on that dream, even though I won an award for best producer from a local radio contest” (r52).

While one respondent implied social progress: “I also worked as band manager and booker before I played music myself. There was a lot more discrimination then: in the early 80’s. If more female musicians start playing instruments and take themselves more seriously then others will follow” (r27), at least two other women believe that we may be backsliding in this area: “while I feel women have been finding a place in the pop world, I don’t feel we have advanced our status in any way. Joni Mitchell was my role model. I can’t think of a woman musician today (except Bjork) who I’d want as a role model for my daughter (r13); and “In BC, C-FOX is a major radio station for young listeners. For weeks, I’ve been listening to the station, waiting for a female fronted band to hit the airwaves... NONE! (Finally, Bif Naked, but THAT’S IT!!!)” (r71).

Kris found the dearth of female role models particularly difficult to contend with. She explained,

When I was young and playing in bands and discovering that I was gay, I had no idea that that’s what was happening to me. I had no role models. I had no – I was, you know, playing in a band with a bunch of guys, traveling on the road. I didn’t have any frame of reference. So when I became depressed, I think that it was really, truly connected to that. I don’t think it was about the music, because music has always made me really happy . . . Strong woman musicians weren’t really around as role models but the stereotypes were. What I mean by this is that when you expect the worst, you are prepared for it.

She admits confusion on this point but asserts that her role models were really the men that she grew up listening to.

I never – you know, this is where I find it confusing, because I was never inspired by women. But if I saw something that I really liked in a woman performer, I really enjoyed that. I mean I listen to the type of musicians that have, influenced
me when I grew up, were men musicians. I wore my guitar low because that’s the way Jimmy Page wore it, you know. I didn’t know that I should wear it higher.

Sarah sheepishly admitted that she finds herself taking special note of women musicians playing traditionally male roles, seeing them first as women and then as musicians, always aware that they are unique in her experience of pop music.

I mean, if it makes that impression on me, I imagine it’s making it on other people. And I’ve – seeing women play drums, and then you’re like “oh! I could do that.” And it’s surprising how that is necessary, how that is needed . . . To just see somebody in that role. You know, I played in the Saddle Tramps for three and a half years. I didn’t once sit behind the drum kit. You know, it’s a fun place to sit, even if you’re not a drummer. And I’d never just sat behind a kit for all that time. All those gigs. All that opportunity to just try it. And I think it never even crossed my mind that that could be something that I could do. And then you see a woman play drums . . .

Teachers’ Influence

Respondents who have had formal lessons have taken lessons in both school and private settings. The ultimate influence of these teachers is often unclear, but nearly all respondents took the opportunity to report on at least one music teacher, and the comments were almost never neutral. 20 While most respondents reported that neither private nor school music teachers encouraged broad exploration on instruments or exposed students to female musical role models, most also disagreed that their music teachers expressed definite ideas about gendered musical roles. On one point, there was near complete agreement: almost all respondents reported hating music lessons at some

20 While I do not believe that a person’s gender can ever be separated from their experience, for the purpose of reporting, I have distinguished between what I will call “general” comments on music teachers and those that point explicitly to gender issues in education. I address data that speak specifically to gender issues in education in the gender issues chapter (Chapter 7).
point. Kris put it plainly. “When I was younger I took piano lessons, you know, the kind of piano lessons your parents put you in . . . and I quit because I hated it.”

“Bad” Teachers

Many comments on “bad teaching” and “bad teachers” revolved around general memories of favouritism, a teacher’s lack of enthusiasm for anything other than a paycheck, or simply being uninspiring; as one respondent put it, the bad teachers were “boring, unenthusiastic, and uncaring” (r75). However there were also several specific criticisms leveled by respondents that included physical abuse, inflexibility, and technical ineptitude.

Though they were infrequent, stories of tales of physically abusive teachers are important to note. Two such stories stand out. “My piano teacher, whose name I can no longer remember. Very cross. Would threaten to crack a stick across my knuckles if I hit the wrong notes. Ages 8 – 10” (r31). “I don’t remember, but my mother told me I quit piano lessons because the piano teacher hit my sister’s hand with a ruler” (r20).

Several respondents felt as though their teachers lacked the knowledge or experience to be teaching at all: “He was a student at the time and didn’t really know what he was doing. I would simply play through my pieces, he’d tell me what notes/rhythms I played wrong (as if I didn’t already know) and then we’d move on. I could get away with barely practicing, and sadly, I did” (r42).

There was disagreement about the merits of teachers who challenged students, but most respondents who commented found teachers too challenging. For example: “The choir teacher at my highschool - who tended to push keen or gifted students so hard
they’d give up. who had no interest in exposing her students to anything more than she was interested in. she was very into ‘ladylike’ and ‘polite’ ” (r61). An uncommon but notable critique in my data was about a teacher who did not push hard enough. “i don’t really have a least fave... but i suppose the guy who was too nice and didn’t really push me hard enough to work...” (r30).

Overwhelmingly, the two most frequent criticisms were a teachers’ inflexible approach to music and teachers who did not understand or support respondents’ their desire to learn pop music. One wrote about “a female voice teacher who berated [her] for singing anything other than classical music” (r19). Another had nothing good to say about any of her teachers:

They were all horrible. they all had a fixed idea about music. they were traditionalists who were afraid to create. they did not have the ability to think outside the box. I played bass guitar in grade 11 & 12 band. my teacher had no idea that I couldn’t read music. she wasn't familiar with a “modern instrument” like bass. I got a “B” both years (r6).

This response sums up the majority of criticism leveled at music teachers:

It was rare to find someone who would allow me to develop my own style and personality. They were all about sticking to the basics. No wonder kids hate music lessons. I did learn the basics and am thankful for it but my creativity was stifled and my spirit broken many times. I used to listen to the song and play it back by ear instead of reading...which did definitely hinder my professional playing.. but never my ability to create (r7).

“Good” Teachers

As with negative comments about teachers, the positive comments include many general comments, in this instance about encouraging and kind teachers, who also exposing students to a wide array of music. In these data, respondents often gave names,
where that was rare with negative comments. What the “good” teachers did typically was
to connect music lessons to the “real” musical world, to challenge their students, and to
make an effort to know their students and make personal connections.

Many respondents were impressed by their teachers, who were themselves
working musicians, and able to provide practical experience beyond technique. One
respondent recalled an inspirational teacher who “had a rock band and played in
Nightclubs. He liked all kinds of music. He was not the typical ‘old fart’ band teacher”
(r6). Two other respondents appreciated their teacher’s extra efforts to provide practical
professional experience. “There was a great lady who decided to add a couple of courses
to the regular band class, which were voice class and a music co-op class which i wanted
to learn more about recording and went out to some studios and got a few lessons” (r7).
“It was a teacher who took on an after school music program where the students formed
a band and worked on covers. A semi-professional production was performed at the end
of every school year. This experience gave me basic tools I still carry on with me today”
(r65).

Some respondents remember a particularly challenging teacher as a very positive
influence. One respondent wrote about “a passionate teacher who taught us university-
level content in 10th grade. He pushed us hard, but his love for music was contagious.
Everyone from my class ended up studying music in university” (r48). Sarah talked about
learning from several teachers to think differently and more critically about music. About
a critical course on women and music she took at Queen’s University, she said, “All of a
sudden a little switch changes – I think that’s huge. I really do. I think that’s a really, really big, big thing.”

One of the two most frequent themes in this section is the good teacher having been responsive to students’ interests and personalities. One musician recalled an encouraging teacher who helped her to find her voice. “He taught me some blues scales and i started developing my improvisation skills. We also started learning pop songs which allowed me to interpret emotion rather than stick to a particular way of playing the song. i felt free, i learned what i needed to and never felt like i wasn’t doing it right” (r7).

Another respondent remembered a teacher who took time to learn about her student’s learning styles.

She knew I was lazy and undisciplined but she also saw that I was very talented. So she was quite gentle with me, and would play all the compositions in the book and allow me to choose the ones I wanted to learn. This kept me interested enough to progress. She also knew I learned better by ear and didn’t force the theory on me, but would add it in little pieces (r9).

Seemingly paramount in respondents’ education were teachers who made personal connections, beyond the classroom context. One player wrote, “My favourite music teacher didn’t teach me, but my locker was near the music room. He knew that I played harmonica and made me a mix tape of Stevie Wonder and blues music” (r28). Another recalled a teacher who helped her to overcome restrictions on her practice opportunities and allowed her to indulge her curiosity about instruments she was not studying:

In high school, I had a teacher who was very passionate about music. Although I was too young to be in one of his senior classes, he would open up the band room for me to practice on the school’s drum kit (I couldn’t practice at home) and permit me to sign out musical instruments for experimentation (r57).
Discussion

The resounding theme in this chapter exploring the effect of families, peers, role models, and teachers is the notion that respondents received both support and discouragement from all quarters. Respondents’ experience of ambivalent support is consistent with previous findings from Costley (1993), Davidson et al. (1996), Green (2002), and MacKay (2007), and refutes no literature with which I am familiar.

**Birth Order and Sibling Support**

Many studies conducted on traits of successful people across domains note that these people tend to be only children, or first born (Richardson & Richardson, 1990). Stremikis (1997) found the same in her study. Nearly half of the respondents to my survey also meet that criteria, but then, of course, half do not. Interview respondents’ birth-order data shows no pattern at all. For Kasia and Sarah, both the youngest in their family, their sibling’s support of their music was important to them. Kasia’s brother was a Canadian Olympic rower, and she reports, “He was doing his own thing. He was rowing. He wasn’t around. He was out west. But I think he thought [me being in the band] was cool because a lot of the university crowd was into the band.” Sarah credits her older sisters with breaking her parents in for her. “I benefited from having them have had 5 children before me to try more discipline stuff out on. I think I got away with a lot more. That’s what my older sisters tell me.” Further, she notes that it was older sister and sometime band mate, Mary, who introduced her to the live music scene.

Yeah, [Mary] had taken me to shows, when she was 22 and I was 16, she’d take me to see the Hip, ‘cause she was friends with the Hip and they were just starting
to play outside of Kingston. So yeah, she took me to shows and really took me under her wing, and I thought she was just the coolest. You know.

Respondents to my survey who were only children or first children often also reported that they enjoy touring. Interviewees and I discussed this trend and we agreed that there might be any number of reasons for it. Perhaps first-borns from large families may be familiar with and enjoy the jostle and chaos of touring. Maybe they were equally familiar with the cramped conditions “enjoyed” by touring musicians, or that they simply had more patience with groups. However, if those are some of the reasons, it follows that musicians born third or later, necessarily from large families, should be equally happy touring, and that only children should enjoy it less. There are several interesting aspects to this birth order discussion, but clearly none of them is conclusive.

*Early Family Life*

Parental encouragement seems like it might be important to musical success, but the data suggest that it is not critical. I believe the important point to draw from it is that a lack of family support is clearly not always off-putting. In instances where respondents noted both emotional and musical distance from their families, one wonders if that distance might have been created by friction between the child’s thirst for music and the parents’ disengagement with it. Respondents who identified their families as “tone deaf” often reported that their families had an appreciation for music nonetheless. It is notable that many parents still encouraged participation in such an unfamiliar domain and that they sought music teachers from outside the family, most often on instruments rather than voice. Perhaps the family’s difficulty with tone manifested itself in a lack of confidence with musicians’ vocal abilities. I came across no literature that touched on this topic, but
for myself, most of my family is never in good voice and I was never encouraged to sing. My father was a professional, non-singing drummer. It is only very late in my own music career that I come to consider myself a singer as well as a drummer, and that only after many disastrous attempts to sing in performance. My experience differs, of course, from many others’.

Adult Family Life

Analogous to family support available to young musicians, it is notable that though many adult musicians reported instances of supportive partners, many respondents also reported discouraging spouses and adult parents. Respondents terminated several unsupportive relationships, and while Stremikis (1997) and Sicoli (1995) report that many female professional musicians have difficulty maintaining stable relationships, their findings are not supported by my data. With 40% of respondents married or in common-law relationships and another 40% in what appear to be other types of committed relationships, it seems as though things may not be so bleak on the relationship front for Canadian female musicians. On a musical life for her daughter, Kasia has become a supportive parent herself. She said that she would be “OK with it” if her daughter decided to pursue professional music.

Peers

There is a very strong sense among respondents that interacting with other musicians and fans is a large part of the appeal of professional music, but that it is the
music “business” that is the problem. This point becomes much sharper in chapter 7, on gender difficulties.

That many musicians played music with friends growing up and many did not, points to the diversity of experiences that may lead to a career in professional music. Pegley (personal communication, spring 2005) and Green (2002) both noted the importance of solo and group “hacking” for a pop musician’s development. However, Clawson (1999) observed that women often come to playing pop music much later in their lives than men do; therefore, it is reasonable that many respondents who did not play with childhood friends do look to adult friends for musical support and collaboration.

On the point of respondents’ adult friends not having definite ideas about gendered musical roles, this finding is not surprising. It is less likely that Canadians have released their gendered musical perspective and more likely that these respondents associate with people of similar social values.

Role Models

Since long before the advent of rock’n’roll, critics have written about the poor example set for “today’s” youth by popular music and popular musicians (Garofalo, 2008). As the literature has shown, from experimental studies on gender associations with musical instruments (Pickering & Repacholi, 2001), to “person-on-the-street” interviews about female bass players (Clawson, 1999) and heated media debates focused on music videos (Walkerdine, 1998), the effects of pop culture role models is shown never to be deterministic. What inspires one person to rebel will cause another to conform, and will
have no impact at all on a third. However, it appears as though most respondents would have preferred more role models to choose from, whatever their influence might have been. The relative absence of Canadian female musical role models is itself a powerful message in the discourse between the pop music industry and the consumer. The message to women is clear: your musical options here are very limited. Thankfully, many respondents chose to ignore it.

**Teachers**

The message one would expect teachers to take from this chapter is that students crave personal engagement, the kind of music education described by Bowman (2002) that is concerned less with training in technique than it is with “the development of character and identity” (Bowman, 2002, 64).

In the survey there were many more comments about good teachers than about bad ones. However, where most of the positive comments were vague, poor teachers are remembered vividly. Of course, it is infuriating to read about music teachers so lacking perspective that they might strike a child, and these instances are rarely enough recalled in the data, but clearly, one such instance is one too many. I myself remember being kicked in the rear-end by a snare drum instructor who was angry about my lack of progress. I recall not getting much better at all after that.

The question of motivating students is addressed by several authors and researchers, and while Bowman (2002) stresses the ultimate importance of character- and identity-building over technical training, Rife et al. (2001) note that while younger “classical” students responded best to nurturing teachers, as the musician develops, he or
she begins to respond better to teachers’ challenges. Green’s (2002) pop music respondents made it clear that they responded best to freedom and practicality from their instructors.

The main idea I draw from respondents’ comments on their teachers is that the good ones made personal connections with their students, well beyond teaching technique. It sounds as though most respondents would agree with the call to teachers to recognize their extra-“educational” function as role models and fellow human beings (Bowman, 2002; Boyce-Tillman; 1993, Costley, 1993; Delzell & Leppla, 1992).
CHAPTER 6: IDENTITY

Identity is a popular topic among researchers across the social sciences spectrum, and has been written about broadly in the context of music, equity, and self-expression. The key identity issues that emerged in my research were: sexual identity, gender associations and activism, public image and stage personae, the “musician” identity, and respondents’ thoughts about being a role model. Respondents most often claimed “musician” as their identity, and in this chapter I will explore what that means and how that it interacts with other possible identities.

Sexual Identity, Gender Associations and Activism

As I discussed in the literature review, the public is wont to make many assumptions about female musicians’ sexuality. Although I explore that topic further in chapter 7, Gender Issues, it is important to get insight into respondents’ own perceptions of their sexual and gender identities and what those identities mean to respondents. Table 5 shows the response data on the survey question, “I identify my sexual orientation as:.”

21 I have indicated the exact terms used by respondents in quotation marks.
Table 5

Respondent’s Sexual Orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Heterosexual,” “straight,” “het”</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Lesbian,” “gay,” or “queer”</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Bisexual”</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other responses</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n = 81)

Other responses included editorial comments such as “a bisexual who’s lousy at dating women. I’m married to a man now (very happily). But as an old widow, I’d be open to anything” (r72); “Heterosexual but am flexible if the opportunity to engage in different orientation came up!” (r3); and “the soul knows no gender. throughout my life I have fallen in love with people. now I am married, so for the rest of my life I will be with a man” (r39). A small handful of respondents seem to have taken issue with the question: “who cares what it is... i dont know” (r66).

Whatever their gender orientation, most respondents did not consider themselves the embodiment of traditional femininity, either when they were children or now, as adults. A small majority (60%) of respondents report that they were tomboys growing up. A slightly larger majority (68%) report that there were not feminine little girls. As adults, 75% of respondents do not consider themselves traditional women. Sarah talked growing up, “feeling that it was a handicap to be a girl.” Into her adulthood, she often behaved in a hyper-masculine ways, reflecting, “I was like –you know, I can drink. I can drink
anyone under the table, you know? Any of the macho stuff I totally went for that.” She began to examine her “unfeminine” behaviour in the context of her feminist studies at Queen’s and the influence from her eldest sister:

I was really going to university and moving to Kingston and going to Queen’s and being in first year, and my sister, my eldest sister – you know – had been a feminist and I kind of was like “what’s all the fuss about?” I didn’t quite get it, you know? She’s eleven years older than me. But when I first started to – come to Queen’s and see the – really start to understand – read a book called The Politics of Reality, by – it’s a classic, feminist classic. Anyway, just started to like realize, “Oh, I have been giving myself a handicap or putting myself in a – you know, in a kind of a debit position” just by the something I always had to prove myself out of – and I realized – I started – my perspective definitely started to change.

Sarah’s journey of self-discovery and her resulting activism is a story common to many respondents. The term “feminist” has come to be associated in many people’s minds with social activism (Conrad, 2000; Pantin, 2001), and much of the harder-edged pop music produced by women in recent years has been politically charged. While the data show a strong activist sense among respondents, slightly more than 50% (45 of 85) of respondents disagreed with or were neutral to the survey prompt “I call myself a feminist,” despite the fact that slightly more than 50% (44 of 85) of respondents also reported that they believe in feminist ideals.

Several respondents indicated that my research, in particular, might be a useful political tool. A typical comment to that effect was “I don’t know what you will do with the results of this survey but hopefully it will bring about some awareness and perhaps foster change as a result” (r52). To affect their own changes, many respondents perform at social fund- and awareness-raising events. I first saw The Pursuit of Happiness live at a
medical fundraiser at Fort Henry, and Kris spoke of an event arranged by her partner’s brother in London.

Dee’s brother, also, he’s a singer. And he plays – he’s a broker, and he has this fundraiser that they do in London with – it’s called Battle of the Bands, and all the legal and financial people get together and they basically all form bands and they do this huge fundraiser for a cancer foundation. And so, we’ve been recruited to play in his band.

Such events are common in Kris’ musical life.

Sarah spoke of the obligation she feels to speak on behalf of those people and places with quieted voices. She said, “I do have a microphone and I do have an opportunity to speak to the media and stuff. I do feel like the natural environment – there are so many important things that need to be supported and talked about.” Sarah spoke about a moment when her awareness of her social responsibility became more acute, in the presence of another very active and vocal musician.

The bandroom was up above the stage, looking down. Billy Bragg, who was such a great spokesman, and such a great songwriter and singer, and really grassroots and I felt like “I’m here for a reason” – I believe in that stuff. I don’t necessarily ponder it too much, but I feel like “Here I am playing with Billy Bragg, being able to experience this so close up. I must take this opportunity and, and try to make good with it, whatever I can see my own version of good.” We gotta participate. We’re citizens.

Lorraine also spoke about the need to speak for those whose voices often go unheard, and how confused musical and social roles can become. She related episodes from her first cross-Canada tour during which the band often played at strip clubs, as those venues were often the only ones who would allow bands to perform original music.

I only minded that they treated the strippers so badly and that was really hard for – on the one level you have to decide for yourself “Oh, OK, am I a musician or am I – you know – political ideas that I have about the world.” At which point
does one mix into the other? Where does one stop and one end, or doesn’t. I mean it doesn’t, you know?

Lorraine also lamented what she sees as the dearth of social awareness in today’s young women, who cannot see the need for “feminism” and social action.

I think too, less and less women are political in this day in age. Younger women [see] no need for it. You know some of them really have – they’re vegans, and they’re this and they’re that. But there’re not – you know, there’s no fear like we had. We had this huge fear back then. And that really, that generated the passion and the energy to – to do stuff!

Lorraine has reflected a great deal about her own activism and career.

With my solo career, I didn’t have a mission attached to it. It was more like I was teaching myself how to write songs that were more personal. And so, the things that work the best for me [now] is when there is a little bit of a meaning and purpose attached to them, that is larger than the simple act of either performing or, you know, directing. It has to have a – a kick. I’m a social activist. I’m always thinking “How is this going to help the community?” I think what I’ve done in the last 15 years is that diversify my career. ‘Cause I also produce, I produce cultural events that have issues attached to them. I did this homeless show. [I ask myself], “Does this particular project allow people to reframe the way they think about this particular thing?” In the case of the homeless it was “How can we reframe the way that people see the homeless?” In the case of the Aboriginal Music Awards, it’s “How can the music industry - how can I do this show so that the music industry sees that aboriginal music exists?” In the case of a film, “How can I get people to look at Queen Street and see how viable it has been as the catalyst energy for how music has changed across this country?” So I’m always looking for a way of say, making a contribution to the larger cultural life, you know? I don’t wake up in the morning and say “How can I make a contribution socially?” But I know that – I know that when I think about what project is gonna drive me for three months, I know it’s because I have some kind of meaning and purpose.

Public Image and Stage Personae

There is no consistent approach to the public image or stage personae reported by respondents. It turns out often to be the case that public image or stage personae are the same thing, but not always. Many respondents attested to employing a genuine personae,
a being one’s “true” self on stage. For example, “I have always been and tried to project exactly the person that I am. What you see AND hear is what you get” (r19). Many others suggest that any public image is a put-on and may as well be toyed with: “Ironically, my current band tries hard to look stylish and elegant. We’ve learned that it’s impossible to not have an image – even when I tried to make myself look awful, that was an image. Visuals play a huge role in the success of a band. So now we dress up in matching outfits, wear lots of accessories, and have fun” (r31).

Sarah is renowned for her genuine image, both on and off stage. She said, “One of the hardest parts of being out there for me is ‘image,’ because even from the beginning, you know, ‘well what kind of image do you want?’ And I’d be, ‘well, what I am!’ That’s the image. I don’t wanna construct or be able to put a name on it.” She has often been very upset by promotional material that attempts to glamorize her. Her first reaction to posters promoting *You Were Here* was disgust and anger.

“Uh, God!” And some of the “uh, God” because they’re overly touched up and, I mean – I – when *You Were Here* came out, we’d done tour posters and they used a black and white photo. When I got to the record release I’d seen the photo but I hadn’t seen the poster, and posters were all up. And my US label had airbrushed our arm hair away. I was pissed off. It wasn’t even really obvious, it was something – and I was pissed off.

Even so, Sarah does not decry other artists’ personal presentation choices. She said, “I mean, some people have more of a sense of style of, ‘oh well, for this album, for this let’s all kind of wear this or that, you know.’ And I respect that. I actually admire that in, in people as far as presentation. I think that’s important, and I don’t think I’ve probably put as much time or stock into it.” She admits that she often wishes that she was given to paying more attention to her presentation.
You know, I think it’s just – I think sometimes for myself, it would be good if I paid a little bit more attention to that sometimes, because it can – it would – it could improve the overall presentation of it. And then I’m like looking for clean socks – you know – in the bottom of a bag. So, sometimes I don’t have it together to be able to do that. But I do admire it.

Lorraine reflected that her approach to her public appearance has changed dramatically since her days with Parachute Club. She attributes the reinvention partly to a quest for personal identity and to the day’s fashion.

Well, I think that [in the 80s] . . . costumes were part of what identified you as being unique. And you know, your personality, because you’re developing your personality in your 20s and your 30s. And you’re saying to yourself, ‘this is who I am’ and ‘this is who I am.’ And I notice for myself now that I’ve become more simplistic with my clothing. You know, basically, it’s not so much about costume anymore. In the 80s the clothes were more like a costume, or . . . would make me feel a certain way. And I would then play into that personality. Whereas now, really, I’m a kind of jeans and black turtleneck and blazer kind of girl. I just try to keep it simple, you know? And then, even on stage lately, where I go on stage I, I wear a nice pair of jeans and maybe a t-shirt, and I make it about my performance, not what I’m wearing. Whereas before what I was wearing was part of my performance.

Kris’ was proud of her ability to surprise people when her aggressive stage demeanor confounds their expectations based on her off-stage, “soft” femininity.

Whereas Sarah and Lorraine spoke more about grooming and wardrobe, Kris focused on her comportment, and how it contrasted the more feminine feel of the band’s female backing vocalists.

I had a very soft, kind of emotional – I was very soft and very feminine. But when I laid in to play guitar I was very aggressive, and sometimes even scared people with how aggressive I could be on the guitar. That was a very key – I wouldn’t say juxtaposition – but it was very opposite to what was going on the other side of stage. And I always enjoyed the shock on peoples’ faces when they would meet me before and I’d be very polite and sweet and everything. But then I could kick ass.
There were several instances in which respondents reported using a crafted stage persona that leaves them unrecognizable off stage. This on-stage performance is sometimes for entertainment value, sometimes to distinguish between public and personal presentations, and sometimes for personal safety. On respondent wrote, “Well I play a ‘character’ on stage when I perform one particular act and this evolution just happened. I always have been theatrical and involved in musical theatre so it just felt natural” (r34). Another, sounding just as concerned about her privacy as about the show, wrote:

i dont wear much makeup off stage, let alone really care what i look like to others when im not performing. i can transform my look into a very intense glam somewhat modelike appearance even with just a bit of mascara. definite jekyl and hyde ability. some people who have followed my band for years still wouldnt recognize me on the street. i like being more anonymous on stage and enjoy dressing up the part for a rock show, then after show taking of wig (if im wearing one dont always wear one) changing clothes and socializing with crowd who are not aware that i was the girl in the band. i like to be accepted for who i am not as an image on stage and i dont wish fame on anyone! (r21)

Kasia spoke about how her on-stage personae and musical role left her out of the spotlight. She was very happy about that. “Well, half of your body is covered up by an accordion, so . . . and we were wearing costumes all the time, taking on these different personas. But see, no one ever paid attention to me because I was the dorky accordion player, right?” Her band’s lead singer, Kim Bingham, bore the brunt of male fans’ attention. Kim wanted to become unrecognisable off stage because some audience members seemed unable to distinguish her private self from her performer self.

I remember that she was talking about one incident where some guy harassed her on the street, and she was talking about this before the show and said that she was going to try to change her appearance for the shows so she wouldn’t be recognised. She had a sister who was a couple of years older than her that looked a lot like her and she getting harassed too.
Lorraine’s comments about the change in her style of dress and what that meant for her performance point to another trend in the world of pop music: musicians’ penchants for altering their public images. Survey responses point to a variety of attitudes about the need for and the validity of such changes. One respondent described her change in appearance as a change in her public image: “I reinvent all the time. About every six-eight months. Change hair color (blond to red to black), change clothes (all in black to cowboy rancher style to girly pink)…” (r8). Another replied that “I’m still waiting to have a public image to reinvent” (r39), while a third insisted that “I’ve learned it’s impossible to reinvent a public image!” (r25). One respondent explored the motivation behind reinventing one’s public image. “Reinvention generally has to do with the music you play and how you want to present yourself to your audience. I think if you are a more mature artist you are likely to be more comfortable with yourself and your accomplishments and won’t feel the need to change or reinvent” (r3).

It appeared as though many artists’ are driven to change their images because a current one is not working to sell the product, and that some others have the change forced on them, unknowingly by their promoters. One respondent wrote, “I was rejected by the folk community and re-invented myself as a hybrid; pop/folk/torch (r9).” Another reported that “i felt like i had to get sexier to get more press. i had to start showing more cleavage to get in the papers, as when i did that, we got big stories, and big pictures in the papers” (r64). Sarah’s opinion on crafting her public image was crystal clear: “That’s my least favourite part of [the business].” Recall that she talked about promoters’ attempts to airbrush her photos, and how frustrating they were, but that she grudgingly
acknowledges, once again, that she should perhaps pay more attention to these self-promotion details. “You know, I’ve smoked too much pot and drank too much and stayed up too late and earned these lines and dark circles, and then, of course, ‘Oh but I want to look good,’ you know?”

Sarah acknowledged the power of a musician’s visual imagery, and how most people expect female artists to be “beautiful.”

Beauty is such a requirement – whatever beauty is. And I’ve run into [pressure] at different things, like we did a video for “South of Me” for the Weeping Tile Valentino record – we shot it in Kingston. And, during the editing the head A&R guy from Warner, really nice guy, said “you know there’s a process that we can use called X-blah-blah-blah, and it will just soften up the dark circles under your eyes.” And I was like “ooooooo,” you know? I think I did kind of hit a point where I’m like “ah, I don’t care.” I don’t really care. And then – then, it comes back and you do care. I kind of struggle with that.

The Musician Identity

Activism and performance personae might be thought of as byproducts of the primary “musician” identity shared by almost every respondent. “Musician” seems to come first, and without the musician performer, the activist might well have a quieter public voice. There is an explicit understanding expressed by most respondents that they simply “are” musicians; they play not because they choose to but because they must. This does not mean that they all consider themselves necessarily “performers” too, but many do. The response “It chose me, I didn’t choose it” (r 58), captures this self-identification feeling very succinctly. Others chose to expound a bit more on the draw of the lifestyle: “Not much of a decision to be made – it was how I spent all of my spare time. couldn’t imagine doing anything else! and now – my life has changed for it, and all of the
freedom and flexibility I have, I couldn’t trade for anything” (r 40). Kris reflected on many of her musical manifestations and what some of them have meant for her:

Yeah. It’s never been political, for me, at all. You know, I’ve got pictures of myself when I was about four years old holding onto a guitar. It’s always been something that’s been a part of me. And I always had family encouragement in that way. Took many different forms, you know, when I was in high school – you know, I did the high school band and that kind of thing. But, I think that finding myself inside of that has always been for me a driving force. It’s a form of creativity, it’s a form of escape – huge – and it’s somewhere I feel complete.

Sarah spoke about how the songwriting is the strongest part of her musician identity: “I don’t feel like songwriting is something that I have to do, or I wouldn’t be me. I do like the performing side of it, but the most fulfilling, maybe on the egotistical level, is songwriting.”

Several other respondents tried to communicate what might lie at the heart of their musician identity. Some seek attention: “I’ve always enjoyed being the center of attention” (r3); or “my love to entertain and get a rise out of people” (r4). Some respondents seek validation from performing. One wrote, “People tell me they like what I’m doing and that it gives the goosebumps lol” (r11). This holds for some at the very beginning of a career: “playing high school coffee houses...getting compliments and ATTENTION” (r16) or “attention from others at the beginning. I needed that to help allow myself to see that I could do it” (r1); but also for some, whose careers are well-established: “played many shows..being asked to be showcased for nova scotia music week and getting into pop explosion and being written about in some papers has brought me a lot of joy lately” (r2). For many the musician identity helps them to stand out and be noticed. For example, one respondent wrote:
I was blown away by the attention I could receive for writing songs and singing. I would finish a song and play it for friends at a party and the place would go silent. I felt special. I knew I was good at it, I must have been. Finally I was good at something and thought of as special. I always loved music and now I could make it myself and get recognition and stand out! (r1)

Some reported a certain underdog satisfaction in overcoming the difficulties women face in popular music: “It IS harder to be a woman in rock! But I don’t regret one second of the battle – it is more than satisfying to hold my own in this arena” (r48). Some explain that it is the creative possibilities and support from musical communities that bring the most satisfaction:

One song that I composed with some friends, just came to life and felt sooooo incredible. It’s amazing what composing something can feel like, especially when it’s not just you feeling that incredible excitement, there are a couple of others involved. And then you look back at this product, and every single time you play it, you’re reminded of why you love this stuff and these people (r43).

Still, others describe the experience of an intense, essential connection with their audiences: “There have been many times people have come up to me after a concert and have told me they were moved. Especially women. This feels wonderful. Singing on stage feels like flying every time” (r22). Lorraine related a story about a woman who had been in an accident and was inspired by Parachute Club’s anthem “Rise Up.” The connection the woman made with Lorraine’s work was obviously intense.

We’re playing Ontario Place back in the day when it was still in the big round – we called it “the pizza” ‘cause it could rotate 360 degrees – in the course of the night be able to see all the audience, you know, because you’re going around? And this tour manager comes backstage with someone in a wheelchair. And the woman says – she’s all “my name is blahblahblah” and she says, “you know I was in this car accident and they’re saying that I’m never gonna walk again. And I just wanted to tell you that I listen to “Rise Up” all the time, and this is really the song that inspires me to keep going” and stuff like that. And, I’m like “wow!” ‘Cause we’re – all of us are blown away, right? And so, it was this beautiful moment. And then scroll forward to maybe three years later we were playing, I think it’s
Wonderland, or something like that. And, tour manager comes in, and, you know, he’s always bringing all these people in, and we’ve just done this fantastic show. And we’re just really kind of high from it – And this person comes in and she says, “I don’t know if you remember me, but I was the girl that was told I couldn’t walk. You know, I still listen to ‘Rise Up’ everyday. And it was really that song that really helped my determination. But that song really got me through it.” And I remember thinking – we were all standing there, and it was really weird – really, we really all kind of burst into tears. Because, you know, you’re already high from the stage. And then, when it happens, it’s such a moment of essential pure humanity – it’s so bizarre. And you’re thinking – ’cause you’re not really – you’re not really in the moment. You’re not in your body, because you’re going “Woah, I can’t imagine having a song that gets you through this period of time,” right? And, WOW! And it happens to be a song that you’ve been a part of, right? So I think for myself – I think over the years, all the “Rise Up” stories I’ve heard have, in a way, always been the thing that has been the icing on the cake of beautiful moments of performing. And then someone tells you that something that you might have written has changed their life! That’s crazy! It’s powerful! I mean, you don’t wake up in the morning and think “Oh yeah, gee, I changed somebody’s life” because you’re in your own stuff. But, when you look back on it, you actually go “Wow, that person inspired me to continue doing what I’m doing” –that’s what I think. You know, that’s what comes back.

Like any career, though, while it is a vocation for many, several respondents did note that playing music, and doing it for a living, is a choice. One respondent wrote about lucky circumstances that brought her to the stage and though she enjoys music and what it does for her, she knows could be fulfilled in many other ways:

> often i dont feel like a musician, its more like its something i set my mind to do and choose to do and the wind just blew my to the stage, i was lucky to hook up with a successful band (esp as inexerienced as i was at the time)and i enjoy it but i could easily do anything else, im a pretty free spirit and adaptable being, although i do feel i am a leader and having a platform for voice is important to me on any scale and ive totally fallen in love with my telecaster and playing guitar and getting closer to my singing voice (r21)

For another respondent, music was a pragmatic choice, switching to an easier creative outlet: “I switched from acting to music because of its flexibility and the possibility of doing one’s own project instead of relying on an outside production team”
And, it was important for many respondents to make it clear that playing music is essential, but that playing professionally is not. As one wrote: “Music is and always will be my life. The music industry, however, will not” (r19).

Professional Goals and Musical Aspirations

Whatever motivated respondents to pursue a musical career, and however compelling that motivation was, data on respondents’ musical goals and professional aspirations show that nearly of half of all respondents’ aspirations were inconsistent. Fully one third of respondents agreed that their interest in music has fluctuated. That group frequently reported that their parents discouraged musicianship and that their private music teachers had definite ideas about gendered musical roles.

Figure 7. Over the years my interest in music has fluctuated. (n=83)
Many of the two thirds of respondents who reported consistent interest in music reported that music was important to both family and friends.

This report is rife with data on musicians who started young (or old!) and have stayed with it, but what about those who have not only left the business behind, but have abandoned playing music too? Kasia provided some insight on her perspective, knowing from the beginning of her career that it was to be short-lived. She said:

I guess [I] always the knowledge that if I didn’t succeed at that, that that’s OK because it’s not really what I wanted to do anyway. You know what I mean? There was never really any pressure on me to actually make it . . . the whole time I was in the band I knew that it wasn’t going to be a career for me – ever. It was just an opportunity to hang out with my friends. . . . “I have to go to school, you know, I can’t do this forever.”

She went on to relate that she never considered revisiting her professional career, even after numerous calls to do so after Me, Mom & Morgentaler’s wildly anticipated and successful reunion show at the Montreal Jazz Festival in 1999. Our interview took place in her living room, where her accordion has sat in its case, ignored and unopened for several years. She has simply lost interest in it.

On Being a Role Model

While much of the data suggest that respondents perceived a relative lack (or total absence) of viable role models for their professional careers, there is a strong sense that many respondents see themselves as potential role models for other aspiring musicians. As one woman wrote, “the women in the audience always came to me with emails, letters, or in person after concerts. they seemed to THRIVE on female role models, and felt comfortable to approach me. this was a wonderful thing. i felt like i could really
Another wrote how she often finds herself thrust into a representational role by her fans: “Any time a young girl or South Asian kid comes up to me and tells me that she or he plans to start a band, or that she or he is proud of me for representing them, constitutes as a positive experience” (r62). Kris noted how the options for female musicians have changed since she began playing, and how she hopes that she has been a positive influence in that transformation:

And I would like to think that I contributed to somebody feeling that they had options as to how they could perform. Or what they could be. They didn’t have to be necessarily – a lead singer. Or they didn’t have to play an acoustic guitar. You know? I would like to think that I helped give girls that option. You know it’s funny when I’m on the subway now it’s such a common sight to see girls walking around with gig bags. And they’re all cool and they’ve got the attitude. And I think, “Oh my god, what a world that would have been when I was 16, or 17, or even 20.”

Lorraine explored the example she set it The Parachute Club: “Well, we had some traditional roles – but even with me, you know, playing electric guitar and being sort of an equal co-guitar player in the group. You know, that was kind of unusual back then.” On whether or not she believes that she has personally helped to affect a change in attitudes about female musicians, Lorraine reflected

Well, it would be great to think, but you don’t really know. I mean, some of these [younger] people I bet don’t even know us, you know? But, I don’t know about what other people would think . . . I think a lot of the players, the young girl players now are kind of in their own world about it . . . Because the doors have been opened and they’re not thinking that the doors were never not open. I notice that in general, with young women, because I go to see some of their bands. There’s a couple of girls who I’ve followed – they’re young girls whose parents knew us, right? And so they asked us to go see them – they’re quite talented actually. And they have a sense of who we are, and what we did, but not really. Because they’re playing like it’s their little – they feel like they’re inventing the wheel.
Discussion

The Musician Identity

In the face of many obstacles, it appears as though the key to why these women keep playing is that they identify themselves as musicians. This idea is consistent with Davidson’s (2002) findings on musicians’ identity, that “music has become a critical means of self-expression” (p. 103). While some respondents wrote about music as a choice, I cannot say if this distinction is sometimes simply semantic; after all, even those driven to play had to make a decision of sorts to pursue a career, even if that is the thing that they felt they had to. Certainly some few respondents made it clear that professional music was for them one viable choice among many, and there are those who maybe identify more as “performers,” rather than as musicians, specifically, like Lorraine or the respondent who switched from acting to music.

The idea of not really “choosing” a musical career was explored recently by Canadian rock-guru and writer, Dave Bidini on a CBC phone-in where he was giving advice to would be pop stars. He said, essentially, that “there are musicians who want to play and there are musicians who need to play, and only those who need to play succeed” (D. Bidini, on CBC’s Ontario Today, March 6, 2006). In Kasia’s case, for example, she makes it clear that a career in music was never her goal, and so despite her unwitting success, she was able to leave the music industry behind without reservations. That Kasia was also able to abandon her accordion playing points to how little positive influence family, friends, peers, and the industry itself can have if a person is ambivalent about their own musicianship.
Social Activism

On the point of respondents’ social activism, my data supports Sicoli’s (1995) findings that female pop musicians tend toward charitable activities, but his finding that pop musicians lack a strong identification with feminism is not well supported here. In the ten years between Sicoli’s research and mine, “Third Wave,” or post-modern feminism has both lost and gained ground with respect to the acceptance of the term “feminist,” so it is not surprising that many respondents are able to call themselves feminists or not, while still maintaining “feminist ideals.”

Gender Identity

I had hoped to explore much more about gender comportment and, possibly, the notion of “psychological androgyny,” some of the ways in which the literature reports that women experience and express a non-traditional self-image, but data analysis did not flow in that direction. I expected to delve into women’s negotiation of gender as a source of strength in a male-dominated field, because, as I do explore in the next chapter, on gender issues, gender-based barriers to women’s success in popular music must surely test the most confident and driven musician regularly.
CHAPTER 7: GENDER ISSUES

As I wrote regarding gender and musicians’ interactions with teachers, I do not believe that a person’s experience can be separated from her or his gender. For now, in some way, gender influences every facet of our lives. Thus, a separate chapter dealing with gender issues related to music education and the music industry is problematic because such an approach implies that I do, in fact, regard gender as a discreet element in a musician’s life. However, the sheer volume and impact of data related explicitly to respondents’ gender-related issues is so great that the topic demands its own chapter in this report. Instances of gender stereotyping and sexual harassment pervade data related to music education and to the music industry, so much so that it is surprising that respondents have been able to persevere in the face of such adversity.

Gender Problems in Education

The data show that many music teachers misuse and abuse positions of authority. The most benign misuse of this authority may turn students away from music for good. Encouragement, for example, may be a misuse of teacher authority, if not thoughtfully directed. Davidson et al (1998, 1996) and Rife et al (2001) show that encouragement from parents, teachers, and peers can have a negative impact on young musicians, depending on the form and intensity of the encouragement. Ainley (1996) made the point that familial encouragement is likely to have an especially negative effect if a young musician’s musical expression involves rebellion against authority. Dai’s (2002) findings are similar across domains, for gifted girls in particular. Many gifted learners learn to underachieve for a variety of reasons, social acceptance being one of the primary causes.
(Lupart & Pyryt, 1996). Green (1994) too found that girls appear to be especially susceptible to this phenomenon in the music classroom.

Gender stereotyping can thought of as a passive misuse of authority, since many teachers engage in this behaviour unconsciously. As reported in my literature review, many studies using varying methodologies have shown that teachers steer students toward gender appropriate musical activities (e.g. Abeles & Porter, 1978; Costley, 1993; Lamb, 1990). However, other research also reveals that gender stereotyping affects not only what music teachers are prepared to let students do, but also how teachers and students perceive musical success. Green (1994) and Hanley (1998) found that teachers and classmates often ascribed success to boys’ musical efforts where results showed no such success, where girls needed strong achievements to receive praise.

Sexual harassment is a recurring theme in respondents’ reports about their music education. This active abuse of a teacher’s authority is physically and emotionally dangerous for students. While there have been several studies of sexual abuse by teachers conducted in the United States, Canadian data seems unavailable. Although music teachers were not specifically the subject of her research, in a meta survey of the sexual abuse studies, Shakeshaft reported that “teachers whose job description includes time with individual students, such as music teachers or coaches, are more likely to sexually abuse than other teachers” (2004, p. 21). Prior to this report, Shakeshaft and Cohan (1995) found that whether abusers were male or female, the targets of abuse were almost always female. We would expect that these kinds of abuses, or even the student’s perception of such abuse, would turn students away from music all together. However, as
my data is full of references to such abuse, it is clear that reactions to it must be ambivalent, since respondents who were victims of such abuse did not let it drive them away from making music.

Gender-Stereotyping

Many respondents reported that others’ gender stereotyping negatively affected their experience of both music education and the music business. Gender discrimination and stereotyping in music education has been studied extensively (Green, 2002; Hanley, 1998; Stremikis, 1997; Abeles & Porter, 1978) and the experiences of survey respondents coincide with previous findings. One respondent recounted her public school difficulties with a “grade 7 instrumental teacher; scary guy with an accent who liked the pretty dainty girls to play flute; any other girls got sent to the voice room. I guess I wasn’t pretty or dainty enough!” (r09). Another respondent recalled her own instance of gender discrimination in music the class and her response to it:

I begged and begged to play the drums, but wasn’t permitted to. The drums were giving to the boys in grade 6 instrumental music. I was first given the trombone to play until I smacked one of the unworthy drum boys in the back of the head with my slide, then the trumpet was imposed upon me. Eventually, I failed and withdrew from music as an option and had to read independently during music time as my “punishment” (r57).

While 84% (63 of 75) of respondents disagreed with the statement that school music teachers expressed clear opinions about which instruments were appropriate for women, only 13% (10 of 75) reported that their school music teachers exposed them to
female music role models. Respondents reported the same general trends for private music teachers.

Those respondents who noted that teachers did express opinions about gender-appropriate musical roles were likely to have reported similar experiences with both school and private teachers. Those whose private teachers expressed opinions about gender-appropriate musical roles were more likely to be primarily singers, who sometimes play an instrument. Paradoxically, these respondents also note that those same private teachers were also likely both to have encouraged broad exploration on instruments and to have exposed the respondent to female music role models.

Gender discrimination and stereotyping is not confined to public schools, but also shows its face in higher education. One respondent wrote about problems with “a man that taught me vocal music at university. It was very obvious that he favored boys and it was difficult to get the same kind of encouragement and respect from him” (r43).

It appears as though such dissuasion is not always threatening. As one musician wrote, “i think that occasionally feeling looked down on because you are a female playing music can be really troubling, and that’s happened a few times to me, but it can also strengthen your resolve” (r12).

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22 This number and the next one represent only those participants who responded to this question and who did not respond “not applicable,” as they are, presumably, only those with experience in the music classroom (vs private lessons or no formal training at all).
Sexual Harassment

Reports of sexual harassment in education were common in survey responses. Repeated by several voices in various ways were stories such as “[one] teacher, at 30 years old, ended up dating a fellow student at 15” (r63). Some students stay with music but leave abusive teachers in search of healthier relationships. For example: “i also studied vocals in an indian ashram (in india) and my vocal guru grabbed my breasts in a private lesson. i have had other male teachers who were very sexist and encouraged me to wear fewer clothes to lessons. i quit and stuck with women teachers obviously” (r64). Abuse leaves other students confused and conflicted: “I suppose I’d have to let you in on the fact that my voice teacher from when I was 16 became my secret lover. So I guess he’d be my “favorite” even though he broke my heart a year later” (r72).

Many women musicians report being harassed in the context of school music programs, although not necessarily by their teachers.

When I was 11 I joined a high school music program and I’ve always looked more mature than my age. At the time I may have looked 18. Any how it was my first time singing in a microphone and I was sing off to the side of it. One of the techs came to me and said “No no no, you have to sing into the mic as though you were giving a blow job!” (r65)

Gender Problems in the Music Industry

Respondents identified many gender-related problems in the music industry, including gender stereotyping, sexual harassment, how important it is for female musicians to look “good,” and the difficulties that requirement sometimes brings with it. Figure 8 shows that most women do not believe that being female has enhanced their professional opportunities.
Many respondents commented on their need to prove themselves in ways that male musicians do not. Many relished the opportunity. For example:

[I enjoyed] surprising a bar full of male customers at one of my gigs. i carried my gear into a small bar i was playing at, set it up and played. many of the customers ended up staying there for the entire performance. at the end of the night, a drunk male customer approached me and told me that him and his buddies had been making fun of me when they saw me arrive, lugging my gear all alone, struggling with the doors and such. they had said, “hey, look at that. one of the band guy’s girlfriends is dragging in all their gear.” they were especially surprised when i ended up to be the band. they were so surprised they stayed for the entire performance (r35).
Gender Stereotyping

It is clear from the data that respondent’s believe that audiences and male musicians have specific expectations about women in the music industry. As suggested by the quotation above, many female musicians feel that they need to prove themselves as musicians. Figure 9 suggests that while this may be the case, many women do believe that people assume they are competent musicians.

![Bar chart showing responses to the statement: As a woman, I feel that people assume I’m a competent musician.]

**Figure 9. As a woman, I feel that people assume I’m a competent musician. (n=85)**

Whatever the degree of competency a woman may feel ascribed to her, respondents generally agree that society believes that female musicians women are lacking compared to their male counterparts. Certainly, by the time my respondents entered into
professional pop music, they were conscious of their second-class musical status. One woman wrote, “My female friends and I were not aware of gender stereotyping at all when we were in our teens, which was lovely. It was only after we began playing professionally that we were forced to acknowledge that, as women, we were automatically treated and viewed differently” (r80). The “difference” of women’s music and female musicians is often emphasised by woman-focused live events. Many believe that this woman-focus impedes women’s integration into the music business. “I am tired of being asked to play ‘girls with guitars’ nights. I am sensitive to the pervasive ghettoization of women in music. I resent my gender being used to assume ‘my genre’ of music” (r23).

Gender-stereotyping problems persist in the industry machinery, beyond the public eye. Musicians have troubles with their professional representatives. “I have nearly always encountered major problems with my managers...always male..and some producers..male as well... who didn’t think women should have any opinions when it came down to recording their own music” (r19). Musicians have trouble simply buying gear.

its the same old story when i go into a music shop, a bunch of guys in tight jeans wandering around trying not to help customers, especially if theyre women. when i ask to try out a guitar, they pick up the acoustic they assume I want and go all ingve23 in front of me, as if there is no way I could put a guitar through its paces on my own, as if i will buy it based on how he plays some shredder garbage on it . then they surrender the guitar and look as though they expect me to muddle

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23 Ingve Malmstien is a “shredder” guitar hero. His style is extremely fast and precise, and although it is popular with many male musicians, many players find his approach more athletic than musical.
through Twinkle Twinkle before i give up and admit ill never be as good as they are (r85).

**Sexual Harassment and Abuse**

Attitudes about women’s secondary status pervade the music industry; from artist management, back stage and on stage, and to fans and fellow musicians, the data is rife with reports of this attitude leading to sexual harassment in every conceivable professional music space. One respondent wrote about traveling with bands: “As far as being a touring musician on the road with men, unless i find a ‘buddy’ to hang out with it’s pretty grim. boys on the road seem to inevitably revert to boyish behavior and dirty jokes about women, whether I’m sitting in the car with them or not. it is alienating” (r52).

Another described a disturbing event with a band mate before a show:

We were staying in an open concept band room above the bar. There was a couch area in the common area of the room. He had taken a stripper from the downstairs bar upstairs in the afternoon and was having sex with her on the couch. He had laid out beside him on the coffee table facing him a picture of his 8 year old daughter and was staring at it while they had sex. I walked in on this (r58).

Kris maintained that she has usually gotten on well with band mates, but sexual harassment marks her experiences with them.

I only had one experience when I was starting out as a musician, playing in a cover band. And there was one person in the band I didn’t get along with. He was a very typical, male musician from that time. Misogynist, very self-centered, and, and he also thought that a girl being in band meant, you know, had to have sexual connotations to it – I’ve always been really accepted as an equal with all the guys that I’ve played with. And, you know, I can definitely think of many of them that have been hugely formative in who I am as a musician.

Many respondents recalled harassment from their professional representatives.

For example,
i have been on the road, and was having trouble with a promoter, and called my agent in front of him to get some advocacy. my agent started asking me to imagine i was taking my clothes off for him. i felt trapped, as i wanted to get paid, and was trapped in between these sexist men. this was consistent in all my years on the road (r64).

Neither back stage nor front-of-house is a creatively or emotionally safe place for women. One musician reported difficulties with a “Soundman who told us we belonged in a home ec class not on stage and which one of us was going to give him a blow job?” (r25). Another recalled trampling on backstage territory24 a male musician had claimed for himself.

I played a sold-out show at a 1000-person venue. I was using the monitor room to store my instrument in between sets. Over the course of the night, as I came into the room, I became more and more annoyed at the fact that the walls were covered with half-naked pictures of women. By the end of the night, I had had a few drinks and decided to tear up around half of the pictures and left them shredded on the floor. The long and short of it was, the guy whose “personal stash” it was was very angry and I had to apologize to him (r37).

On stage is not a safe place for women.

Once when I was 16 and in an all-girl band, a guy in the audience approached the stage and started rubbing his hands all over my legs. I was in the middle of a guitar solo and I completely screwed up because of him. He was probably just trying to show off in front of his friends, and I knew him vaguely. But he’ll never understand how embarrassing that was for me. The only time I really felt like “an object” (r31).

Once a guy jumped on stage and started calling me horrible things into the mic and started playing on my keyboard. This shocked me and eventually the barstaff dragged him off stage. I felt attacked and this completely freaked me out. This was in the beginning when I just started to play and was at Jailhouse Rock on Mont Royal! (r34)

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24 A monitor room is a “green room” of sorts, which “belongs” to any musician playing a venue on a given occasion.
Even when one woman anticipated a big problem at a bar and asked her bandmates for help, she didn’t get it. It took a nearly deadly episode for her bandmates to take her seriously.

Someone kept staring at me while I was 19 in a rock band, in a town called Williams Lake. And he kept looking at me eerily – stopped me in the hallway (bar in a hotel) as I was returning from the bathroom and said how he was going to meet me at the end of the night. I told the guys in the band that he was making me feel uncomfortable, as he wouldn’t quit staring, of course the guys all made fun of it, wouldn’t believe me. I walked out of the bar that night, he was there waiting, so I ducked back into the bar to grab one of the guys from the band to walk me to my room – well about 10 min. later, we’re walking through the corridor/hallway and that same guy is being handcuffed by the police!! Ended up he kept telling the hotel clerk he was waiting for me and they got in a bit of an argument and got in a scuffle and the clerk felt something hard in his jacket. He had stole a large kitchen knife from the kitchen (in the hotel) and was sitting there, waiting for me. The band THEN believed me and freaked out, not letting me leave my room for 3 days. AHA!!! NOW THEY BELIEVED ME! ha! They never questioned my judgement from there on in (r69).

Clearly, not every instance of abuse is this traumatic, and many respondents expressed ambivalent reactions to sexual discrimination and abuse: “I think that occasionally feeling looked down on because you are a female playing music can be really troubling, and that’s happened a few times to me, but it can also strengthen your resolve” (p12). Moreover, not all stories of encounters with male musicians were negative. One woman recounted playing with Lyle Lovett and experiencing his first-rate professionalism.

When I was 19 I got a call from a booking agent to play violin in a quartet backing up Lyle Lovett. Normally he hires classical musicians in each city to play on 6-8 songs, reading sheet music. But this agent had seen me perform in a club and thought it’d be cool to have a musician who plays original music to do (not a “school of music” – type). The first thing Lyle did when he came to soundcheck was introduce himself to us and chat for a little while. Then during the show, he introduced the four of us individually and we stood and bowed. He had memorized all of our names. Lyle’s professionalism and courtesy to us left an
incredible impression on me, and taught me to always be kind to younger, less well-known musicians (or otherwise) (p37).

Another woman recalled an influential meeting she had with Australian pop group INXS.

I met INXS when I was 18. They were lovely guys. They took the time to talk and to encourage me. They didn’t hit on me. They took me seriously. It was the first time any musician took me seriously without trying to pick me up. I’ll never forget that. It was the first time I thought “I could do this” (r6)

Whatever their experience, most respondents acknowledge that the public perceives female musicians as promiscuous. The perception is often demonstrated in unlikely settings. A woman wrote, “[I] once told an elderly doctor that I was going on tour with my band that summer. He assumed that I was in a brass band. When I told him that I was going with a rock band, he said to me ‘Don’t you think you should be on the pill.’ It was funny because it was pretty much the opposite of what our tours were like (r28). Kasia agreed that many men in the audience assume that a woman on stage is usually ready to have sex after the show. All four interviewees agreed that most musicians are not more sexually active than other people are. Lorraine suggested that the issue is a confused one because many people see male musicians as sexual predators, and assume that female musicians are equally promiscuous. She insists that The Parachute Club simply did not work that way, either for her male or female band mates.

That’s what guys would see, I think, because if you look at a rock band, right – there’s like so many guys that say “you know I’m in the band to get chicks.” I mean, they’re obviously in the band to play and everything. But there, there’s also the bonus of sex, like there’s a little bit of action that happens afterwards, right? Well that could not be further from the truth for [The Parachute Club]. Because, you know, everyone was pretty much focused, and some people had families. And everyone was pretty much focused on what we were doing. The ideas that we had about what we could do with the music and stuff, so there wasn’t really – honestly
– there was none of that [sexual] energy going out. And any kind of sexual energy that [the audience] picked up on had to do with basically what I would call the magic of just simply the heightened energy of playing live and really getting high off of each on stage.

Kris spoke about how audience members pick up intentional sexual messages from some performers. She has no issues with a woman choosing that kind of performance, especially if sexuality is an expected part of the musical role, as she says it is for backing vocalists. However, such messages were not part of her role or her intention.

. . . because backup singers always seem pretty typical backup singer roles, so they were very feminine. And, there was no question as to what they were up there doing. They were singing and they were nice to look at, and you know – that’s not a bad thing at all. But my personality was very different so I think it – it took a bit of a different intention.

Physical Appearance and Eating Disorders

Many respondents noted that their physical appearance is much more important to their success than it is to a man’s. They recognised that audiences see female musicians first as women, who are attractive, or not, and then as musicians.

On a “feminist” note, I have definitely noticed there being a difference between being a male musician and a female one. When I am in a room full of male musicians, even if they know me, they first see me as a “nice” or attractive women first and then a musician, second. Appearance to them has no issue when it relates to their own. I have played with many wonderful male musicians who aren’t particularly beautiful, and it just doesn’t matter. But for women, it is SO important to have beauty both in the industry and among male peers (r22).

Nevertheless, not every respondent bemoaned this attention to female appearance. For some, extra-musical feedback seems to be motivating. One musician wrote, “One thing I have noticed however is that the more positive feedback I get about my
appearance, the more I’m motivated to practice and perform” (r42). This reaction underscores some of the complexity of this topic. It reinforces the idea that women do not share one, monolithic, approach to performing pop music. It also begs troubling and unanswerable questions such as “Are we to take ‘pretty’ or ‘sexy’ female musicians less seriously?” After all, all stage personas are constructs, even those “worn” by woman who achieve the “natural look.” Her publicists’ efforts to beautify her image rankled Sarah. Recall her reaction to touched-up promotional photos. “We’d done tour posters and they used a black and white photo. When I got to the record release . . . I’d seen the photo but I hadn’t seen the poster, and posters were all up. And my U.S. label had airbrushed our arm hair away. I was pissed off!” She too is conflicted about how best to represent herself. She expressed disdain and then ambivalence about her publicists’ further efforts to soften her facial features.

While many respondents reported that they pursue what Western society might consider traditional female attractiveness, an equal number state they do not. Those who are more traditional in their appearance often reported that they were feminine little girls, and now have more children than those who do not pursue traditional attractiveness.

Nearly 90% of respondents agree that physical fitness is important to them, although those who do not are more likely to play in bands. No respondents equated physical fitness with their weight, but weight does seem to be a very important professional issue. As one woman reported, “My weight has been a big factor in my music career, I have been told out right – ‘loose weight or you will never make it’ ” (r01).
Anxiety about the need to be thin often manifested itself with respondents as eating disorders. Slightly more than 60% of respondents reported battling an eating disorder at one point. One respondent wrote, “I don’t know any woman who doesn’t have issues with weight management or has strange eating patterns. I binge and purge constantly, but I’ve never had problems with anorexia and bulimia. Just your regular week/month long obsessions with diet and food, but those things come in waves” (r04). Many respondents first resist and then succumb to industry manipulation. “It has been a major source of contention. I could never be thin enough for my managers or Record Label even though I was close to being anorexic a few times during my career” (r19).

Some respondents regain control after examining the roots of the problem, often associated with the industry but not always exclusively. “When I was younger I binged for a very short time. It was just at the start of my musical career and I was striving for perfection I guess. It did not last long though as something in me grabbed hold and told me to smarten up and accept myself. I think this was more related to a difficult coming out period than music experience” (r58).

Kris said that she does not know whether instances of eating disorders are more prevalent among female musicians than in the general public, but she does recognise her own battle and that it is a problem she shares with others in the industry.

I don’t know if it’s elevated, but I think it’s probably pretty typical. I did experience that myself, when I was in my early 20 – very early, like 20, 21 kind of thing. For me it was it was definitely attached to my confidence and self-esteem. I was very self-conscious about – and I was also the lead singer in the band at the time. And I felt self-conscious about that . . . And I think that that was also the tail end of the very materialistic [period in pop music] – and there was a lot of pressure on women to be a certain way – and I wasn’t that type of musician.
And, it didn’t last very long, but it was definitely a part of – a part of my growth. It surprises me even to think that.

Lorraine reflected on her own body-image issues.

I’ve certainly been – I’ve not had an eating disorder. There was a point where I became really quite skinny and people wondered if I did. And it was just stress or whatever. But I’ve certainly – I know what it’s like to be in my body and not be in my body... And interestingly enough, I’ve felt more in my body when I have more weight, then what would generally be associated with beauty – interestingly enough. As long as, you know, I’m still energetically moving and connected to myself, then there was a feeling of some kind of beauty being exhibited to self. Right?

Further, Lorraine commented on how damaging eating disorders can be to one’s creativity.

OK, you look everywhere and – everywhere – and you see these skinny women and you see their bones. I don’t want to see their bones. I don’t want to see their thin slice of skin just barely hanging on. Because that to me is an indicator of, well, of a deep sadness, and it’s an indicator of a disconnect to the actual body. And it’s really hard to be a total and utter creator and not have all of the elements of self, you know, connected to creating. It is a total mind-body-spirit-emotion, package that allows you to get really high when you’re performing. You know? So for there to be a disconnect in the body is just a sad place.

Mental and Emotional Health

Beyond body dismorphic illnesses, many respondents wrote about dealing with other types of mental illness. Depression was the most common illness among respondents. Slightly more than 60% (53 of 85) of respondents confirmed that they had dealt with or are currently dealing with depression. Many respondents believed that creativity and depression go hand in hand. For example: “I think most creative people suffer from forms of depression” (r03). Some wrote about their own struggles. “I think every artist gets sad, and I certainly have darked out, but I’ve never been diagnosed with
depression and I generally can recognize it and know exactly how to deal with these moments” (r04). Some wrote about combating depression with drugs and alcohol.

“Depression is big with every musician I know. When I was a teenager I medicated my depression with alcohol. Now I talk myself out of it. Its a wicked trap when the music business has such high highs and such low lows” (r06).

Sarah spoke about the connection she sees between her music and her affect, and how people might project sadness or depression onto her.

I recognize a real connection with music and melancholy – or music and a certain kind of isolated, I’m-on-my-own kind of feeling that gives you some companionship, or something. And I like that, in a way. As much as I said that I was self-obsessed and stuff, I don’t think I’m necessarily that self-aware about some things – so, personally, I’m like “Hmm. I’ve been depressed.” I know I go through periods for sure of being dull, dull, dull, dull, you know. There’s no spark, you know? And I’m sure that can be considered depression someway. I think that you gotta kind of – it’s your own little – special thing, you know? I know that people have said about my music that it’s melancholy, and I think that could be certain chords, certain intervals that I like – certain kinds of – I don’t know why that is. I’m drawn to it in other music and it just comes out in my own. Ruth Edding, who’s a 1920s singer, she was called “The Happy Singer of Sad Songs.”

For many respondents music has been an escape from mental illness. One respondent wrote simply, “Music has saved me from a life of depression and anxiety” (r60). Another wrote,

I’ve never been clinicly diagnosed with anything. I’ve attended a lot of therapy sessions through out my life. As I alluded to before, I think I had about two years where I was really self destructive (dating asswholes, taking extra drugs like extacy blah blah blah) and two years where I was really depressed (not eating well, not sleeping, crying alot, skiping class, generally forlorne.) Music gave me something to focus on besides my self (r72).

Kris spoke about dealing with depression that she attributes to her sexual confusion, which she eventually resolved.
I did, when I was younger, feel depressed for a period of time. But I really attribute that more to my coming out – when I was young and playing in bands and discovering that I was gay, I had no idea that that’s what was happening to me. I had no role models. I had no – I was, you know, playing in a band with a bunch of guys, traveling on the road. I didn’t have any frame of reference. So when I became depressed, I think that it was really, truly connected to that. I don’t think it was about the music, because music has always made me really happy. But I have known, myself, that there is – there’s a sad chord in there that lives. And that sad chord sometimes comes out in different songs and in other songs it doesn’t. So, you do find it – you do search for it. I guess it’s the typical emotion that comes along with the minor chords, you know?

Thus, for many respondents, music provides a respite from “the blues” or from actual depressive states. Searching for other ways to alter their reality, many respondents also turn to alcohol and narcotics.

Substance Use

Most respondents drink alcohol and a few smoke cigarettes. More than 75% (66 of 85) of respondents report that they use drugs. Of that percentage, almost all use marijuana; however, some reported use of cocaine and heroine. For some recreational substance use seems to be a life-style choice, not always associated with making music. For example:

I drink almost everyday very rarely more than 2 a day, I like to drink in the evening- at a gig or even at home. I smoke pot before I have sex or when I am going out to see some good live music, or the odd time to watch animation dvds (r91).

Another respondent made the point that alcohol, at least, is often difficult to avoid when one tours.

[I] probably have a few drinks a few times a week. When on tour its difficult because you’re always offered free drinks so it becomes more frequent. Probably at most 4 in one night. Weed for special occasions - never before shows and only when offered. I never feel the need to buy weed (hey! that ryhmes nicely!) (r34).
As frequently as respondents reported drug use, most also reported that they performed completely or relatively sober. For Kasia, sobriety was sometimes a matter of logistics. Venues simply did not provide alcohol she enjoyed. She said, “‘Don’t use all the coolers!’ Because I didn’t really like beer at the time. I still don’t really like beer, but it was like 24 beer and 4 coolers, because there’s two women!” More importantly, the band did not want a beer-drinking professional image. “No one was really into that, like drinking beer on stage. In fact, I think we actually made a point of that. We didn’t want that image, of a beer-drinking, jean-wearing band, you know?”

On the matter of drug use in Me, Mom & Morgentaler, Kasia was very candid. She said, “Yeah, it was very prevalent, especially with some. It was a lifestyle for some. I’m not going to lie to you; I tried it a couple of times, but it wasn’t the most enjoyable experience . . . Especially passing it between 10 people. Right, 8 band members and the soundman and roadie. Like, forget it. . . . it was a lifestyle for a lot of them.”

Lorraine’s experience with The Parachute Club was similar. She said, “There was a period of time in the 80s when there were drugs, there was alcohol, and there was tobacco. But, not to even to the extent that other male rock bands – Parachute Club was pretty tame. You know? Like you can compare us and we were kind of like white toast probably.”

Drugs were not an important part of Kris’ experience in Pursuit of Happiness, but alcohol was. Even so, professionalism typically took precedence over the party, before the show, at least.

I never got into drugs. We drank tonnes in Pursuit of Happiness. Seriously – a lot of booze. But there was no drugs. I wasn’t even interested in it. I didn’t like – I
can’t say the lifestyle because I didn’t know it, but, I mean, I drank a lot during those years of being on the road with Pursuit of Happiness for sure. But, I never took up cigarette smoking, or dope smoking, and sort of chemicals. It never applied to me at all. You know, and there’s only so many beers you can drink before you get sick, you know? I mean I think that most of the partying was after the gig. But every now and then there was – you know, having a bit too much before. But, the band – one thing that I like – I love – about the band, we all had the same headspace about what we considered to be professional. And we definitely partied. We had an enormous amount of booze in our dressing room every single day. When we arrived at a gig, we would have two cases of beer, a 40-ouncer of vodka, a 40-ouncer of tequila, a bottle of scotch, couple of bottles of wine. Every single day this arrived in our dressing room.

Marijuana is Sarah’s constant companion. She said, “I’m a chronic pot smoker – yeah – I pretty much smoke pot every day.” Our discussion around her drug use centered primarily on its use as a creative tool.

I like it too much – and sometimes it’s really great though – I mean, sometimes it puts me in a headspace of, of just ideas, free-form ideas. And I – I have written a lot of songs, and, you know, not getting super high or whatever, but just like a little brain tweaker. Sometimes I think that’s awesome. Jamming – I love jamming. I mean, my favourite thing to do is just play whatever – drums, guitar, piano, bass – like whoever is around. And I’ve always – it can be fun either way. I really – but I don’t do any other – I mean I drink beer and wine, but that’s pretty much it. Pot, beer and wine for me. And, I do wanna just scale down. ‘Cause I don’t, and I kind of look forward to touring in the States because I don’t really look for it. And mean – when I don’t have it, I’m not like jonesing for it. I just – it’s fine, you know.

Sarah did say that pot is “sometimes a crutch,” but that she does not feel as though necessarily needs it to create.

Discussion

Gender Stereotyping and Sexual Harassment in Education

It is not only girls and women who are victims of gender discrimination and stereotyping, as boys are often turned away from musical pursuits thought to be feminine:
playing flutes or acoustic guitars, or singing (Abeles & Porter, 1978; Green, 1997).

However, limitations imposed on boys’ musical expression is beyond the scope of this study; I am examining, in part, continuing barriers to women’s self-expression using the tools of popular music. Generally, popular music attracts young students more than other genres do. It is problematic if young girls learn from the outset that this music is okay for them to listen to, but not to perform. It is also interesting to note the sometimes-ambivalent reaction to such discrimination: it dissuades some women, while others try harder in the face of this adversity. It is no surprise that gender stereotyping is a complex issue, to which there are many understandable, if not predictable, responses.

The data reinforce the need for teachers to be always on guard against discouraging students, based on gender stereotyping. Many other studies report that teachers often unwittingly perpetuate gender stereotyping in music (Abeles & Porter, 1978; Green, 1997, 1994, 1993; Griswold & Chroback, 1981; Hanley, 1998; Legette, 1998; Pucciani, 1993). For example, Stremikis’ (2002) adult participants repeatedly cited educator and mentor influence as reasons for or against choosing music as a career, often relating negative experiences of gender discrimination. That older participants were more likely than younger participants to have reported having school music teachers who expressed clear opinions about which instruments were appropriate for women may indicate that this trend is declining in schools. This finding may also be an indicator that older respondents were more sensitive to the gendered language and aware of its presence. Both interpretations are possible, though the former is more optimistic.
There appears to be some logical trouble with my finding that those respondents who reported that private teachers expressed opinions about gender-appropriate musical roles also frequently reported that private teachers were likely to have encouraged broad exploration on instruments and exposed respondents to female music role models. These teachers’ reported opinions and actions are at odds, but we need to take into account two factors in making sense of this puzzle. First, recall that data reflect respondents’ opinions and perceptions, but not necessarily anyone else’s state of mind. So, while a teacher may have offered a student many musical choices and female role models, the students may have perceived an implicit message about a teachers’ opinion of what is musically appropriate, where the teacher may not have intended such a message. Second, while a teacher could know, rationally, that music is not inherently gendered, the teacher’s actions could suggest otherwise. As Green (1994), Hanley (1998), and Lamb (1990) reported, much of the confusion and damage music teachers cause is unconscious and unexamined.

On the issue of sexual harassment, it appears as though many music teachers have taken advantage of a student’s vulnerability that is inherent in music lessons. In these lessons, we ask our students to emote, to be open to new ideas, and to follow their hearts where learning music is concerned. Students can feel beholden to teachers because of progress teachers have helped them make, or because teachers can open professional doors for them. Students also fall in love with teachers with whom they feel they are making emotional connections. Clearly, the power teachers can wield is enormous. Dewey (1938) wrote about the tremendous potential that teachers have to reach students
and how they often squandered it by relying on stale, “miseducative” strategies, too far removed from students’ life experience. Farber’s (1970) criticism was much more damning, insisting that public education amounted to mental and physical slavery. Many educational critics agree that teachers are responsible for creating and maintaining safe and supportive learning environments. Bowman (2002) insisted that music teachers need to instruct the whole person and whole musician while instructing musical technique. Lamb (1990), and Lamb, Dolloff, and Howe (2002) discussed both compensatory and challenging teaching strategies. These strategies disrupt notions of an exclusively white, European male canon, showing that women have been and continue to be active musical contributors, and question assumptions and practices which have thus far excluded their contributions. Pegley (2000a) discussed music teaching practices that keep girls and women marginalized in a technology and music class.

Gender Stereotyping and Sexual Harassment in the Music Industry

Armed with the assumption that female musicians are ready sexual playthings, many men (and women) in the industry charge forth, ready to exploit any sexual possibility available because of the power they wield over a woman’s musical career. There is a troubling, explicit recognition by these musicians that women do have sexual capital in the music business, and it could be a powerful tool in forwarding their careers. hooks (1992) referred to this troubling idea, in terms of the sexual power evinced by Tina Turner and Aretha Franklin, while Caputo (2005) insisted that the “girl power” of Madonna and the Spice Girls simply reinforces traditional, patriarchal scripts. None of the respondents referred explicitly to “girl power,” as the term is well out of vogue by
now, but women certainly recognise the sexual power in their appearance and comportment available to them, and that such power is not commonly available to male musicians. However, as Caputo argued, using that sexual power often merely confirms musical sexual-stereotypes and undermines the efforts of women who avoid such displays. Sharing the sentiments of many of the respondents, one women wrote, “I look forward to a day when it is no longer of interest that I am a ‘female musician’, and am simply a musician” (r37).

There seems to be a nearly endless supply of stories of overt sexual harassment and sexual abuse directed at women in the music industry. Respondent’s stories of predatory sound techs, managers, recording reps, audience members, and even fellow musicians are consistent with the literature (Mosbacher, 2002; Pope, 1999; Sicoli, 1995). One of the biggest difficulties women have in the business is overcoming what many authors refer to the public perception of a general “air of immorality about women musicians” (Costley, 1993, p. 202) who put themselves on public display (Green, 1997; Mosbacher, 2002). It seems that female musicians are thought to be either (straight and) promiscuous or (probably promiscuous) lesbians (Mosbacher, 2002; Pope, 1999).

Thus, like with the music teacher whose influence might open doors, a fundamental piece of the sexual harassment puzzle is the power wielded by the gatekeepers in the industry. With “boy bands,” these gatekeepers see potential income. With women they see the potential for sex, and then – maybe, though not very likely – potential income.
While Sicloi (1995) and Wills (1994) have documented cases of mental illness and substance use and abuse among popular musicians, neither was reporting on Canadian women. Such disturbing trends in the music business appear to continue, without regard for political borders or time passed. Pope (2001) and the four interviewees confirm that Canadian women have been dealing with these issues at least since Joni Mitchell’s hippie days in mid-1960s Toronto. There is a romantic mythology surrounding “tortured” musical geniuses that stretches well back before Mozart, and popular music has had its share of these musical martyrs, from Janis Joplin and Jim Morrison to Kurt Cobain. (As usual – happily, this time – there are fewer female than male role models in this infamous chapter of pop music history.) However, few women, if any, in this study suggested that they simply had to get drunk or high to escape some overwhelming reality that spoke too loudly to their artistic expression. Substance use simply seems de rigueur for pop musicians, for a variety of reasons, and continues to be, despite both explicit and implicit messages from musicians who are very vocal about their own struggles with drugs and alcohol. For example, there are many reports that Janis Joplin intended to kick her drug habit not long before she died (Echols, 1999). Anthony Kiedis, himself an addict, front man for the wildly popular and long-lived California funk group Red Hot Chili Peppers, wrote many passages in his best-selling autobiography which specifically de-romanticise and decry drug use (Kiedis, 2004). Such straightforward reporting and advise from a long-time heroin addict should bear some weight with up-and-coming musicians, but seems not to at all. In fairness, not many respondents report use of hard
drugs, but the prevalence of drug and alcohol use among respondents still seems surprising. Thus, while (consensual) sex may not play as big a role in Canadian women’s experience of popular music – as the public expects, there is quite clearly still a lot of drugs in our rock’n’roll.
An emergent theme in both survey and interview data is musicians’ thoughts about what makes a successful musician. In the survey, many respondents wrote about the impact of their own strengths and weaknesses on their professional careers. Interviewees reflected on this topic too, and most commented on what qualities they found in ideal band mates. What emerged is a lengthy personality “wish-list,” with infrequent references to musical skill. Where musical colleagues are concerned, most respondents appear to prefer sociability and professionalism to skill.

Self-Reliance and Independence

Nearly all survey respondents reported that it is important to rely on oneself. Those more likely to agree strongly with this notion were also more likely to believe that their achievements are individual accomplishments.

While independence is not the same thing as self-reliance the two are closely related. Most respondents reported feeling independent and that they value that independence. In one case, at least, the independence seems to be necessary the result of having little in the way of support or role models. The respondent credited herself with “creativity and an unusual independence. When I was younger and there were fewer women playing, I didn’t notice. Just did what I wanted to do” (r83).

In total, 30% of respondents preferred to work alone on projects. Those who did prefer to work alone were more likely to see female musicians as competitors, and tended to pursue traditional notions of female attractiveness. The more respondents preferred working alone, the less likely they were to perform with bands, or to collaborate on
projects. It is also less likely that they and their friends played music together while they were growing up.

However, for the slight majority, there is magic in collaboration, inspired primarily by a sense of communal effort.

One song that I composed with some friends, just came to life and felt sooooo incredible. It’s amazing what composing something can feel like, especially when it’s not just you feeling that incredible excitement, there are a couple of others involved. And then you look back at this product, and every single time you play it, you’re reminded of why you love this stuff and these people (r43).

A strong sense of self-reliance, coupled with success, often leads one to greater belief in one’s abilities. This sense of self-efficacy was a recurring theme throughout survey and interview responses. Almost without exception, respondents indicated that belief in oneself is one of the most critical traits for a musician. On her most invaluable qualities, one woman wrote, “Determination and a belief in my abilities (although it has wavered it always seems to return)” (r15). Another recognized her ability and let it guide her: “I found out I was good at writing songs I decided to go for it!” (r3). Kris summed this up reporting that the strength of her “intuition and believing in [her]self in the most innocent and honest of ways was [her] best asset.”

Drive, Focus, and Sacrifices

As much as self-confidence is key for success, respondents reported that drive, focus, and a willingness to make sacrifices for a career in music and equally critical. This respondent learned to temper her drive with a realistic perspective on her physical limitations.
At the beginning of my touring career, my band did everything we could to stay on the road, even at the expense of our health and sanity. Our desire for fame outweighed our care for ourselves and each other, so we exhausted ourselves at all costs and did tours that were inhuman. There was one show in particular that I was almost forced into playing even though I was terribly ill and exhausted. We had been on the road for many days and I was in rough shape, but the rest of the band didn’t acknowledge my health needs at that point. I played the show that night, but never forgot that lesson – I never let the rest of the band forget it either. Care for each other, care for yourselves. A band will fall apart otherwise (r48).

There was often a sense of sheepish self-wonder in responses that spoke to drive.

“There are so many hurdles I haven’t yet conquered in music. Still so much to learn. I’m determined to stick it out until I reach my goals, which will just keep becoming higher and higher. Maybe I’m masochistic” (r31). Whatever the tone of a respondent’s reflection on determination, it is clear that having well-defined goals helped musicians to focus their drive. Kris wrote:

And we never got so hammered that we couldn’t do what we wanted, because the band always had a real social conscience about the fact that people were actually paying money to come out and have a good time and see us play, and we wanted to do a good job. We felt really a huge responsibility about wanting people to leave with the impression of “you know, I had a really good time tonight” – so screwing that up because you didn’t know how to, you know – put the reason that you’re there first?

Lorraine was very forthcoming about how a clear focus helped her and her band mates overcome particular obstacles facing them.

I’m glad I appeared calm or nonchalant but I don’t feel that way about it. In my case, I hadn’t really realized how misogynistic all aspects of the business were. It was everywhere you turned. It was almost too much to bear at times, you had to keep yourself focused on the task at hand because it would hurt too much to do otherwise . . . what was happening was this huge homophobia and all these small ways. I felt it myself with the band. Some of us were gay, some of us were straight and assumptions would get made all the time about who and how and what was going on but for us we had decided to be family so we just put our head down and plowed thru the bullshit. In the end, it made me very tired.
Whereas Lorraine and the rest of The Parachute Club were often forced to grapple larger social issues, it is important to remember that very personal battles are also waged in the context of a career in music. Kris spoke about how the musician’s life can often be itinerant. “It meant meeting people somewhere else, and, you know, basically leap-frogging your way around from band to band, and from town to town.” Kasia told me about the troubles she had managing her fledgling music career while she tried to finish high school. “If anything I sacrificed school. My second semester of CEGEP, I totally flunked out. I’d gone from being an honours student in high school – and when I started CEGEP the band was getting really active. I was really struggling.”

Though, Kasia also made it very clear that she was often distant from her band mates’ personal and professional goals.

Because there were eight of us, not everybody was involved in the promotion, and all that kind of stuff. The ones that designed the poster felt that it had to make a really strong statement and blah blah blah, and I was “OK, whatever.” I really took a backseat with all that stuff. I wasn’t involved with that stuff at all. Honestly, it was, “We’re jamming? OK, I’ll be there.” There were a few people in the band who had really, really strong personalities and said – you know – this is what I want it to mean, this is what I want to do, this is the statement we want to make. And you can’t have eight people all doing that, so some people just have to take a backseat and that was me. At the beginning there were only two people who wrote songs, and so they felt strongly about the songs and the message, and all that stuff. As more and more people got involved in the song writing, they wanted their say as well. I never wrote a song in my life. Well, it’s like, “Who wants to argue with them?” Right? I may not have agreed 100% with it, but, you can’t argue with these people. You know what I mean? The whole thing was just fun, you know? Especially the first time we went on tour, because I was dating my boyfriend [the band’s drummer] – you know, “Paid vacation! Let’s go!”
Negotiating Stage Fright and Other Obstacles

A musician must also be able to focus on her musical goals such that she will overcome stage fright. Two survey respondents wrote that one of their greatest strengths was their ability to conquer stage fright. “I used to get so nervous before shows that I would cause myself to get physically ill (diarhea). That doesn’t happen any more. Disappeared with more experience” (r04). Another’s anxiety left her “just puking before the shows because I get so nervous” (r31).

When I asked Kris about performance anxiety, she told me about her most recent bout with it, getting back on stage with The Pursuit of Happiness, its causes, and how surprised she was to feel it.

I did have anxiety – I don’t know what I experienced before I did those shows, but I did experience something that completely caught me off guard. I struggled with, somehow, the expectation that because there was so much press going on during that week, and we were on the cover of so many things and all these old pictures were coming up. And I felt really frightened of disappointing people in some way. That I would walk onstage and wouldn’t be that person that they remembered – not that I wasn’t. It’s just that the people were, were enjoying the whole Greatest Hits thing because it was a flash back to their own nostalgia . . . And that, you know, I was somehow going to disappoint people because I wasn’t fulfilling that whole trip to the nostalgia, because it’s 20 years later.

While Kasia seems to have enjoyed performing, she spoke about being anxious in the spotlight. She said, “I guess the stage stuff was fun too but if it wasn’t for the other people it would have been very stressful. I definitely would not want to be front and centre . . . Don’t want to sing; don’t want to have attention on me.”

There is also a certain amount of personal toughness that a musician must develop in order to deal with both internal issues (such as stage fright) and with external issues (such as gender discrimination). Sarah and Lorraine pointed to a personal toughness that
they developed to cope in both their personal and professional lives. Sarah said, “I feel that we were all kind of like toughies, in a way . . . .” Lorraine expanded on the idea.

You know, Hamilton was a very tough town – and to survive a tough town you had to become a little tough. Where I had to become a little bit of a scrapper to even, you know – if it wasn’t for me always being beaten up as a kid, because I was Italian – music was the way that – I lost myself in music, it was the only thing that would even take me out of – and any of the feelings of alienation that I felt.

Ego and Self-absorption

Though survey respondents did not introduce the topic, both Kris and Lorraine spoke at length about musicians’ egos, self-absorption, and the need for a strong sense of self, as a survival mechanism in the business. While we discussed requisites to good performance, Lorraine commented, “You have to have an ego to perform, right? Some ego! You know, there’s healthy ego.” The term “ego” is laden with negative connotations, but Kris, too, insisted that a certain amount of self-centeredness is a given for performers, and that those who deny that are not being honest.

It’s selfish. I’ve got to admit. People who say it isn’t, they’re lying. It’s very selfish. But, it’s also something that, you know, you could feel as soon as you give it out, and it comes back to you, it comes back stronger. And you know, I think that it’s an energy form that is somehow is created and passed to people and comes back. It’s got to be an energy form of some kind. But it’s definitely selfish. I mean, I enjoy it a lot. And, and that entity that happens when you play with a group of people and you become one is pretty special.

Both Kris and Lorraine pointed out that a musician’s ego could get out of control, sending the person always looking for more validation, susceptible to forgetting the illusory nature of the music business. They cautioned that it is critical not to believe one’s own press. Lorraine put it this way:
You need to be able to see beyond that illusion. Because if you don’t see beyond the illusion and know who you truly are inside, then it’s easy to go into a place where you need to self-medicate, or where you need to – you know – where you feel alienated and you need to pull yourself from the essential day-to-day human stuff, when you live in this otherworld. Or where you become very, let’s say – you know, head up your asshole. You know, what’s the word for that? Self-absorbed.

Lorraine said that sometimes only a strong sense of self could keep a musician grounded. A musician needs to focus on who she is rather than what she does because the professional musical life is so unstable.

Because, no matter how you cut it, if you do get to this place where people get to know who you are and what you’re doing, there is an illusion that is presented to you. And that is the energy of all these people going “You’re amazing. That’s great! You have a hit. That’s fantastic!” you know? That is an illusion – because all of that becomes about you, and you’re – I think it’s really important to figure out, like to really build a strong foundation of who you are as a human being, and to know it’s not what you do, but who you are.

**Personal Flexibility**

Most respondents thought of themselves as flexible people. Those who do were often playing in bands, feel independent, and sought out unfamiliar musicians to jam with when they were younger. Kris reflected on her own flexibility and what a necessary quality it is for touring musicians.

I think that I have a pretty adaptable personality. It’s not the same thing as being a push-over, in any way. But I think that I’m pretty flexible. And I think that – you know – I get along with a lot of different types of people. So I’ve never had to be surrounded by a certain type of person in order to get along. You know – there’s countless roadies and techs and bus drivers and crazy personalities. Do I expect any of them to be in my life forever? No. But, can I get along with them enough to do my job? Yeah.

Kris also talked about a flexibility she brought to her assessment of her professional success. She recognised the fleeting nature of success in the pop music
industry and seems to have put more stock in her love of music and performing than in music’s possible financial and social rewards.

I’ve always been pretty realistic about what success meant, even when Pursuit was, you know, on *Billboard* magazine and top of the charts in the States on college radio and stuff. I always sort of had this feeling that “well, this could just end any day,” so I never really felt that, you know, there was that sort of success to attain. But, I think that, I took a lot of that for granted, too. I can’t exactly explain. I don’t think that I was ever really success-driven.

**Emotional Content and Creativity**

Many survey respondents reported that creativity was one of their strongest suits. Many also suggested that creativity and skill themselves are not enough to make for good music, but that there needs to be a genuine engagement with the music and the performance. Sarah reported that it is critical for a singer to “believe” in the power of her performance.

This music is so beautiful because it’s – it’s so spiritual, and it’s performed with love. That’s its whole kind of basis, is that it’s performed with – in gratitude and honoring the Divine or whatever – you know? And so much of what you – what comes back, I think as a listener, is the intention of the singer.

Lorraine said that all the technique in the world does not make up for lacking a creative spark.

I’ve been around people who have, like, a lot of music theory and they don’t have what I would call, “the magic.” You know – they can sit in with anyone and they can play whatever. But they don’t have the magic, the edge that comes from not knowing – not knowing where you’re going . . . ‘Cause I think some music theory is really important, obviously . . . the spontaneity, just playing from the heart, and just the exploration part where you play really badly. It’s like writing – you know. You need to let yourself write really badly to even understand the next level of it.
Lorraine went on to explain how the spark might manifest itself as spontaneity in performance, and that performers should be prepared for the unexpected during a show. She said, “Well, I am very spontaneous. And I do like the freedom to explore things that are — you know — may or may not be the right place to go, when you look at sort of the structure of music, what are normal places?”

Professionalism

Musicians identified several traits and actions that I would use to define “professionalism.” For example, all four interviewees report that they and their band mates were rarely, if ever, drunk or stoned, while they performed. Kasia reported simply that that was not the image Me, Mom & Morgentaler wanted to portray. Sarah’s approach to performing straight has evolved since the early days of her career, and sheepishly reports that when she performs now, if she is high, it is sometimes off-putting to find that she loses her place in the music.

I don’t — with Weeping Tile I used to smoke pot before I played ‘cause I was like “I can do anything” — you know — I didn’t care. And know, I don’t — I don’t get high before I play. Although, that’s not always true. Occasionally, not when it’s really my own big show — but, occasionally if I do a small solo set or whatever, and my friends are there, we’ll smoke backstage — and occasionally that happens. And what usually happens is I get paranoid about the lights: It’s too bright. I’m up there going “Oh my gosh. This is crazy. I’m in front of all these people” — so I’m like “Uh, can you turn the lights down just a little bit? Oh, a little bit more. A little bit more.” That happened in Ottawa, the last show of the tour, like years ago. ‘Course, Luther showed up, [whispers] bad influence. He was like, “ah, the final show of the tour” — we had fun. But yeah, in the middle of the song, you’re like “Are we at the end of the song, or are we still — is this the first chorus or the last chorus? Oh my god. Are we done the bridge yet? Aaahhh!” I hate that. That is not good.
Kris said that TPOH did certainly drink hard, but not before shows as much as afterwards, and when it was before shows, it was never to the point where it hurt the show: “We never got so hammered that we couldn’t do what we wanted [musically]. Lorraine’s band mates in Parachute Club seemed to prefer to indulge after shows too, and it seems as if drug and alcohol were more tools for them, than recreational.

But, certainly there was – there were, ingestions of things, but never – the funny thing is – never – it was always after the show. Never – we never got high or anything like that to go on. Everybody was clean. Clean all the time. And it was afterwards that there’d be – to come down, you know, to be able to sleep – especially when you’re touring. There was that kind of self-medication going on. And then, pretty much, we were white toast. One of our members had a challenge with alcohol but they’ve sought out recovery . . . I think that the drugs or the alcohol were ways of being social and keeping the energy up, or a way of kind of making you come down so that you could sleep and actually move onto the next thing. So, for us it was tame.

A musician’s professionalism can show in other ways too, of course. Sarah related how difficult it can be to perform under less than ideal conditions, conditions too familiar to most professional musicians. She said,

the shit is when you are singing into a real stinky mic, and the horn is blown in the monitor and it sounds like crap – and it, and people are like “blah, blah, blah” really loud. But, done it all. You know . . . If you’re up there you gotta just go for it, you know? Even if you’re like “I can’t hear anything,” just say “Well, this is what it feels like when I’m singing in pitch, I think.” So you can’t get all sucky, ‘cause it's only rock n roll – you know – you got a pretty good gig.

Business Acumen

In survey responses, respondents widely acknowledged business sense as critical for success in the music industry. One respondent wrote that she being a musician required her to be “willing to struggle financially for [her] entire life” (r49). Another wrote that she came into professional music and knew it could work because she had a
head for the business side. “I used my skills of research from academia to build a
resource guide, contacts, and long time endurance. The realization that three years is not
a long time, and how much one can accomplish in musical developments and in
networking” (r5). A third summed up how much time an independent musician will
spend on the business side of things. “[We’re] required to do a LOT of the business. Run
a record label and promotions company. An equal amount of time is spent working the
business angles” (r8).

While many survey respondents described their business pursuits generally, one
left some very good advice for newcomers to the business:

always get paid! Ask for lots of money and negotiate. Never take the $50 and a
meal gig. If you don’t value yourself as a professional, no one else will. People
who hire you for less will treat you with less respect. Have a contract for every
transaction, even a basic, minimal one. It will get you better treatment. Never
apologise or make the “I just learned this song so I might make mistakes” excuse
on stage. And never tell people how much or little you make (they always ask at
parties); if you are a professional, you’re a professional (r9).

Another told her brief and proud story of how she managed the business part to
accomplish impressive feats for her band.

in 1998 i decided i wanted my band to tour canada. i made this happen all on my
own, and we came home having broken even (lost no money and only spent
minimal out of pocket money)... i was proud! i guess i was pretty proud about
booking my band to play in front of 50,000 spectators who all LOVED it at the
Mtl Jazz Fest [Montreal Jazz Festival] 2003... and getting paid properly to do it...
(r30).

While Sarah acknowledged that personal business acumen is important, she is
very happy to turn over the business reigns to someone more qualified.

Yeah. And I’m not an organizer. I really don’t take pleasure in like, “Oh, let’s
plan this something.” I mean I like coming up with ideas and stuff. I like thinking
about it, but I’m not – I don’t plan very well. So, sometimes, I get up to deadlines and my manager is like “Well you have to do, I have to know this, you have to call me, we have to decide this part today” – you know. And things get kind of built up, so, yeah, some things go through the cracks.

She admits that the potentially inflexible business perspective can clash with her artistic expression, and recognizes too that not everyone excels in every critical aspect of a music career. “Oh, I could just be operating at a capacity that’s way more efficient, really get – you could cover so much ground and be super productive, you know . . . Not everybody can be everything – so, I’ll let myself let some stuff slide.”

Skill

While a few respondents wrote about the necessity of skill for success in the music industry, most did not. For example,

practice is so important. There’s nothing worse than seeing a live band that hasn’t practiced enough. having an open mind about music and different genres is invaluable. challenging yourself as a songwriter, singer and musician can only help you grow. focus on what you’re trying to acheive and fine tune your craft. if you’re passionate about what you do, success will follow (r82).

In the next section, I explore interviewees’ notions of “the ideal band mate” and it is notable that skill is rarely mentioned, as one would expect that the ability to play well would be the first of many considerations in the quest for band mates.

Ideal Band Mates

One way that I tried to draw out ideas of essential qualities for a musician was to ask the interviewees “What makes for an ideal band mate?” Responses fell quite neatly into two separate categories, one focused on the personal level and the other on musicianship.
Kris spoke about camaraderie with her band mates in The Pursuit of Happiness, the expectation that you are looking out for one another.

Since most of my life was spent in TPOH, I can honestly say that we all looked out for each other. I think it comes back to my selective process of who I played with as I did experience that sense of trust both in my early and later days. I was exposed to it all though (no doubt about it), but the people I played with were always really nice people to the core. And I think that that was definitely formative in the fact that after – that I always weighed very, very heavily in my books about who I would play with and who I wouldn’t based on could I get along with them. If I could get along with those people – I could make music with them.

Sarah’s sentiments were similar to Kris’ similar, and she added that an easy-going attitude was key.

I mean, so much of being in band is being offstage. You know, you’re just traveling together. So certainly flexibility is so important like for people to be able to just, like – just roll with it. You gotta be pretty easy going in a lot of respects because there’s a lot of downtime.

Sarah expanded on her answer, insisting that there needs to be a mutual respect between band mates, especially when it comes to expressing one of the musician’s vision.

I think there’s a real level of respect that’s there between players – you know – as far as – especially being the band leader it’s nice to have band mates that go, ‘Yep. They’re your songs, so we’re kind of here to express ourselves but also to – you know – fulfill your vision to some degree too.

Lorraine pointed to the fact that personality is key, no matter the composition of the band.

. . . often what happens is that women come together and what draws them together is personality. What keeps them together and keeps them apart – you know – what often breaks up groups. ‘Cause I’ve played with all-women groups, and I’ve been in mixed groups as well, and it is personality. There’s no doubt about it.
Kris described the self-indulgent, self-destructive musical figure as someone she would not play with.

So, I don’t think that using music as an excuse to be an asshole, or a druggie, or “I can’t cope,” or “because I’m a starving musician I’m supposed to be bitter”, or like – you know – “I’m not supposed to integrate with society because, I’m a musician and I’m supposed to be staying up all night and sleeping while everyone else is awake.” But that’s just, that’s other stuff. That’s not about music.

As for the musicianship part of the band mate equation, the interviewees focused on different areas, but all were generally in agreement about some fundamentals. For Sarah’s part, she expected her fellow musicians to pay attention to detail.

I think that attention to detail, sometimes – it depends on the song or the album ‘cause these days it’s a little bit more loose and free-form as far as people just playing and not sticking too much to the parts that are on record. But on previous albums it’s been a bit more crafted and deliberate, so I’d like band mates who really kind of respected that.

Kris reiterated that personality came first for her, but that her band mates had to have something to say, musically, and that doesn’t necessarily come about because of skill.

Personality is at the top for me. As I mentioned, I am a feel player and I need to enjoy the people I make music with but having said that there does have to be a baseline of musical skill to interact on. The level of musicianship has to be interesting to me and that does not necessarily mean being an expert. It means having something to say with a way to express it. This isn’t always related to skill level. Sometimes the most simple of melodies and chords can become the vehicle for something to expand upon musically. I enjoy this contribution. For me it is all about the sense of a song.

Spontaneity was of primary importance for Lorraine, because she knows that it can lead to new things, but she asserted that musicians must direct spontaneity for it to be effective.
You know the type of person that is spontaneous and willing to explore unusual areas, because I know it might not make sense theory-wise. Someone who – someone who is willing to go the distance onstage – you know – who is really free, unencumbered by their own inhibitions. And, someone who is really kind of sensitive to the other people’s energy in the group and what’s going on. And, let’s see. I guess, obviously someone who has a structural mind in terms of thinking ahead, but not rigidity.

Discussion

I did not expect much of these data at the beginning of the project and it is very welcome. While many industry papers and popular learners’ guides offer professional advice for musicians, it is rare to find input on extra-musical concerns. There is scholarly research from Gay (1991) and Sheehan Campbell (1995) that points to the importance of social and business relationships in a band, but young musicians do not typically seek out academic publications for artistic or career advice, and, unfortunately, few practicing teachers seem to either. There are “how to” popular works from industry insiders such as Coxson (1989), Henderson (1977), Hunter and Fogg (2007), and Makoway (2001) but these types of publication often seem outdated as soon as they are published, and are rarely written by industry insiders with any cultural capital. These types of publications also tend to focus on musical skill and business acumen rather than the personality issues so clearly paramount to respondents. In my data, we read a variety of anecdotes and advice directly from contemporary professional Canadian women, whose voices have been excluded to this point.

When asked for advice, so many teachers and players focus on musical technique, while it is clear from my data that for many musicians success comes from paying close attention to details and concerns that are not all inherently part of music making. This
idea is consistent with some of the “person-building” educational focus of which Bowman writes (2002). Music teachers need to be mindful that we are not really in the business of creating professional musicians – any more than children’s league hockey coaches are really in the business of training future NHL players – but that we teach music because it is good for the soul. We teach music to offer avenues for expression that may not otherwise be available to students. In my experience there are many, many exceptionally talented players whose repellent personalities have made them into musical pariahs. Thus, while there is no doubt that most musicians expect fellow players to display some minimum level of technical competency, personal and musical attitudes seem to be far more important. Respondents’ overriding sentiment is that the person comes before the “musical technician.”

Professionalism, in the form of preparedness to perform, is another key trait for performers. Contrary to popular notions of drunk and stoned performers on stage, it appears as though most respondents favour relatively sober performances, and expect the same of band mates. Data also points to a musician’s need to be flexible in performance, ready to “go for it” in some unattractive, uninviting, and uninspiring venues.

Findings in this chapter point to the need for “rock music” courses such as the private one I developed several years ago at The Kingston School of Music and the compulsory pop music education component of music degrees at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki (Westerlund, 2006). In such programs, participants learn to apply their technical skills to song-writing and performance, but also learn from working, professional pop musicians other crucial aspects of life in the pop music industry. There are the “next step”
topics such as recording, promotion, and contract signing, but teachers need to promote both personal and professional self-awareness in their students to help them succeed with the vital interpersonal skills to which so many respondents referred.
CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Study

In this study, I heard the voices of 89 Canadian professional female pop musicians, relating their personal and professional experiences with music. I wove their stories together with reflections on my own musical experience and put it all in the context of the literature on women and music, music education, and the pop music industry. In my preliminary literature review I synthesised a great deal of information and theory regarding women’s experience of music through time and across cultures, and gathered a wealth of perspectives on gender research in music education. I found that although researchers and other authors have written a great deal about women in popular music, little information is available on the experience of Canadian women in pop. To gather such information and insight I first developed an Internet-based survey to which I invited Canadian female pop musicians to respond. I then compiled a list of potential respondents, using my own professional contacts and various Canadian pop music websites. Initially, I e-mailed invitations to participate to some 200 musicians. As word about the survey spread through the music community, I began to receive contact information and referrals for more musicians. From the final count of roughly 300 invited respondents, I received 85 completed surveys. Analysis of the survey data led me to themes that I used to develop an interview guide to use in the second part of my study. By telephone and e-mail I invited four more musicians to participate in the study as interviewees, to help me make better sense of survey data. Interviews, subsequent
analysis, and personal reflection led me to back to the literature to find more context for my findings.

The study reveals a complex combination of personal and professional circumstances that compel and impel women to become musicians, and then to cleave to or to abandon careers in the music industry. The study shows that families, peers, role models, and teachers can all have some effect on personal and professional choices that musicians make, but ultimately, it is clear that each musician is responsible for her own choices. Gender stereotyping and sexual harassment prevail in both music education and the music industry, making these contested sites for female musicians. However, respondents’ musician identify is a powerful personal and professional force, making both education and industry also sites of triumph. Some of my most important research findings are respondents’ reflections on what makes for a successful pop musician. Both music educators and aspiring musicians should find this information valuable.

I could not be happier with the results of my data-gathering efforts. In these days of virtual mountains of junk e-mail and day’s worth of work expected in hours, I am encouraged that so many musicians and their gatekeepers would respond to my survey and then spread word about it to others. Respondents themselves are in large part responsible for drawing so many of their peers into this research, providing me with a considerable breadth of responses. So many survey respondents also offered tremendous depth in their answers, demonstrating a deep interest in this research, and interviewees’ time and effort commitment to my study strongly re-emphasises this interest. My data-gathering success shows me that women musicians in Canada really care to tell their
stories, and that they may have some faith in the potential for educational research to help them do it.

Conclusions, implications, and recommendations from the study follow.

Conclusions

While it is possible that the trends I identified among participants may extend to other female pop musicians in Canada, I guardedly refrain from generalizing the conclusions from my study. Teachers and students alike should take note, however, because these findings are consistent with much of the literature on women’s experience in music, student’s reactions toward teaching practices, and advice from professional musicians. The findings also resonate with my own experiences as a teacher and a professional musician, and so I am confident that this work is both credible and important.

The first and most important finding is that there are no essential biographical precursors for success in pop music. Respondents in this study come from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds and socio-economic circumstances. Their education levels vary widely, and while many respondents have several years of formal music training, many have none. Many respondents became interested in music at a very young age and have been pursuing it since, and many came to music in their adulthood. Many respondents have had constant professional aspirations, while others’ interest has fluctuated. Support for respondents’ efforts from family, friends, teachers, and industry insiders varies from wildly encouraging to crushingly discouraging. It appears as though
a woman may come from nearly any biographical circumstance and have an opportunity to become a professional pop musician.

While professional musicians can emerge from a great variety of life circumstances, a key personal trait for any success in pop music is drive. From every survey response and interview, it is apparent that drive manifests itself as tenacity and personal courage, and that these qualities are vital for a woman trying to make her way in the harsh environment of popular music.

Another key finding is that respondents’ opinions about the importance of music lessons are divided. While many believe formal training to be important, many do not. Thus, it remains the purview of students and parents to collaborate with sincere and capable music teachers to determine a best fit for a musician’s progress. Bearing in mind that most respondents pointed to the primacy of interpersonal skills for successful musicians (rather than technical skill), we cannot ignore the idea that technical skills are only one part of the puzzle. Women face many obstacles in their pursuit of a career in popular music, from gender stereotyping and sexual abuse to substance abuse and other pressures resulting from an intense lifestyle that is subject to public scrutiny. Parents and teachers ought to help equip young women not just with credible technical music skills, but also with strong personal, social, and business skills adequate to meet the daily extramusical struggles of pop musicians.

Finally, despite the challenges respondents faced as they pursued their goals, most claimed that the opportunity to play music is well worth the struggle. Almost without fail, respondents testified that they would not abandon music for any reason. It is clear that
most women will continue to play even if they abandon music as a career. As one respondent put it, “Music is and always will be my life. The music industry, however, will not” (r19). It is equally clear that many will press on because the opportunity to merge their personal and professional identities is irresistible. “[E]ven on the worst sick no gas freezing canadian middle of january rockie mountain or halifax breakdown there is nothing better to do for a living” (r47).

Implications and Recommendations

For the Music Teacher

The research implications for music teachers are simple to list but are critical to implement if we are to affect the repairs to our music programs which are so sorely needed. Teachers should note that the following recommendations apply to learners of any age.

First and foremost: keep your hands off of your students! Romantic or sexual engagements between teachers and students are founded upon very uneven power relationships and are, thus, inherently unethical. Further, a student who learns to conflate musical expression with sexual expression is learning an unhealthy and possibly dangerous lesson. Physical contact between teacher and students that is not sexual must also be minimized – if not avoided all together – for at least two reasons. First, students may misconstrue such contact as a sexual advance, thus poisoning the teaching and learning relationship (possibly leading to a great deal of professional grief for the teacher). Second, students may simply react poorly to a teacher’s appropriation of their
physical space, such a reaction also damaging the teaching and learning relationship. As many music teaching spaces are cramped, it is important to organize the space such that instances of inadvertent physical contact are reduced. Further, teachers must find ways to demonstrate certain technical points without touching students, but if physical contact is absolutely necessary, to adjust some facet of technique, for example, always ask for the student’s permission.

Teachers must be aware of and combat gender stereotyping in the classroom. Clearly, these attitudes can be harmful to all students, regardless of gender. Teachers should take the opportunity to read the first-hand accounts of this ubiquitous phenomenon offered by Green (1994), Hanley (1998), and Lamb (1990), and then critically reflect on their own practice in the context of the guidance offered by such researchers as Lamb, Dolloff, and Weiland Howe (2002) and Pegley (2000a). Included in this guidance are several underlying principles. First, question the canon, which reinforces the dominance of dead white European males (DWEM) in “legitimate” music. Second, question the notion of “legitimate” music by expanding personal repertoires, looking to composers of all genders, ages, places, and times to make musical points. Third, validate students’ tastes by making popular and world musics a major part of any music curriculum. Fourth, be explicit in instruction related to gender and music. Help students to identify gendered approaches to music, by paying strict attention to unbiased instrument presentation, or challenging gender-based assumptions about musical roles, for two examples.

Music teachers must question the entire curriculum. A music program which is technique centered may ignore such essential elements as ear training, and more
participatory endeavours such as guitar classes and drumming circles. And, the most effective teachers will provide instruction and experience in “real” world pop situations, such as jamming and practicing, recording, booking, and designing and implementing promotional packages and CD art. Music classes must also deal with issues related to the variety of contracts professional musicians ultimately seek to sign, and with the myriad pitfalls encountered by musicians such as substance abuse, sexual harassment, and body-image problems.

Such efforts, combined with action research and reflection will help teachers to develop a habit of creating and maintaining caring and inclusive classrooms in which students learn with and from role models from across genders, genres, and cultures. In those classrooms music teachers will instruct the person as well as the instrument.

For the Musician

Respondents provided invaluable insight for musicians at every point in their careers. First, aspiring musicians must understand that there are no biographical precursors to success in the pop music industry. Thus, it is never too late to begin. At whatever age a musician begins a push toward professional status, the extramusical concerns need addressing early on in the process, as forewarned is forearmed. A naïve approach to dealing with the dangers of drugs and alcohol, eating disorders, or sexual abusive in the industry is bound to hurt the aspiring professional.

Next, drive and the musician-performer identity are critical elements for success in the industry. It is also apparent that while technical skill is also important to these musicians, it is not as important as strong interpersonal skills. Thus, an aspiring
professional needs to concern herself not only with her musical abilities but also with fostering a friendly, creative, and supportive personality, which will be attractive to other players. For those who do succeed, reliance on a strong sense of self and stable personal values will be instrumental in navigating this mercurial industry.

Finally, although all of these points are critical to success in this industry, they do not guarantee it. Many respondents also alluded to an element of luck in their career development. Musicians can help themselves tremendously, though, with personal and professional preparation, ready to succeed in the event of a lucky strike.

For Research in Music Education

Researchers should be emboldened by my response rate. A 27% response rate indicates that there are many willing participants for this type of research. And, since data keep pointing to gender problems in music education, it is important to keep on with similar studies to keep track of trends. Ultimately, the point of this research is not to create more professional female pop musicians, but to try to help to foster educational and social contexts in which girls and women might find the inspiration to explore whatever musical possibilities they can imagine, and then to have the support and self-confidence to pursue music in whatever fashion they wish.

My study suggests to me two main avenues of follow-up research. First, a parallel study of male Canadian pop musicians might be illuminating. Second, it will be important to replicate this same study in a few years to see if the trends I have identified continue.
Researchers should be emboldened by my success with a mixed methods approach to data gathering. My strategies with both the on-line survey and the interviews – developing and delivering my own on-line survey; offering anonymity or not, depending on the respondent’s research role; and employing narrative techniques in both research and reporting – were very effective.

Reflections on the Study

The study leads my thinking down two separate paths. The first is marked “Teachers: This Way” and is built upon relatively passable, charted terrain. The second might just be marked “Robbie (you man) Beware,” because it marks one long, ill-lit, and possibly inscrutable path for a male partner, father, and academic. On the teacher trail I will keep my findings and conclusions close to the heart of my teaching philosophy and try consistently to embody those traits common to the “good” music teachers we have read about in the study. To me, this is the easier path because I have already started down in it. I unlearn more and more “bad” teaching and thinking habits and pick up “good” new ones all the time now. My teaching with both Queen’s School of Music and Department of Women’s Studies demands a critical and open mind and I rise to each challenge, proving that a man can be a very effective guide into the world of gender studies and social equity.

The second path is much more problematic. Respondents have contributed some very powerful ideas and experiences to this study. But, after all my writing and talking and thinking on this particular project are done, I really do not know how large these stories loom in respondents’ whole musical experience. I found many responses painful
to read, particularly those dealing with sexual abuse, but maybe they were not so painful to write. Maybe these musicians have moved beyond the violence and it is just another part of the story, a part whose real importance is ever-diminishing with time and perspective. Then again, maybe these stories are still open wounds and were more painful to relate than any of us can imagine. Ultimately, I am afraid that I cannot fully understand how women react to gender-based problems; so much of their experience is embodied and inexpressible. I do not want to admit it – and I desperately hope that I am wrong – but I am beginning to think that there may be some essential, gender-based barrier to my full participation in this area. While I am, of course, always concerned for my partner and daughter (and mom and sisters and aunts and friends and . . . ) and their emotional and physical wellbeing, I simply do not feel personally afraid for my own well-being in the world of popular music. As a straight, white male, I face very few systemic barriers to full and complete participation in any aspect of the pop music industry. But, studying the barriers others’ confront is a different story. I might not be able to help us all work toward tenable solutions to the problems women face because it may simply not be my place to do so. However, as a teacher, researcher, and consumer of popular music, I recognize my complicity in music’s shining glories and dark recesses, and my responsibility to act on behalf of those whose creative and professional place is not as accepted and secure as my own. Perhaps my recognition of myself as a marginalized participant in the story of women’s music may be a critical key for opening doors which are as close to women’s spaces as I should get.
The dilemma facing women who simply are “musicians,” who need to play because that’s who they are, is the challenge to find a creative, safe, and supportive space of their own. The film *Radical Harmonies* (Mosbacher, 2002) explores the women’s music movement in the United States. The film relates the histories of those women who lobbied aggressively for female only performance spaces like the Michigan Womyn’s Festival and female-run labels like Ladyslipper, and the continued influence their work has had on the current scene. That film, my research, and other documented examples, help us to understand that complete gender equity in pop music does not seem at all likely until more women are able to take their places in all facets of the industry, from education and retail to performance, management, production, and promotion:

it is a beautiful form of feminism, when we can have an opportunity to express ourselves. it is just a matter of getting through the sexist shit. the men in the industry i have worked with – especially the higher up i went – live up to every sexist pig adage there is. women should not have to deal with that. more women at the top are important (r64).

Perhaps all the “help” and encouragement and support from well-meaning men is not really helpful at all. Perhaps women simply need more opportunities to mature creatively and technically away from that male-dominated – or even-male influenced – space. As one woman reflected,

when i first began music, i couldn’t play guitar. i was at the mercy of other musicians (always men) to interpret the music i wrote in my head. this added to my insecurity as a musician. i felt some patronizing from male musicians along the way. that changed when i learned to play guitar and become more confident in my abilities (r13).

A room of one’s own, a space of one’s own, a stage of one’s own. Female musicians may have to claim these spaces for themselves. After all, they are not a man’s
to give. The respondents to my study are the ones who claim these spaces, who persisted
despite the challenges of fusing the “female” and the “musician” identities. The stories of
those unable to persist are equally deserving of exploration, and are likely to be at least
equally, if not, perhaps, more disturbing in the way that they illuminate women’s limited
place and space in the pop music industry.
REFERENCES


Babiracki, C. M. (2004). The illusion of India’s “public dancers”. In Jane A. Bernstein (Ed.), *Women’s voices across musical worlds* (pp. 36-59). Boston: Northeastern University Press.


APPENDIX A QUEEN'S GENERAL RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD APPROVAL,

YEAR 1

July 28, 2005

Robbie J. MacKay
Master's Candidate
Faculty of Education
Queen's University

GREB Ref # GEDUC-228-05
Title: “The Personal and Professional Traits of Female Professional Pop Musicians in Canada”

Dear Mr. MacKay:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB) has given expedited approval to your proposal entitled “The Personal and Professional Traits of Female Professional Pop Musicians in Canada”. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (article D.1.6) and Senate Terms of Reference (article G), your project has been approved for one year. At the end of each year, GREB will ask if your project has been completed and if not, what changes have occurred or will occur in the next year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to your unit REB, of any adverse event(s) that occur during this approval period (details available on our webpage www.queensu.ca/vpr/greb/uddforms.html/Adverse ). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that any adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be approved by the GREB. Examples of required approvals are: changes in study procedures or implementations of new aspects into the study procedures that affect human subjects. These changes must be sent to Linda Frid at the Office of Research Services or fridla@queensu.ca prior to implementation. Ms. Frid will seek the approval of the GREB reviewer(s) who originally assessed your application.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Everett
Member
General Research Ethics Board

C C: Ruth Rees, Chair E-REB
Roberta Lamb, Faculty Supervisor
Heather Cross
APPENDIX B QUEEN’S GENERAL RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD APPROVAL,

YEAR 2

August 2, 2006

Robb MacKay
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education
Queen’s University

GREB Ref. # GEDUC-228-05
Title: “The Personal and Professional Traits of Female Professional Pop Musicians in Canada”

Dear Mr. MacKay

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB) has reviewed and approved your request for renewal of ethics approval for the above-named study. This renewal is valid for one year from July 28, 2006. Prior to the next renewal date you will be sent a reminder memo and form to reapply.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to E-REB, of any adverse event(s) that occur during this approval period (details available at www.queensu.ca/vpr/greb/addforms.html#Adverse). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that any adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be approved by the GREB. Examples of required approvals are changes in study procedures or implementations of new aspects into the study procedures that affect human subjects. These changes must be sent to Linda Frid at the Office of Research Services or fridl@queensu.ca prior to implementation. Ms. Frid will seek the approval of the GREB reviewer(s) who originally assessed your application.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Stevenson, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair
General Research Ethics Board

JS/1f
cc: Heather Cross
July 16, 2007

Mr. Robb MacKay
Faculty of Education
Duncan McArthur Hall
Queen’s University

GREB ref. # GEDUC-228-05
Title: “The Personal and Professional Traits of Female Professional Pop Musicians in Canada”

Dear Mr. MacKay:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB) has reviewed and approved your request for renewal of ethics approval for the above-named study. This renewal is valid for one year from July 28, 2007. Prior to the next renewal date you will be sent a reminder memo and form to reapply.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to your unit REB if applicable, of any adverse event(s) that occur during this approval period (details available on our web page www.queensu.ca/vpr/greb/adiforms.html#Adverse). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that any adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be approved by the GREB. Examples of required approvals are: changes in study procedures or implementations of new aspects into the study procedures that affect human subjects. These changes must be sent to Linda Frid at the Office of Research Services or fridl@post.queensu.ca prior to implementation. Ms. Frid will seek the approval of the GREB reviewer(s) who originally assessed your application.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Stevenson, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair
General Research Ethics Board

cc.: Dr. Roberta Lamb, Supervisor, School of Music
Dr. Malcolm Welch, Chair, E-REB
Graduate Studies & Bureau of Research, Faculty of Education

JS/kf
APPENDIX D E-MAIL INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN SURVEY

[Subject line: Queen’s University graduate student seeking music study participants]

I am sending you this e-mail because I know you to be a female musician working in Canada.

My name is Robb MacKay and I am a musician, a music teacher, a gender researcher, and a Masters of Education candidate at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario. I am conducting a study to examine the personal and professional traits of female professional pop musicians in Canada.

To help answer my question, I invite you to go to my research web site at http://post.queensu.ca/~mackayr/womeninpopsurvey/surveyinfo.htm to read about my data collection in greater detail and to complete a survey on your own experiences as a musician.

Should you agree to participate, please understand that I will have no access to any information that would allow me to identify you. Neither your name nor your e-mail address will appear in the completed survey. Every effort will be made to ensure your anonymity and confidentiality.

Depending on the detail you choose to provide, the survey takes a little as 15 minutes to complete.

If you are willing to participate, please complete and submit the survey by October 15, 2005.

If this invitation reaches more than one female musician in a band, as it often does, I encourage each woman to complete my survey.

If you know other women who may be interested in participating in this research, please forward their names to me so that I can extend this invitation to them, thereby providing a more complete picture of female musicians in Canada.

I appreciate your consideration of this research project.

Sincerely,
Robb
(613) 548-0220

Robb MacKay, http://post.queensu.ca/~mackayr

See the G.R.I.M.E. site
Gender Research in Music Education, at http://post.queensu.ca/~grime/index.html
APPENDIX E  E-MAIL FROM RICK PIM, QUEEN’S ITS, REGARDING WEB FORMS AND ANONYMITY

From: rick pim <rick@post.queensu.ca>
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=us-ascii
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
Message-ID: <17079.8286.166791.252850@post.queensu.ca>
Date: Mon, 20 Jun 2005 16:00:30 -0400
To: mackayr@post.queensu.ca
Subject: web forms vs email
X-Mailer: VM 7.07 under Emacs 21.2.1
X-Filtered-With: renattach 1.2.0
X-RenAttach-Info: mode=badlist action=rename count=0
X-UIDL: eAY!!'$)#!>KO"!eM?!!

the executive summary:

if comparing web forms vs email submissions, there are, in my opinion, no significant differences between the two in the level of security and anonymity offered. if email is good enough a web form is good enough.

in more detail:

if someone sends me a piece of email, i can determine the following information from it:

- return email address. this is trivial to forge should the sender so choose.
- IP address of system that sent the note
- possibly the operating system and type of mail client used to compose the email address.

assuming that the return address is forged, it is sometimes possible to determine the sender of the mail message from the remaining information. sometimes it is not.
if someone fills out a web form, i can determine the following information from the data i am sent:

- IP address of the system that fillout the form
- probably the operating system of the computer that filled out the form and the name and version number of the web browser used to fill out the form.

as above, it is sometimes possible to determine the sender of this data. sometimes it is not.

the data 'exposed' in both scenarios is roughly comparable (assuming the sender of the email forges their email address. if they do not, then there is more data exposed in an email message).

on another front, both offer comparable levels of security: not very high.

rp

rick pim                    rick@post.queensu.ca
information technology services    (613) 533-2242
queen's university, kingston

"What better place to begin my reign of Communist terror and oppression than a memorial to that decadent and imperialist American, Melville Dewey, hated originator of the Dewey Decimal System!!"

-- the Red Scare
The Personal and Professional Traits of
Female Pop Musicians in Canada
Robb MacKay, MEd candidate, Queen's University,
Kingston, Ontario

Letter of Information for Research Survey Respondents

I am inviting you to participate in a research project designed to examine the personal and professional traits of female professional pop musicians in Canada. Your responses to my survey will form the basis of my Master's of Education thesis, which I am researching and writing under the supervision of Dr. Roberta Lamb, at Queen's University in Kingston. The stories of Canadian female pop musicians is an under-researched area of concern to musicologists and educators alike. The results of this study will be published and made available to the general public via libraries and academic journals. As a professional musician myself, I recognize that there are many demands on your time, and I want to assure you that your efforts and expert insight in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Should you agree to participate, please understand that I will have no access to any information that would allow me to identify you. Neither your name nor your e-mail address will appear in the completed survey. Every effort will be made to ensure your anonymity and confidentiality. I will prepare a brief summary of my findings and make it available to you at http://post.queensu.ca/~mackayr/womeninpopsurvey/thesisresearchresults.htm by December 2006. The data that you provide will be stored securely and kept for possible secondary uses, including longitudinal (follow-up) studies.

Throughout this research, I assure you that you may choose not to answer any question that you find objectionable or that makes you uncomfortable in any way. Depending on the detail you choose to provide, the survey will take as little as 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw your participation at any time, without pressure or consequence of any kind. There will be no remuneration for your participation in this research.

If at this point, or at any point in the future, you have any questions about this research, feel free to contact me, Robb MacKay, at (613) 548-0220 or at mackayr@post.queensu.ca. You may also contact my research supervisor, Dr. Roberta Lamb, (613) 533-2065 or lambr@post.queensu.ca, with any questions about my research.
You may contact the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Rosa Bruno-Jofre, (613) 533-6210 and/or the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board of Queen's University, Dr. Joan Stevenson, (613) 533-6081, if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study.

Please submit your completed survey by October, 15, 2005.

Your completion and submission of the on-line survey constitutes your consent to participate in this research.

Thank you again for your consideration of this research project.

Sincerely,

Robb MacKay
APPENDIX G ON-LINE RESEARCH ABSTRACT

The Personal and Professional Traits of Female Pop Musicians in Canada
Robb MacKay, M.Ed. candidate, Queen's University,
Kingston, Ontario

Research Abstract

Literature from before the beginning of the 20th century marginalises women's place in professional music, and current research confirms the persistence of gender stereotyping of musical roles into the 21st century. Women who are able to break into the boy's club of professional music are rare. Rarer still are those women able to achieve success in popular music. Several studies have been conducted that examine the personal and professional traits of women in popular music in the United States and Britain, but little attention has been paid to their Canadians sisters. With the emergence of global pop superstars such as Sarah McLachlan and Alanis Morissette from a music industry as unique as Canada's, it is time to hear Canadian women's stories. This is a two-part study to examine the personal and professional traits of female pop musicians in Canada. Part 1 consists of an on-line survey to be completed by 100 professional musicians, responses to which I will analyse for trends and outliers. These analyses will form the basis for Part 2, in-depth follow-up interviews with four pre-selected participants. The findings will contribute to the growing body of research on gender and music and may widen perspectives on the social context of the contemporary Canadian music scene. This study will also show how current professionals were influenced by their families, role models, peers, tutors, self-image, and adherence to sex roles, and how they contended with the real-life problems faced by many young musicians as they search for their own, authentic voices.
APPENDIX H ON-LINE SURVEY

The Personal and Professional Traits of Female Professional Pop Musicians in Canada

Survey

Your completion and submission of this form to the researcher by October 15, 2005, constitutes consent to participate in the research entitled "The personal and professional traits of female professional pop musicians in Canada." being conducted by Robb MacKay at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

Please fill in the appropriate fields, radio buttons and check boxes to answer these questions. Please feel free to skip any questions that make you uncomfortable. Remember that the researcher receives no information which could identify you with a submitted survey. You are encouraged to expand on your answers where applicable, but please refrain from including details which may reveal your identity.

Please do not use your browser's backward or forward buttons or try to save a partially completed form on your computer. These actions will erase your survey responses. Creating a "saveable" form meant compromising your anonymity, so you need to complete this survey in one on-line session. Depending on the detail you choose to provide, the survey will take as little as 15 minutes to complete.

At the end of the survey, there is a button with which to submit your completed form. Please make only one submission.

If you are aware of any other female musicians who may be interested in this survey and its potential benefits to aspiring Canadian musicians, please send their names to me (at mackeyr@post.queensu.ca or 613-546-0220), rather than forwarding my e-mails to them or directing them to this site. That way, I am able to track the names and number of musicians I have invited to participate in this study.

Go to Section 1
Go to Section 2
Go to Section 3
Go to Section 4

Section 1

1. List the instruments you frequently perform on publicly. 

2. List other instruments you play.

3. Do you sing in public? [ ] Yes [ ] No

4. Place yourself on this range from performing always as a soloist to always in a band. For example, if you perform 50% solo and 50% band, click the middle button.

5. Place yourself on this range from performing always as an instrumentalist to always singing. For example, if you play 50% of the time and sing 50% of the time, click the middle button.

6. Are you primarily an instrumentalist who also sings backing vocals? [ ] Yes [ ] No

7. Are you primarily a singer, but one who also plays an instrument? [ ] Yes [ ] No
8. My age is: please select

9. What is your level of education? If applicable, in what field?

10. Please list hobbies or interests you pursue.

11. What is your ethnic/cultural background?

12. What percentage of your income comes from music?

13. Last year, my income from music was: please select

14. From what age was there a musical instrument present in your house?

15. How many years of formal music instruction have you had?

16. How old were you when you began music lessons?

17. Or, are you self-taught? Yes ☐ No ☐

18. Please indicate your birth order: Please select

☐ Single 
☐ Dating seriously 
☐ Living with partner 
☐ Living common-law 
☐ Married 
☐ Separated 
☐ Divorced 
☐ Widowed

19. My marital status is (select as many answers as are appropriate): [depending on your browser, you may have to hold down the Control key (PCs) or Option key (Macs) to make multiple selections]

20. If you have children, how many do you have? (If you don’t have children, please enter “0”)

Section 2

21. My interest in music began when I was a child. True ☐ False ☐

22. Someone in my family gave me my first music lessons. True ☐ False ☐

23. A family friend gave me my first music lessons. True ☐ False ☐
24. My first music teacher was a paid professional, previously unknown to my family.  
25. When I was growing up my family was financially secure.  
26. My father was a business man/professional.  
27. My mother was a business woman/professional.  
28. Many of my friends started singing/playing music when I did.  

Section 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29. I perceive female musicians as competitors.</td>
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<td>30. I receive my creative energy from others.</td>
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<td>31. My tendency is to juggle several projects at once.</td>
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<td>32. My accomplishments were achieved on my own.</td>
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<tr>
<td>33. When I am working on something, my mind goes in all directions at once.</td>
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<td>34. I believe that music lessons are important.</td>
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<td>35. I believe it is important to depend on oneself.</td>
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<td>36. I enjoy a variety of musical genres.</td>
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<td>37. I enjoy touring.</td>
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<td>38. Physical fitness is important to me.</td>
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<td>39. When working on a project I like to work alone.</td>
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<td>40. I receive greater satisfaction from my work than from my family.</td>
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<td>41. I always collaborate on my musical efforts.</td>
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<td>42. When I was a child, my ideas about what I wanted to become changed with the wind.</td>
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<td>43. Over the years my interest in music has fluctuated.</td>
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<td>44. As a child I was a tom-boy (climbed trees, liked getting dirty).</td>
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<td>45. My relationship with my mother was distant.</td>
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<td>46. My relationship with my father was distant.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
47. My family was tone deaf.
48. My parents discouraged my musicianship.
49. My parents understood the music I played.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50. Where music is concerned, my parents encouraged every opportunity.</td>
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<td>51. When I practiced music, my parents tried to avoid listening.</td>
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<td>52. Music was important to my family when I was growing up.</td>
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<td>53. My parents held and expressed definite ideas about which instruments are appropriate for women to play.</td>
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<td>54. My parents exposed me to a wide variety of musical genres.</td>
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<td>55. My parents took me to see live music.</td>
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<td>56. My parents exposed me to female role musical models.</td>
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<tr>
<td>57. As a child, I was a very feminine little girl (wore dresses, played with dolls).</td>
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<td>58. In school, my music teacher(s) held and expressed definite ideas about which instruments are appropriate for women to play.</td>
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<td>59. In school, my music teacher(s) encouraged me to explore a variety of instruments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>60. In school, my music teacher(s) exposed me to female musical role models.</td>
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<td>61. My private music teacher(s) held and expressed definite ideas about which instruments are appropriate for women to play.</td>
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<td>62. My private music teacher(s) encouraged me to explore a variety of instruments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>63. My private music teacher(s) exposed me to female musical role models.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64. When I was growing up, my male friends encouraged my musical pursuits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>65. When I was growing up, my female friends encouraged my musical pursuits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>66. When I was growing up, my friends held and expressed definite ideas about which instruments are appropriate for women to play.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
67. When I was growing up, my friends and I were aware of female musical role models.  
68. Now, my male friends encourage my musical pursuits.  
69. Now, my female friends encourage my musical pursuits.  
70. Now, my friends hold and express definite ideas about which instruments are appropriate for women to play.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
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</thead>
</table>

71. I perceive female musicians as colleagues.  
72. I spend a lot of energy making my physical appearance traditionally attractive.  
73. I consider myself a traditional woman.  
74. As a woman, I feel that people assume I’m a competent musician.  
75. Professionally speaking, I feel that my gender has enhanced my opportunities.  
76. I have a flexible personality.  
77. I have a flexible approach toward people.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
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<th>Not applicable</th>
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</table>

78. I feel independent.  
79. Independence is important to me.  
80. I call myself a feminist.  
81. Although I believe in many feminist ideals, I do not call myself a feminist.  

Please place your experience on this scale.  

82. Growing up, my friends and I listened to music together.  
83. Growing up, my friends and I played music together.  
84. Growing up, I sought out people previously unknown to me to play music with.  
85. I am an: Extrovert - Introvert  

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<th>C -</th>
<th>C -</th>
<th>C -</th>
<th>C -</th>
<th>Always</th>
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Section 4  

86. If you keep fit, what do you do to keep fit?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>87. Please tell me about your favourite music teacher from school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88. Please tell me about your least favourite music teacher from school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89. Please tell me about your favourite private music teacher.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>90. Please tell me about your least favourite private music teacher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91. Why did you decide in favour of a career in music?</td>
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<tr>
<td>92. What personal characteristic do you consider most influential in your decision to become a professional musician?</td>
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<tr>
<td>93. What personal experience do you consider most influential in your decision to become a professional musician?</td>
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<tr>
<td>94. Do you drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, or use recreational drugs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>[Please be specific.]</td>
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<tr>
<td>95. How frequently, how heavily, and/or under what circumstances do you drink, smoke, or use recreational drugs? [Please be specific.]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>96. Please relate a particularly troubling story from your experience as a musician, as a beginner or professional.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>97. Please relate a particularly positive story from your experience as a musician, as a beginner or professional.</td>
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<tr>
<td>98. Have you ever suffered from a mental illness, including depression?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99. Have you ever been treated for mental illness, including depression?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
100. I identify my sexual orientation as: 

101. How has others' judgment of your physical appearance affected your career?

102. Have you ever suffered from an eating disorder? If so, please describe the circumstances.

103. Have you ever been treated for an eating disorder?

104. If you have ever reinvented your public image, please describe the circumstances behind the reinvention.

105. Is there anything else you would like to relate about your experience as a musician?
APPENDIX I E-MAIL INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERVIEWS

[Subject line: Queen’s University graduate student seeking music study participants]

Greetings from Kingston. My name is Robb MacKay and I am a musician, a music teacher, a gender researcher, and a Master of Education candidate at Queens University. I am conducting a study to examine the personal and professional traits of female pop musicians in Canada.

To help me answer my question, I invite you to go to my research web site at <http://post.queensu.ca/~mackayr/womeninpopsurvey/interviewinfo.htm> to read about my data collection in detail and to read and complete documents which will allow me to interview you for my study.

My own experience in the Canadian music business and some preliminary research I’ve done has led me to choose you for this study because of your personal history and the unique perspective I think you can provide on particular times and places, sub-genres and movements within Canadian music history.

If you are willing to participate, please complete the Letter of Consent on my web site and submit to me as soon as possible. If you are hesitant, after reading my Letter of Information, I urge you to contact me at this e-mail address or at my home, (613) 548-0220, to allow me to address any concerns you have. Yours is an important voice in Canadian music history, which I would very much like to include in my study.

I appreciate your consideration of this research project, and I very much look forward to working with you to tell the story of women in Canadian pop music.

Sincerely,
Robb
(613) 548-0220
APPENDIX J ON-LINE LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR INTERVIEW

PARTICIPANTS

Personal and Professional Traits of Female Pop Musicians in Canada
Robb MacKay, MEd candidate, Queen's University,
Kingston, Ontario

Research Abstract    Research Results

Letter of Information for Research Interview

I am inviting you to participate in a research project designed to examine the personal and professional traits of female professional pop musicians in Canada. I propose to interview you in order to examine, in depth, your expertise in this area. The data from my interviews, along with data previously gathered in surveys from other female Canadian musicians, will form the basis of my Master's of Education thesis, which I am researching and writing under the supervision of Dr. Roberta Lamb, at Queen's University in Kingston. The stories of Canadian female pop musicians is an under-researched area of concern to musicologists and educators alike. The results of this study will be published and made available to the general public via libraries and academic journals. As a professional musician myself, I recognize that there are many demands on your time, and I want to assure you that your efforts and expert's insight in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

I expect to conduct two interviews with each interviewee. The first will likely last between one and one and one half hours. The second will be a follow-up interview, for clarification and expansion on points from the first interview, and will likely last a half hour. We will conduct these interviews at a time convenient for you, likely by telephone. I will record the interviews on audiotape and make transcriptions of the tapes. I will send you a copy of the interview transcriptions for you to check for accuracy, and so that you may identify points that you would like me to omit from my report. I will contact you to arrange a convenient interview time as soon as I receive a letter of consent from you.

Because the Canadian music scene is very small and intimate, and because a discussion of a Canadian musician's career would be meaningless without reference to details that would necessarily identify you, such as song lyrics or band names, I cannot and will not offer to conceal your identity. Throughout this research, I assure you that you may choose not to answer any question that you find objectionable or that makes you uncomfortable in any way. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw your participation at any time, without pressure or consequence of any kind.
This interview will be audio taped. The data that you provide will be stored securely and kept for possible secondary uses, including longitudinal (follow-up) studies. There will be no remuneration for your participation in this research.

I will prepare a brief summary of my findings and make it available to you at http://post.queensu.ca/~mackayr/womeninpopsurvey/thesisresearchresults.htm by December 2006.

If at this point, or at any point in the future, you have any questions about this research, feel free to contact me, Robb MacKay, at (613) 548-0220 or at mackayr@post.queensu.ca. You may also contact my research supervisor, Dr. Roberta Lamb, (613) 533-2065 or lambr@post.queensu.ca, with any questions about my research. You may contact the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Rosa Bruno-Jofre, (613) 533-6210 and/or the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board of Queen's University, Dr. Joan Stevenson, (613) 533-6081, if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study.

Thank you again for your consideration of this research project.

Sincerely,

Robb MacKay

Go to Letter of Consent
APPENDIX K ON-LINE LETTER OF CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

The Personal and Professional Traits of Female Pop Musicians in Canada
Robb MacKay, MEd candidate, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario

Letter of Consent for Research Interview
I have read the description of the research study, "The personal and professional traits of female professional pop musicians in Canada," as contained in the accompanying letter of information and retained a copy of the letter for my records. I understand that this research is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of a Master's of Education degree and that the results of this study will be published and made available to the general public via libraries and academic journals. My questions have been answered, and I understand that my participation in the research is voluntary, and that I may withdraw at any time.

I understand that my name will appear throughout the published research report which will be the result of this research.

I understand that I will receive no remuneration for my participation in this study.

I understand that I will have access to a brief summary of the research findings at http://post.queensu.ca/~mackayr/womeninpopsurvey/thesisresearchresults.htm by December 2006.

I understand that I will not be expected to answer any questions that might make me feel uncomfortable or that I find objectionable. I am aware that I can choose which of my responses are to be published, and that if I withdraw from the study, none of my responses will be published.

I understand that these interviews will be audio taped. I understand that the data that I provide will be stored securely and kept for possible secondary uses, including longitudinal (follow-up) studies.

I understand that I can contact the researcher, Robb MacKay, with questions, any time at (613) 548-0220 or at mackayr@post.queensu.ca. I may also contact the research supervisor, Dr. Roberta Lamb, (613) 533-2065 or lambr@post.queensu.ca, with any questions about the research. I may contact the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Rosa Bruno-Jofre, (613) 533-6210 and/or the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board of Queen's University, Dr. Joan Stevenson, (613) 533-6081, if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study.

Participant's name:
Date:
APPENDIX L INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Describe the perfect band mate. How do you measure up to your own ideal?

2. Imagine a fiction genre that might best describe your family's support of your music career (comedy, drama, film noir, soft porn, thriller, PG, etc.). Please relate a chapter from that book.

3. Can you relate a time specifically in your career or your music education when you thought, “This wouldn’t be happening to a guy,” or “Right now, I’m really glad that I’m a woman”?

4. I’m just finishing the Mötley Crüe biography, The Dirt, and it’s an extreme picture of male musicians’ misogyny. Though the stories are more lurid and violent than any I’ve encountered before, in my own musical life or in other music literature, they seem to fit into a familiar pattern among men that conflates musicianship and sexual power. In contrast, the survey respondents recall instances in which they have been powerless, objects of unwanted sexual attention, both on and off stage. How do these two ideas compare to your own experiences?

5. If you were counseling music industry types, from roadies and sound techs to producers and managers, what advice would you offer to help them get the most out of musicians? Using your own experiences, please relate positive and negative experiences with any echelon of the music industry.

6. Though many of the survey respondents wrote that they are compelled to be musicians, some indicated that it was a choice among many possible jobs, while others employ music for political means. I’ve considered these career descriptions respectively as: vocation, with a responsibility to oneself for self-expression; job, where music is one among many viable career options; and, facilitator, one who feels a responsibility to communicate to and for others. How do you see yourself with respect to these categories, and why?

7. Perhaps with reference to a song that you particularly enjoy playing, or to an especially terrible venue, please tell me a story that describes your love of performing.
8. There is a romantic notion about artists and their susceptibility to depression. One respondent wrote that music and depression is a “wicked trap.” Please tell me if you think that statement rings true in your experience.

9. If you can imagine a spectrum of indulgence which includes Iggy Pop, Cheech and Chong, and the Flying Nun, how would you say that tobacco, alcohol, and drugs fit into your life and your career music?

10. Can you tell me about a time when you were the only one who believed that you could succeed in music? Can you tell me about a time when you were surrounded by supporters who believed you would succeed but you were doubtful? In both these cases, who were these people and how did their support, or lack thereof, affect you, motivate you, destroy you . . . ?

11. Many respondents have indicated battling an eating disorder at one time or another. Do you think that number of women with eating disorders is elevated in the music industry? In terms of musicians and the challenges they face, of what larger issues do you think this syndrome is symptomatic?

12. Please tell me about your philosophy regarding your looks and self-presentation. Do you struggle with your physical self-image?

13. Is there anything that you feel I’ve missed in this interview?