

The modern classical chamber music ensemble: Exploring individual identities, management and group processes

A dissertation submitted by

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Abstract

This thesis investigates and answers questions surrounding the professional identity of small ensemble musicians, the interpersonal relationships of the members that work within chamber music groups, and the organisational approaches to maintaining an ensemble in today's cultural environment. Specifically, this research addresses the following questions: in the current cultural environment, how is a sustainable ensemble created and how do the qualities and characteristics of musicians support the development of an ensemble? How do the interpersonal relationships between ensemble members affect the working and sustainability of the group? And, what organisational aspects must be taken into consideration as far as communication, commitment, shared values and goals? By taking the individual musician's perspective on ensemble performance and organisation within non-traditional or unconventional ensembles, this thesis aims to answer these questions through discussion provided by professional musicians working in the field. Through this process, the research highlights the opportunities and approaches available to training or practising musicians, and the skills needed for a successful career.

As different genres of classical chamber music ensembles have emerged during the 21st century, the aims and output of these ensembles have developed in new and unconventional directions. This has inevitably had consequences for the professional identities of ensemble members and the musical and non-musical processes applied to their musical groups. The literature surrounding chamber music ensemble performance and processes has focused mainly on traditional

ensembles, primarily the string quartet, piano trio, woodwind quintet, and vocal ensembles. These have served as examples towards investigating the cognitive, psychological and communication methods of small, high-performing teams. By focussing on non-traditional ensembles; those that have mixed instrumentation, varied members, and perform early, contemporary or new music, this research investigation explores commonalities and differences in interpersonal dynamics of non-traditional or new genres of ensembles. This contributes further understanding of ensemble processes, adding to the information provided by more traditional ensembles discussed in existing scholarly research.

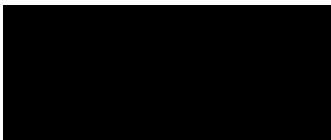
The qualitative research interrogates the domain-specific self-image of a chamber musician through both a focus group session and individual in-depth interviews with thirty musicians. Exploring the participants' perspectives on ensemble performance and organisation via interview, data was provided to facilitate analysis of the musicians' own explanations of their professional identity as chamber musicians. Through a phenomenological and social constructionist lens, thematic analysis based on grounded theory principles was used to analyse the individual experience of the phenomena, while addressing the construct of understanding group processes within its social world. Analysis focused on the way in which the different identities, aspirations and motivations of ensemble members combined to form a cohesive group identity. The findings affirm that many musicians begin and develop ensembles through 'trial and error', without a clear vision or goal and little understanding of group dynamics, leadership and decision-making strategies. Within a framework of organisational theory, this research brings to the forefront the internal (group dynamics, individuals and

ensemble culture) and external influences (ensemble structure, audience and technology) that affect these ensembles in today's cultural environment. This evaluation provides further knowledge about chamber music ensemble processes and practices.

The research highlights the need for practising musicians and educational institutions to be more aware of the entrepreneurial skills such as goal setting, value sharing, networking and leadership, that musicians now require to ensure longer-term success as professional chamber musicians, including the need to balance a portfolio career. By recognising the motivations of freelance performers, training organisations, such as universities and advance performance institutions, can better prepare student musicians when deciding career options. Music students can also learn to embrace or recognise the entrepreneurship that is needed in their music career and use both business and art as a way of propelling their profession forward. With a unique emphasis on non-traditional ensembles, this thesis presents the challenges these ensembles face, including either a lack of repertoire or unusual repertoire that is unfamiliar to audiences, the eclecticism of programming, and finding performance opportunities. A discussion of these aspects uncovers influencing factors on productivity and performance that practising musicians need to consider when managing and maintaining an ensemble. It also offers insight into music group practices that can inform small collaborative units within organisations outside of the music field by displaying correlating elements of business, humanity and creativity.

Certification of Dissertation

I certify that the ideas, analyses, results and conclusions reported in this dissertation are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award.

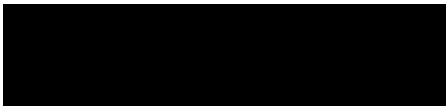


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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study focuses on deepening our understanding about the individual experiences of professional, small ensemble musicians within the present day cultural environment; specifically, those that are core or freelance members of ‘non-traditional’ or ‘unconventional’ classical chamber music ensembles. Through a qualitative methodology, this research provides a detailed investigation of the modern chamber ensemble musician as an individual, explores how these individual identities form a cohesive group, and examines how chamber music ensembles serve as complex organisations in terms of organisational behaviour and the internal and external influences affecting them.

The methods and processes of maintaining an ensemble are explored, discovering ways in which an ensemble proves successful in terms of superior performance, longevity, and gaining respect and recognition amongst the players’ peers and audience. By drawing our attention to musicians from non-traditional or unconventional ensembles, this research strengthens the inquiry of musical identity and group practices by looking particularly at how it is that a small group of professional musicians from diverse backgrounds can be responsible for not only their own individual quality performance and artistic output, but also contribute to a group’s collective commitment to excellence in performance.

Through individual accounts of professional musicians, this research uncovers the personal attributes of chamber musicians, internal group dynamics, interpersonal

relationships and professional development across a number of different ensembles and individuals. Of particular interest are the participants' observations of communication strategies, leadership, decision-making and teamwork on both an interpretive (artistic) and professional (organisational) level. In addition, the research explores the way in which skills in these areas are employed within a musical group to achieve musical fluency and group coordination.

1.2 Background to the study

Today's audience is exposed to an enormous range of classical chamber music ensemble types (Burgess, 2004; Capps, 2005; Petocz, Reid, & Bennett, 2014). Ensembles such as string quartets, piano trios, woodwind quintets and vocal groups – which have been the focus of much small ensemble research – are still widespread having developed over past centuries as musical genres in their own right (Baron, 1998; Blank & Davidson, 2007; Ford & Davidson, 2003; Lim, 2013; McCalla, 2003; Murnighan & Conlon, 1991). This research introduces to the field of ensemble studies and organisational behaviour the approaches of less mainstream classical ensembles, those that have been specified as 'non-traditional' or 'unconventional' for the purpose of this study. These ensembles have been described as 'non-traditional' or 'unconventional' because they are unique in instrumentation: they do not always adhere to a typical or conventional musical scoring, and they do not have large amounts of standard repertoire. There are no archetypal levels of hierarchies and due to the unique and/or flexible instrumentation, instrumental and musical roles are not predefined as they are in their 19th century counterparts. The instrumentation and scope of these ensembles

varies in accordance with the expansion of genres to include contemporary or new music ensembles with an eclectic mix of instruments and technology, and early music ensembles with unfixed instrumentation based on Historically Informed Performance (HIP) practice.

The question is, therefore, what are the similarities and differences between these unconventional ensembles and those with developed hierarchies and establishments? Davidson and King (2012) write,

In small ensembles, cohesiveness can be supplemented by factors such as the potential for equal musical input and the fact that all players use essentially comparable instrumental techniques (e.g. in string quartets or flute choirs). Even when the ensembles are comprised of quite different instruments, as in the case of a wind quintet where the French horn is juxtaposed alongside a flute, the complementarity of the instrumental timbres is often regarded by the group members as a cohesive element too.

(pp. 3-4)

The wind quintet provided in this example is still considered a conventional ensemble and is a combination of instruments that has a large library of repertoire available to it (Ford & Davidson, 2003). When new repertoire is created, it is this specific combination of instrumental roles that is in the mind of the composer. Ensembles of traditional classical chamber music genres have established hierarchies and processes over time, making them important case studies in earlier

scholarly research (for example, Butterworth, 1990; Poulson & Abraham, 1996). Unconventional ensembles however, are more flexible and unique in terms of the combination of instruments and may very well comprise complementary instrumental timbres. However, they may also encounter further challenges by not having the stability of a developed genre or repertoire (therefore they do not represent a specific genre); membership is often transient, changing from one project to another; the ensembles are eclectic in instrumentation; and musical/instrumental roles are often interchangeable within the group. For these reasons, these ensembles and the freelance nature of the performers in them provide potentially new perspectives on ensemble development (Kokotsaki, 2007), as well as further insight into the relationship of musical ensemble processes with organisational behaviour (Gilboa & Tal-Shmotkin, 2010; Tal-Shmotkin & Gilboa, 2013). This research also explores the effect more eclectic and unusual group mixes has on group structures and the social, interpersonal relationships of their members. Therefore, within this diverse field of small ensemble performance, there is a need for a new investigation into chamber ensemble practices looking at both musical collaboration and organisational management of these unique ensembles, and what their members consider as cohesive elements.

A key attribute of chamber music ensembles is that the performers are interdependent of each other (Davidson & Good, 2002; Murnighan & Conlon, 1991). A significant proportion of most working musicians' practice requires collaboration; whether one is a solo musician working with an accompanist or a member of a small or large ensemble, the majority of musicians work with others

at some point in their career. Each of these musical collaborations, whether it is two or twenty musicians, requires a number of different skills and techniques, and raises various challenges and rewards. For classical chamber ensembles in particular, the performers have to be incredibly aware of their co-performers: listening, anticipating, reacting and responding to the interpretations of others and the subtle musical nuances within a performance, as well as contributing their own personal artistic skill and flair towards the group's outcome (Schutz, 1964; Adorno, 1976; Sicca, 2000). This level of intimate teamwork leaves little room for error, as every member is interdependent and responsible for the complete coordination of the resulting performance. The skills required of chamber musicians affords them high esteem amongst artists, as noted by Maestro Salvatore Accardo:

Among musicians, to refer to a colleague as a good chamber music player is a real accolade, implying that he or she is a particularly sensitive musician who enjoys working closely with a few other colleagues. First you have to master your own part and then put the piece together and agree on interpretation jointly, because the final performance is not just your affair but a truly joint effort. (cited in Sicca, 2000, p. 149)

The personal connections made within this environment display a unique ability to communicate not only within the musical performance but also to establish close partnerships on a social and professional level in terms of shared goals and often shared management of organisational aspects. In particular, self-managed

classical chamber music ensembles, where the members themselves are responsible for the musical and artistic decisions, are often also responsible for the organisational aspects in order to ensure the ensemble is both viable and successful (Gilboa & Tal-Shmotkin, 2010). My research investigates the ways in which members of a group develop a shared understanding of a professional group identity and philosophy within a variety of structures as well as balancing their own individual artistic needs and careers. The characteristics of chamber musicians will therefore be examined, leading to an acute understanding of the individualities and identities of current professional chamber musicians.

The research examines the professional identity of a chamber musician and how musicians define themselves as individuals who are also part of a collective group. It explores how the impact of interpersonal relationships amongst musicians can affect the success of an ensemble, be it musically, financially, or in terms of longevity and public acclaim. By exploring the lives of individual professional musicians and listening to their experiences and interpretations of their cultural world, it is possible to gain a better understanding of collaborative musical performance, the business of managing an ensemble, and organising music.

In order to understand why and how an ensemble forms, we need to know the motivations behind the individuals (Schnare, MacIntyre, & Doucette, 2011). The collaboration of musicians from different cultural and training backgrounds requires an understanding of the desires, inspirations and motivations that

encourage ensembles to form. Kemp (1999) examines the different personality types of people who are drawn to being musicians. He writes,

By considering the musician's personality and temperament we may well open up new ways of understanding their motivational drives, their single-mindedness, and their investment of so much of their self-concepts in music. (p. 25)

Given Kemp's assumption, freelance ensemble musicians and their motivation and investment in the chamber music field warrants further research enquiry. The question remains, how do these different personalities combine to create a cohesive ensemble? The professional identity of *chamber musicians* is therefore important to this research because it establishes the grounds for understanding more about why individuals come together to form a musical group.

My personal observations as a practising professional chamber musician indicated that there was a need for further research to provide a greater understanding of modern chamber music ensembles, in particular those that are self-managed, as well as aspects of ensemble organisation. Throughout my performance career, I experienced a number of surviving and failing ensembles, all having various organisational structures. The following are the most prevalent structures and working models that were observed during my career as an ensemble musician:

- Self-managed: small ensembles working consistently together as a team with undefined roles (organisationally and artistically), yet unifying towards a common goal;
- Management team: ensembles that include an artistic board or team comprising a selection of ensemble members who decide the actions of the ensemble above other members; and
- Artistic director: one ‘director’ (often titled ‘artistic director’) who divides tasks amongst other ensemble members creating individual roles on an administrative level, not necessarily on an artistic level. Or, a director may also take all the responsibility of a group, both artistically and/or administratively.

I encountered each of these ensemble structures and hierarchies in the different ensembles that I worked in, and I experienced the unique working environment that these structures created for the musician. It was these experiences that encouraged further investigation, in particular, research into ensembles that do not have histories of systems in place (non-traditional chamber music ensembles). In order to understand these structures more deeply, this thesis examines and draws upon the literature and research around organisational behaviour processes including collaboration, leadership and decision-making.

This research looks at the prospect of organisational behaviour and teamwork informing the processes of chamber music ensembles as arts organisations. Chamber music ensembles are rarely part of a larger organisation. Generally, the ensembles considered by this research are self-managed and generate their own (often internal) administrative structures and hierarchies. This thesis takes a

distinct view of chamber music ensembles as organisations in order to determine the organisational influences and operations that impact small ensemble teams.

The literature on chamber music ensembles that will be explored further in Chapter 2 focuses on three main areas regarding leadership and decision-making processes within musical ensembles. These are

- ‘fixed’ or traditional ensembles, for example the string quartet (Davidson & Good, 2002; Gilboa & Tal-Shmotkin, 2010),
- the relationship between the conductor and orchestral musicians (Boerner & Gebert, 2012; Cook & Howitt, 2012), and
- the use of communication through improvisation in jazz ensembles (Barrett, 1998; Sawyer, 2006; Seddon & Biasutti, 2009a).

It is noted that existing research is typically based on quite standard hierarchical scenarios, leaving space to create research that focuses upon leadership and communication processes amongst flexible groups with unique combinations of individuals, skills and backgrounds.

1.3 Significance of the study

The strength of this study lies in gathering firsthand experiences, thoughts, and beliefs from practising professional chamber musicians who primarily perform in non-traditional or unconventional ensembles. This is advantageous over other methods with external observers alone because it gathers the *individual’s* perspective, uncovering their personal opinions, knowledge and perceptions of the world in which they work, and information is received from within a wider

context. The idiographic nature of this qualitative study focuses on the individual as a musician in an ensemble – or multiple ensembles – rather than observing specific groups. By focusing on participants separately, greater insight is gained into the world of the chamber musician and how they experience and navigate different ensemble environments, as opposed to limiting the study to one particular type of collaboration. Discussed in the following three sections, the reflections and storytelling of the participants’ experiences provide valuable findings that can contribute new knowledge to a number of areas including professional development for practising musicians, educational development for training musicians, and the organisational behaviour and collaboration literature in fields outside music.

1.3.1 Practising musicians

Schnare et al. (2011) discuss the different elements of ‘the musical self’ in terms of future hopes and fears, and the implications of these hopes and fears on musician motivation. In their study, Schnare et al. look at the musical self of a range of musicians from a variety of genres. By paying particular attention to one specific type of musician, the modern classical chamber ensemble musician, my research reveals how they identify as musicians and how the changing cultural environment affects their motivations and their identity.

Like many artists, few chamber musicians work full-time in their creative pursuit. In Australia, for example, recent data collected by the Australia Council for the Arts for their 2015 edition of *Arts Nation: Overview of Australian Arts* indicates

that significant changes are occurring in the working lives and patterns of musicians. They revealed that the majority of Australian musicians are now establishing 'portfolio careers', spending only half their time on their creative practice (Australia Council for the Arts, 2015, p. 17). A portfolio career has less focus on one particular line of creative work and involves a broader set of skills than what a working musician may have required in the past. An earlier study by Professor David Thorsby and Anita Zednik for the Australia Council for the Arts (2010) revealed that for some time the majority of Australian musicians have been relying on portfolio careers. The researchers state that

Nowadays few artists follow the traditional linear trajectory beginning with training, passing through an emerging phase, arriving at establishment, and continuing with a life devoted exclusively to a core creative practice. Rather the concept of 'portfolio careers' has emerged, characterised by a variety of work arrangements, some involving original creative work, some applying skills more widely, some requiring team participation, some taking time out from creative work for further study, travel, research, and so on. (p. 13)

This growth of portfolio careers suggests artists, including musicians, split their identity in any number of ways; one day they are performing music in front of an audience, the next they may be teaching aspiring music students (Bain, 2005; J. Mills, 2004; Oakland, MacDonald, & Flowers, 2013). This highlights the need for these musicians to vary their identity from one task to the next. The majority of

participants in my research are freelance musicians and portfolio careerists, their accounts therefore divulge their career and musical aspirations with an aim to reveal how they balance identity as they move throughout different projects and responsibilities.

In order to maintain a portfolio career, musicians have to develop additional non-musical skills outside their initial training. Smilde (2012) states that professional musicians must be lifelong learners, being susceptible and adaptable to change. Within her research, she presents Peter Jarvis's definition of lifelong learning as follows,

The combination of processes throughout a lifetime whereby the whole person – body (genetic, physical and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses) – experiences social situations, the perceived content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically continually changing (or more experienced) person. (cited in Smilde, 2012, p. 1)

Research into the lives of established, professional musicians, especially those that devote their primary artistic output to chamber music, provides further insight into how musicians give meaning to their work, the skills they need, and their personal experiences of working in a variety of ensembles. In order to be self-sufficient, musicians need to be actively pursuing viable sources of employment

outside their initial training. Professional identity therefore has a much bigger bearing on musicians as the trend of the working patterns of musicians moves towards portfolio careers. Knowing and understanding the importance of creating a professional identity early in their career and making it sustainable is of great significance to emerging musicians and/or ensembles and also to those continuing their work.

The working environment for musicians and artists has also changed greatly over recent years both in Australia and abroad. The need for establishing portfolio careers early in their professional life encourages the musician to increasingly take on a role as an entrepreneur, including self-management. This has inspired musicians from different backgrounds to collaborate on interdisciplinary projects, balancing different artistic opinions, styles and objectives (Petocz et al., 2014). Thus, new research needs to approach aspects of professional ensemble work from both the musical and professional management perspectives. With this in mind, my research aims to improve understanding of arts management practices for team performance and how they may be incorporated as a way of lessening conflict and increasing group (ensemble) effectiveness.

1.3.2 Music education

The findings of this research have enormous potential for music education. Considering that collaboration is an inevitable part of a musician's career, understanding the internal dynamics of non-traditional or unconventional chamber music ensembles provides key information about creative collaboration. This

study will describe how the relationships between co-performers of different backgrounds evolve, and how inherent musical skills are used to create a cohesive, unified ensemble. The role of musical leadership will be investigated from a number of perspectives, highlighting different decision-making processes within diverse organisational structures.

An understanding of the social behaviour of musicians in small ensembles and the importance of developing a professional identity is significant for musicians undergoing professional training (Bennett, 2008b). Throughout the coaching of musician performers, focus is more often on teaching technique and repertoire, leaving little guidance toward the psychosocial aspects of being a collaborative musician (Hays, 2013). Westerlund, Gaunt, and Welch (2013), Pun (2014) and Smilde (2012) all discuss the importance of professional flexibility as a practising musician, the ability to network and adapt to different professional and social contexts in a fast-changing age. These skills and knowledge can be learnt through experience in collaborative music making and go beyond the teaching of technical dexterity. The collective nature of music making requires a better understanding of the importance of collaborative group methods by learning different approaches to teamwork, leadership and decision-making. By looking at a number of different ensembles, this knowledge will also have an important influence on higher music education and teaching methods. Westerlund et al. (2013) explain,

... higher education needs to extend beyond a focus of technical or historically rooted knowledge for a particular discipline. Although working in social settings is prevalent in music (orchestras, choirs, bands, chamber music, and so

on), understanding of learning in higher music education still rests heavily on the transmission of content specific and repertoire-related knowledge and musical skills, and this transmission is generally assumed to take place first and foremost in a master-apprentice setting, from one individual to another. The dominant one-to-one mode of tuition has also tended to be extended into group contexts, and specifically collaborative possibilities of learning have featured less. (p. 1)

This research has the potential to promote the teaching and learning of ‘lifelong’ skills that professionals need today. It is hoped that the findings from this study will be available to trainee performers and assist their teachers and mentors with their preparation for real-world scenarios and future employment. This information will assist them in becoming more adaptable and help them to ‘meet the challenges of [a] rapidly changing cultural life in the twenty-first century’ (Smilde, 2012, p. 1).

1.3.3 Small group organisational behaviour

Current organisational behaviour and business management research is recognising the benefits of creativity and the arts in business (Adler, 2006; Bathurst & Ladkin, 2012; Cook & Howitt, 2012; Gilboa & Tal-Shmotkin, 2010). This research will contribute to the recent growth in the literature focused on internal dynamics of creative collaborative working groups. The use of music as a

metaphor or as the basis for understanding small to medium sized self-managed teams in project management, business and education has led to a number of studies on collaborative music making. Researchers have often chosen the string quartet in particular as a working group model. A study by Tal-Shmotkin and Gilboa (2013) states,

Musicological studies have focused on the musical products of this ensemble while other studies, from the psychology of music approach have focused on the social interactions between the SQ [String Quartet] members. Such studies are beneficial to the field of management because it is possible that the teamwork of SQs follows processes resembling those of various organizational units.
(p. 57)

The use of a string quartet is a logical choice for a teamwork model as it is a familiar, proven working chamber music ensemble. Having been a recognised stable ensemble format since the Classical period (ca. 1750–1830) with minimal, if any change, it is an example ‘par excellence’ of an outstanding working group. This research will further explore and identify the balance of leadership and communication amongst more flexible creative musical groups by looking beyond ‘traditional’ ensemble make-ups and taking into consideration the individual peculiarities of different instruments and their players.

In a 'non-traditional' ensemble structure, members typically differ greatly in cultural and musical background, and instrument, suggesting a variety of personalities, skills, educational backgrounds and roles within the ensemble. Analogous to a string quartet, members of non-traditional ensembles need to be interdependent, have an understanding of individual boundaries, and form group cohesiveness. The way in which a varied mixture of instrumentalists and/or vocalists achieves this and how individuals adapt to different contexts remains fairly unanswered. A contemporary ensemble, for example, may comprise a wide range of performers and can vary the membership depending on their current project or program. Determining the way in which cohesion is achieved through the sporadic nature of these ensembles will contribute to the research on flexible work teams within organisational behaviour.

Musical ensembles provide significant evidence about creative collaboration in small groups or teams. Professional ensemble musicians are similar in their situational context to small to medium teams in other organisations, including those in the corporate world, healthcare and sport. Each musician is highly experienced and skilled individually, and needs to strive for a shared goal. This ability to support a collective responsibility for the group's outcomes, to communicate both within the ensemble and to other stakeholders (audience, concert promoters, media), and to develop a direct, democratic leadership style that allows group decision-making, makes chamber music ensembles a perfect study for group behaviour and sociology. The study of musical collaboration within self-managing ensembles therefore offers valuable insights and

understandings into the workings, development and sustainability of all small professional working groups.

1.4 Focus of the research

The background and importance of this topic, as discussed earlier in this chapter, establishes three crucial areas for research: professional identity of the individual chamber musician, group identity, and the organisational behaviour of non-traditional or unconventional chamber music ensembles. Drawing from the relevant literature exploring various disciplines of teamwork, small group organisation theory, my own professional experience of the working patterns of ensemble musicians, and the personal accounts of professional classical chamber musicians, the following questions and sub-question will be addressed:

1. In the current cultural environment, how is a sustainable ensemble created?
 - a. How do the qualities and characteristics of musicians support the development of an ensemble? And how does an ensemble develop a professional identity?
2. How do the interpersonal relationships between ensemble members affect the working and sustainability of the group?
3. What organisational aspects must be taken into consideration as far as communication, commitment, shared values and goals?

These questions will be investigated by looking at individual opinions and experiences and placing them in a theoretical framework that reflects organisational principles, treating a chamber music group as an organisation

within a complex open system of interacting internal and external components.

This is achieved by

- examining the motivations for pursuing a career in chamber music of individual professional musicians;
- identifying the professional, social and artistic relationships between ensemble members in unconventional ensembles; and
- investigating the differences and similarities in organisational processes of a variety of ensembles.

The individual interpretation and perception of this phenomenon is of most importance to this research. The participants' voiced experiences reveal their thoughts and opinions and give insight into how these perspectives inform collective processes and practices within a broad range of current chamber music ensembles.

1.5 Overview of the thesis

This thesis is principally in three parts. The first part includes this introduction, the literature review, theoretical framework and research design. The second part presents the four analysis chapters covering two main areas, identity and organisational influences, and the third and final part presents a discussion of the findings as well as conclusions and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2 surveys the literature surrounding the development of chamber music ensembles over time, identity, group behaviour, and the musical ensemble's association with teamwork. It establishes the place for this study amongst prior

and current research, identifying a gap in the literature concerning a limited amount of research into unconventional or non-traditional classical chamber music ensembles.

The methodological approach taken in the research is outlined and explained in Chapter 3. The chapter begins with the broader context of sociomusicology and the contribution of key theorists, (Schutz, 1964), Adorno (1976), and Becker (2008) towards the social interaction between members of a chamber music ensemble in terms of the relationships between performers and the broader networks of society. The chapter continues to address organisational theory and the influences of individuals, groups, the organisational culture and structure, and the external environment using a framework derived from Cooksey's (2003) 'contextual complexity of organisational activities'. This forms the foundation on which the study of chamber music ensembles as an arts organisation can be built. The qualitative frameworks are presented, crossing the contexts of interpretative phenomenology and social constructionist paradigms to inform the data collection and analysis. Finally, the role of myself as the researcher and my professional experience as an ensemble music practitioner provides an additional source of insight.

Chapter 4 presents the research design involving a focus group and individual semi-structured in-depth interviews to gather data. The selection and make-up of participants included in the population sample is described as well as the method and line of questioning drawing from a phenomenological perspective. The

analytical method is detailed, presenting the stages of induction and deduction of raw data and literature to form initial codes. The discussion in this chapter also presents the development of a thematic map displaying the two core themes of identity and organisational influences together with the sub-themes that were explored. Appendix E provides definitions of all the codes obtained from the data.

Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 present the analysis, findings and results of the investigation through detailed descriptions and interpretations of the participants' responses. Chapter 5 evaluates what it means to the participants to be chamber musicians today; why they choose chamber music as their artistic output, and the meanings they ascribe to their lives as freelance musicians. Based on the findings in Chapter 5, Chapter 6 explores group identity and how this is formed in the various ensembles presented by the participants. By drawing on the research data it explains how a group identity is developed, how ensembles find different niches and what influences this identity. Chapter 7 details different group dynamics and explains what factors contribute to the variation in dynamics. Chapter 8 takes a much more systematic view of ensembles, investigating more formal organisational structures, the role of the artistic director, and the external influences on chamber music ensembles. Through organisational concepts and influences, Chapters 7 and 8 describe elements of chamber music ensembles as arts organisations.

The final part, Chapter 9, summarises the research findings with reference to current literature and the theoretical and analytical contributions of the research.

The importance and implications of the research to the areas addressed in this introductory chapter are brought to the forefront. The chapter concludes with outlining the limitations of this current study and the potential for future research based on the initial findings of this research.

1.6 Conclusion

Through an investigation of the inner workings of unconventional and non-traditional chamber music ensembles from the perspective of currently active individual ensemble musicians, the findings of this research will make an important contribution to the field of musician identity and group processes and performance. Through in-depth research of the individual qualities, characteristics, attitudes and beliefs of contemporary chamber musicians, the research offers an empirically informed understanding of how musical groups achieve success through a number of key elements. These include aspects of communication, leadership style, decision-making and teamwork. This research offers some important insights into how a varied group of performers combine to produce a cohesive group performance while maintaining their own artistic integrity and freedom. The evaluation and interpretation of the data collected provides detailed information about what makes an unconventional ensemble unique and successful in today's music world and clearly demonstrates the kinds of pitfalls as well as the accomplishments that are experienced by present day practising chamber music ensembles.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This qualitative research traverses the disciplines of music psychology, sociomusicology, performance studies and music education. Additionally, disciplines including social psychology, organisational behaviour, and sociology have guided the research by providing conceptual links between musical ensembles and general organisational processes, adding depth and understanding to the area investigated. This chapter will draw upon literature in these disciplines to explore and explain the analytical and interpretative lens through which various aspects of the research topic are established.

The basis for this enquiry is a belief – grounded in personal professional experience and a broader review of music literature – that it is necessary to use information and insights gained from experts in the field (practising musicians) to build an accurate profile of what is occurring within unconventional or non-traditional ensemble groups. Of particular interest is understanding how their practices might differ to those of other music ensembles (such as a string quartet, or musicians who belong to a large ensemble, including orchestras or choirs). In reviewing previous research into the behaviour of ensemble musicians, there was a perceived lack of research that focused on contemporary, unconventional or non-traditional ensembles, particularly with an approach that drew on the personal experiences of musicians to understand how they manage interpersonal relationships, decision-making and collaborative leadership in today's cultural environment.

To detail the existing gaps in music research, and make clear the overall utility of applying a multi-disciplinary approach, this review chapter is structured into four key parts beginning with a survey of the developments of chamber music and including a critical review of literature about the psychosocial behaviour of chamber music ensembles. The concept of the chamber music ensemble will be defined and its historical development mapped in order to illustrate the currency of this research. The second section examines aspects of ‘the musical self’ by drawing on key assumptions about professional musical identities and identifying areas where there has been little empirical research. The third part of the chapter investigates concepts and theories of collaboration and group behaviour. The key focus is upon group behaviour and how collaboration is formed through organisational development. It is here in particular that literature in fields other than music is shown to be valuable, and it is reviewed in order to understand how collaborative work is approached within these fields. The benefit of this is that it provides insights into different kinds of group processes that may have significance for musical ensembles. The fourth section discusses literature about the similarities, comparisons, and correspondences between musical and general organisations. Throughout this literature review, organisational culture is also examined in order to identify the connections that exist between musical and other types of organisations.

2.2 Surveying the concept of chamber music throughout history

This research supports and applies the definition of chamber music determined by *The Oxford Companion to Music*:

... music written for a small ensemble, either for private (domestic) performance or, if in the presence of an audience, for a relatively small hall. The definition excludes solo music, for an essential ingredient of chamber music is the pleasure of playing together. (Arnold, Bashford, & Griffiths, n.d.)

The *Oxford* definition is itself built upon a concept that has a long history. Nicola Vicentino in his book *L'Antica Musica* [Rome: 1555] (as cited in Baron, 1998, p. 1), was the first to use the term *chamber music* to describe part-singing that was to be sung outside the church in a more private and intimate setting. Throughout the following 300 years, *music for the chamber* was variably described as instrumental music that had a specific function and location; particularly intimate, private, non-religious music that was performed in a small room by amateur musicians, rather than in the more common venues such as the church, theatre or outdoors. By the late-19th century, the expression *chamber music* was used to describe 'exclusively intimate, solistic [*sic*], instrumental ensemble music' (Baron, 1998, p. 2) and developed into a number of specifically scored genres including the string quartet, wind quintet and piano trio, amongst others. Function and location became less of a concern to the definition of the term, and chamber music ensembles with professional musicians began to perform more regularly in great concert halls to large audiences (Baron, 1998). Twentieth century

performers and composers developed an interest in music from the past, players uncovered forgotten genres, while composers began to write new works based on past traditions. This period in history also saw a revival of chamber music written for different mixtures of instrument types, similar to those of the late-18th century ‘broken consort’. These ensembles could no longer be defined by scoring (string quartet, piano trio, and so on), and as Baron (1998) observes, ‘the whole idea of genres came under attack – not theoretically by writers about music but by composers who began to ignore traditional genres’ (p. 421). It is the ensembles that have resulted from this shift in genre that are the focus of my research, taking a contemporary perspective of chamber musicians who perform with varied, unconventional ensembles.

Today, a chamber music ensemble is defined as a classical musical group comprising between two and ten instrumental and/or vocal musicians (Lim, 2013; Sicca, 2000). What separates chamber music from other forms of ensemble music is that each individual has an independent part, melodic line, or role. Whether this role is of a solo or accompanying nature is more often determined by the musical score the performers play from. It is this independent part writing that distinguishes chamber music from other genres, and the close ‘listening ability’ of the members and reliance on intimate partnerships that characterises chamber musicians (Sicca, 2000).

Historical and more recent developments in the field of chamber music (both musically and culturally) are important aspects to this study. Looking at the

evolution of chamber music highlights the way that audiences, composers, performers and new developments in technology have shaped how chamber music is performed and received. Davidson's (1999) research of social psychology in relation to musical performance demonstrates the importance that social norms and the socio-cultural behaviours of performers and audiences play in the creation and perception of a musical performance. Davidson presented the case of a string quartet that pushed the boundaries of formal performance settings by not conforming to societal expectations of the time, suggesting that this demonstrated a movement away from formal social settings to increased informality.

Just as social settings and expectations in the Western world are becoming more varied and informal, so too are chamber music ensembles. Capps (2005) for example, provides a report that illustrates the variety of chamber music concerts provided by Australia's *Musica Viva* organisation, indicating that performances are more varied in context (in terms of venue, content, and style of performance) depending on the expectations of a particular audience demographic. It is clear then that contemporary practices have expanded the chamber music genre to include mixed and eclectic approaches to composing and performing music, including the use of electronic mediums, unusual instrumental combinations, research-based performance practice, and interdisciplinary performances (Beech, Broad, Cunliffe, Duffy, & Gilmore, 2015; Capps, 2005; Griffiths, 2003; McCalla, 2003; Petocz et al., 2014).

Shifts in the cultural environments that shape these ensembles add to the need for a more extensive review of current chamber music practices. Through listening to, and interpreting, musicians' experiences of performing and working within the present cultural environment, one can form a deeper awareness of what shapes current ensembles and how they are structured and maintained over a period of time. Beech et al. (2015) explain that ensembles in the 21st century are becoming less 'role-oriented' in terms of players and their duty or function within a particular ensemble, to one

in which individuals cluster around one-off artistic projects on the basis of what they, uniquely, can bring to the project – a network of practitioners focus on the needs of a specific project. (p. 18)

Their findings claim small ensembles are relying on structures that focus on artistic directors and chief executives who choose from a pool of musicians, which is moving away from a 'person-as-role' view towards selecting musicians to employ a unique mixture of skills, attributes, and perspectives within the ensemble (Beech et al., 2015). By discussing such role expectations with a number of classical chamber musicians to determine how they see their position within different ensembles and to ascertain which skills are required in the current chamber music environment, my research expands on this observation by Beech et al., through a focus on classical chamber musicians outside the traditional genre, who often play in groups that are more project-based.

2.2.1 Research in the field of chamber music

Research in the behavioural field of classical chamber ensemble musicians has, in the past, focused on the more ‘traditional’ group design; in particular, string quartets (Butterworth, 1990; Davidson & Good, 2002; Gilboa & Tal-Shmotkin, 2010; Murnighan & Conlon, 1991; Seddon & Biasutti, 2009b; Tal-Shmotkin & Gilboa, 2013; V. M. Young & Colman, 1979); piano duos and the ensemble pianist (Blank & Davidson, 2007; Dogantan-Dack, 2012; Kokotsaki, 2007; Williamon & Davidson, 2002); wind quintets (Ford & Davidson, 2003); and vocal ensembles (Lim, 2013; Paparo, 2013). Each of these ensembles have clearly defined and established roles in relation to the musicians and their instrument’s position within the group. These ensembles do not often draw on a pool of players, as suggested by Beech et al. (2015), and therefore are best observed as fixed structured groups. It is also evident that there is an established hierarchy in terms of leadership within these ensembles, with often the ‘top voice’ or ‘top line’ leading the ensemble (Murnighan & Conlon, 1991). Historical developments in musical composition throughout the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods have also defined the way these roles are scored (Baron, 1998). Composers are familiar with the structure of these ensembles and write for each instrument according to their traditional role and idiosyncrasies. The string quartet, for example, consists of four members who rarely, if ever, change musical position or function. Blank and Davidson (2007) summarise the roles of members of a string quartet as follows,

- first violin is typically musical leader;
- second violin supports but has significant melodic material, often directly entwining with the first violinist;

- viola gives the ‘middle’ register of the quartet and allows the player to achieve a strong identity not found in orchestral work; and
- cello acts as the base of the group. (p. 232)

Piano duos, as the name suggests, involve only two players performing on identical instruments (and in the case of a piano duet, they share the same instrument). A wind quintet comprises flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn, and bassoon, with no interchangeable part, and a vocal ensemble’s members are distinguished by voice type, generally: soprano, alto, tenor, baritone and bass. The similarity of instruments and the historical shaping of these ensembles have proven to be useful examples for case studies exploring the internal dynamics of musical groups where each member has a particular place in the ensemble.

Ensembles and their performing repertoire have shifted over the past 100 years, creating new challenges and resulting in more experimentation with different combinations of instruments, pushing beyond boundaries of the ‘traditional’ roles that were once defined for each instrument. It is these contemporary ensembles that need to be the subject of research into interpersonal relationships amongst co-performers, describing how musicians with different backgrounds and skills can unite to create a desired outcome or performance (Bathurst & Ladkin, 2012; Kokotsaki, 2007).

The case study approach has served as a valuable foundation to investigating ensemble processes (Austin & O'Donnell, 2007; Butterworth, 1990; Poulson & Abraham, 1996). Interviews or observation of groups as a whole contribute

specific information pertaining to certain groups, and exploring this literature provides a basis whereby the results can then be investigated further on a personal, individual level. V. M. Young and Colman (1979) were among the first to study the psychological processes in small ensembles, namely string quartets. Their theoretical research compared a number of small group psychological theories to reveal a set of factors that affect working ensembles, including conflict, co-operation, leadership and group influence. Music ensembles were recognised as ‘an unusual kind of social group whose mode of interaction involves a degree of intimacy and subtlety possibly not equalled by any other kind of group’ (1979, p. 12). The authors, however, admitted their work was speculative and needed further empirical research to substantiate. The string quartet was chosen for their study specifically due to it comprising ‘four instruments of the same family, similar in timbre and method of sound production’ deeming it ‘a small group *par excellence*’ (emphasis in the original, 1979, p. 12). The focus was on comparing theories of small group processes, conflict resolution and leadership, specifically to string quartets. They concluded that ‘a string quartet ... is a special kind of small group which, for various reasons, might reasonably be assumed to manifest some of the established psychological processes of small groups in a particularly striking way’ (1979, p. 17). The emphasis here is that this particular group and its tradition and history reveal specific traits that could be established in other types of ensembles. The theoretical study by V. M Young and Colman paved the way for further investigation by other scholars resuming a decade later. This research laid the groundwork for empirical comparative studies of ensembles that comprise

musicians with varying, yet complementary instrumental performance techniques and backgrounds.

A review of the literature identified three individual case studies focusing on the group processes, developments and cooperation of individual string quartets through observation, case study and interview methods. Butterworth (1990) took an observational approach to the behaviour of members of a string quartet, notably the Detroit String Quartet (DSQ). He explored group aspirations and shared values as well as decision-making and conflict resolution. He also reported that the repertoire performed by the quartet provided a clear direction for the group, an inward orientation of the group was important, and clear levels of aspiration and group philosophy are needed to ensure that all members were in agreement with the aims and objectives of the group. This highlights the importance of team direction, structure and organisational context, and how these elements relate to group dynamics. Interestingly, the members of this string quartet were also members of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (with the exception of one member who was supported by her partner who was a member of the DSO). Therefore, the members had other means of financial support, taking the strain off becoming financially viable as an ensemble, and allowing the members to focus on an artistic commitment to the music. Butterworth notes that 'the part-time involvement of DSQ members in the quartet is a defining characteristic of the ensemble' (1990, p. 213), creating a different set of priorities and work ethic for autonomous, stand-alone ensembles. In contrast to my research, Butterworth did not take into consideration the thoughts and opinions of the individual musicians away from the ensemble, and reveals little about the

member's personal priorities and values in relation to the ensemble group. Although Butterworth was able to observe the ensemble's group processes over a period of time, his research reported on and reviewed one ensemble, paying particular attention to group processes as a collective. Furthermore, Butterworth's case study sample did not include participants who did not have orchestral careers and who chose chamber music as their primary performance output.

The second case study by Poulson and Abraham (1996) provides a transcript of a group interview with members of the Portland String Quartet. In the study, the members were asked to view a videotape that the quartet recorded thirteen years before. The musicians were instructed that they should focus on the group's dynamics and then comment on any changes or lessons they might have learnt over the past thirteen years. The researchers recorded and transcribed responses from each individual player, as they discussed building relationships, trust, the value of quality work, conflict management, decision-making, and communication strategies developed over time. The thoughts of each individual are represented although they were interviewed as a group reflecting together upon their experiences of performing with this particular string quartet. However, Poulson and Abraham introduce the idea of each musician as an entrepreneur 'taking the risk, personally and collectively, to develop a work group on which their individual livelihood rests' (1996, p. 198). Unlike the DSQ in Butterworth's study, the Portland String Quartet was founded in 1969 and has been a full-time ensemble since 1980 (with only one member change since 1969 at the time of Poulson and Abraham's study, and two further changes in 2013 and 2015). As a full-time venture, 'themes of personal responsibility for the success of the

enterprise and of quality' were addressed in the interview (1996, p. 198). This study had the advantage of being able to observe changes in group behaviour over time as relationships were formed and maintained. This quartet also discussed repertoire specific to the string quartet canon; the members claimed that they 'are caretakers of a body of the string quartet literature, which we think is a very important body of literature in the musical world... It's important that people continue to take care of this literature...' (1996, p. 200). They said this added value to the ensemble's cause as it gave purpose towards maintaining a specific genre. New music ensembles today do not have this same purpose because they are not responsible for preserving an established repertoire. Therefore, an examination of the different values and purposes placed on new music ensembles and how individual professional and group identity is formed is something that warrants further research.

The third case study is of the Medici String Quartet by Austin and O'Donnell (2007). This study focuses on one member and his experience of working with the quartet. It highlights aspects of relationship building, professionalism and shared leadership, and introduces the issue of conflict between musical authenticity and commercial interests. This is, however, discussed from the perspective of one member only. Although there is some mention of money versus artistic integrity, it is mostly in relation to this musician's experience of working with record companies and the demands they place on an ensemble in terms of repertoire and project limitations. The internal struggles of artistic integrity versus economic viability amongst members was not discussed in relation to the group itself, but rather the individual choices performers made outside the group to take on other

projects to supplement income, and relieve the financial stress and hardship faced by the members. Reporting of the research also presents the interviewee's decision to become a chamber musician, and is one of the few studies that addresses the thought processes leading to this career decision. After a year of orchestral playing, the interviewee stated he 'became extremely uncomfortable with being obliged to play like everyone else' (2007, p. 4). In this respect, the research was seen as valuable to my study because it provides some insight into the conscious choices musicians make when deciding upon chamber music careers.

These three in-depth case studies are of great value, as they investigated the experiences of particular string quartets and players, bringing to light musicians' personal thoughts and opinions about ensemble processes. However, as noted, they have their limitations: each study focuses on one particular group and genre, and does not take into consideration the experiences of ensemble members who work in a variety of contexts outside a particular genre, nor do they compare different ensembles' processes and experiences.

Murnighan and Conlon (1991) took a mixed method approach and were the first to conduct a large-scale project investigating the internal dynamics and success of a number of professional string quartets in Great Britain. By interviewing eighty individual professional musicians from twenty different string quartets, Murnighan and Conlon were able to draw comparisons between string quartets and other kinds of intense working groups. Within these string quartets they

looked at instances of paradoxes, applying concepts established by K. K. Smith and Berg (1987/1997). K. K. Smith and Berg had defined paradoxes within social groups as ‘contradictory and opposing emotions, thoughts, and actions that *coexist* inside the group’ (emphasis in the original, 1997, p. 15). Through localising these in the context of string quartets, Murnighan and Conlon were able to compare successful groups (identified through performance fee, number of albums, number of mentions in interviews, number of concerts, newspaper and magazine reviews, and ratings of abstracted reviews) and then analysed whether any of these held paradoxes. Leadership versus democracy and the paradox of the second fiddle were found to be specific to string quartets, while confrontation versus compromise was discussed in terms of general musical conflicts. The results displayed a number of strategies used by successful ensembles to manage these paradoxes, albeit implicitly. For example, without discussing methods of conflict management in terms of confrontation or compromise, the members seemed to achieve agreement through not conceding when they had a strong opinion, they played more than talked in rehearsal, they had well-established implicit rules concerning what could be said and what could not, they shared a superordinate goal, and there was a general feeling that conflict was good (Murnighan & Conlon, 1991). These strategies for managing conflict are not specific to string quartets, however, the researchers only discuss approaches to conflict focused on matters of musical interpretation, and do not explore organisational disagreements.

The early 2000s saw developments in music psychology and investigations into the impact of socio-cultural and socio-emotional factors on ensemble behaviour.

Jane Davidson, a key researcher in the field of music psychology and sociology, contributed a large amount of research on performer identity, social and musical coordination, and social processes. Davidson and Good (2002) observed and interviewed a student string quartet, exploring the social and musical coordination in rehearsal and performance. From their observations, they were able to identify socio-cultural issues that affected the functionality of the ensemble. These factors included concerns with the social dynamics of the group, performance anxiety and musical demands. Particular attention was paid to the communication required between players to create a cohesive musical performance. This study was directed at a newly formed string quartet at a student level, also from the perspective of a new entity. The research explores a number of psychological and social issues; however, whether these issues subside with professional groups over time is worth questioning. This early qualitative study does bring to the forefront the intrinsic communication and co-ordination skills musicians possess. As an exploratory investigation within the context of a student string quartet, the authors 'provide an initial framework for further more wide-ranging investigations that may gradually embrace other styles and traditions of musical performance' (2002, p. 187).

Williamon and Davidson (2002), Blank and Davidson (2007), and Kokotsaki (2007) have published research that is concerned with understanding more about the relationships formed between musicians involved in collaborations with piano. Williamon and Davidson's (2002) study focused on co-performer communication within rehearsals and performance of a piano duo. The use of body movement, eye contact, verbal interactions and other visual cues between the performers was

observed both in learning a musical work and coordinating the musical meaning. Although they did not witness particular movements towards the audience, it was noted that ‘the presence of an audience affects the way in which performers behave’ (2002, p. 64), and an interesting aspect for further exploration. This study sample was limited to members of one piano duo, which was created for the purposes of the study and was not a fully established ensemble. Therefore, the focus was on one particular set of co-performers, providing a framework in which to investigate co-performer communication within ensembles of mixed instruments and various group sizes. Blank and Davidson (2007) also explored the social factors of piano duos, and, like the string quartet, they acknowledge that this ensemble was chosen for its instrument similarities. Two distinct aspects in relation to the piano duo were exposed - the socio-emotional and professional elements. The socio-emotional aspects described by Blank and Davidson are also discussed in Ford and Davidson’s (2003) study of wind quintets and build on previous research of interpersonal relationships, leadership and group work. These two studies identify another perspective of group work – the professional aspects of collaboration that include matters of organisation, administration, management, repertoire choice, rehearsal schedules and performances (Blank & Davidson, 2007).

The body of previous research has concentrated on ensembles involving the same instrument, or from the same instrumental family. Kokotsaki (2007) – whose research focused on collaborative piano duos – suggests that the conditions which affect homogenous ensembles (same instrument or instrument family), are communication, balance, performers’ roles, group size, experience, time

availability and performers' personalities. Kokotsaki comments that identifying these conditions and understanding the role they play in group processes is enhanced when studying heterogeneous ensembles, due to their more complex nature (2007, p. 663). Although writing four years earlier, Ford and Davidson (2003) demonstrate the validity of Kokotsaki's observation by consciously choosing to move away from the study of homogenous ensembles, such as string quartets and piano duos, as they note was predominant within the music research at the time, to study the roles of members of wind quintets. The wind quintet is a specific combination of instruments often sitting in conventional seating arrangements. What was discovered in Ford and Davidson's research was that the particulars of different instruments created shifts in the internal dynamics by way of the player's character and traits, and their instrumental roles within the musical score. However, this study still observed a 'traditional' form of ensemble and its instrumental roles within the genre. Based on the findings of Ford and Davidson's research, logically a more eclectic group of players would seem to create further differences in internal dynamics. This was something at the forefront of thinking when forming my research, adding further layers of complexity.

Lim (2013) and Paparo (2013) both researched vocal ensembles, and turned their attention to the professional side of self-managed ensembles. Lim (2013) interviewed a full-time *a Capella* ensemble (vocal ensemble without instrumental accompaniment) to ascertain what factors contribute to the excellence of chamber music ensembles as work groups. The results of Lim's study revealed two contributing factors that were similarly found in the earlier studies of Blank and Davidson (2007), and Ford and Davidson (2003). These three research studies

pointed to the ways that collaborative musical decisions and socio-emotional aspects affect ensembles. In addition, the researchers found that issues including leadership, task distribution and organisational models affected the group's output quality.

So far, the studies discussed to this point in the chapter have focused on traditional ensembles mostly performing established, classical repertoire. Outside classical music, another genre that has been examined closely for group interaction is that of jazz. Although not strictly within the bounds of 'classical chamber music', the constraint of much of the literature that focuses specifically on classical ensembles can be combatted by looking more widely, at the literature on jazz ensembles. Considering improvisation as a distinct factor of the genre, researchers regard this as another contributing element in ensemble communication and the role of ensemble members, whereby each member acknowledges their dual role as a soloist and accompanist during a performance (Barrett, 1998; Bathurst & Ladkin, 2012; Berliner, 1994; Hatch, 1998). MacDonald and Wilson (2005) used focus group interviewing as a method to gain information about group ideologies within jazz ensembles. By interviewing the group as a whole, they were able to observe group dynamics firsthand and witness methods of non-verbal communication presented between group members. Macdonald and Wilson's study is one of the few that take a focus group approach, as observing communication and group behaviour of musicians in discussion was an important aspect of their research methodology.

Many of these ensemble studies, whether they gather data from individual interviews, focus groups or observation, have investigated or observed particular groups as a *whole*, demonstrating how specific ensembles or types of ensembles cooperate within their own boundaries. My research expands on existing best practice in that it takes the perspective of the *individual* – how they identify as a chamber musician, how this affects their involvement within an ensemble, and their experiences of working in different chamber music ensembles and contexts. This approach meant a large amount of data was collected, and that aided a deeper understanding of the meaning musicians give to their professional identity and the work they ascribe to different ensembles.

The literature presented shows that there has been an increasing interest in qualitative research into how small ensemble musicians work together in order to create a professional group identity and maintain a successful ensemble. To add to this growing body of research, investigation into different kinds of groups – including contemporary art music and those without a traditional structure – need to be conducted in order to understand the different working environment various ensembles face when preparing for performances and maintaining success as a professional ensemble. Self-managing ensembles that have interchangeable parts, or contemporary experimental ensembles (including jazz), where roles are not clearly defined, lead us to question how these groups determine the responsibility of each member both musically and professionally, and how they apply personal knowledge and skills to work collectively towards a creative, unified goal.

2.3 The musical self

Identity work – the categorisation of the ‘self’ and how it is categorised by others – has an established history dating back to early philosopher and psychologist William James in 1890 (James, 1952). It is believed that identity is built and developed, the result of a person’s interaction with others and the environment (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Coupland, 2015; Dilthey, 1988; Mead, 1934). In recent years, there has been a growing body of literature on the development of a professional musician identity. Professional identity is best defined as ‘one’s professional self-concept based on attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences’ (Slay & Smith, 2011, p. 86). Schnare et al. (2011) define the musician’s identity, or *musical self*, as ‘an aspect of the self-concept that integrates perceptions, beliefs and schemata about a person’s musical abilities and possibilities’ (p. 95).

A considerable amount of literature has been published on formation of musical identities (Deliège & Sloboda, 1996; DeNora, 2000; MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2005; MacDonald & Wilson, 2005; O'Neill, 2005) and the incentives and motivations for individuals to undertake music as a career (Clark, Lisboa, & Williamon, 2014; Coulson, 2012; Jarvin & Subotnik, 2010; A. J. Martin, 2008; Olteteanu, 2012; Schnare et al., 2011; Woody, 2004). From a psychological perspective, Kemp’s seminal works (Kemp, 1996, 1999) provide an in-depth examination of musicians’ personalities and temperaments in order to uncover the motivations and self-investments of people who pursue music, suggesting ‘it may not be merely what these people can *do* that separates them from others, it may

well prove to be the kinds of people that they *are*' (1999, p. 42). One aspect of his research looks at the musician's self-concept and the connectedness between personal identity and musical ability. In this vein, Kemp described a number of anxieties developed amongst musicians due to the following factors: a personal investment into a relatively insecure career; an emphasis on perfectionism; life uncertainties; competitiveness amongst musicians; and the strain of irregular working hours (1996, p. 139). In addition to this, Schnare et al. (2011) consider the musical self and the incentives that lead musicians to invest large amounts of time and energy into their art. They look at the musical self as *possible selves* in terms of a musician's hopes and fears, serving as a source of motivation for musicians. They concluded that

The possible musical self can be described as possessing
hopes for future success and fears of future obscurity...
[and] ... often seeks affiliation with band-mates and other
musicians, and fears their rejection. (p. 109)

These two important identity studies employed different research approaches. Kemp's (1996) book is a meta-analysis that surveys psychological research and incorporates different measurements, theories and assumptions formed across cognitive, social and music psychology. He examines different gender roles, and the lives of students, composers, practitioners and teachers to discover the personalities of different musicians. In particular, Kemp focuses upon orchestral performers, keyboard players, singers and popular musicians. The research, however, does not specifically consider musicians working in small ensembles

and the details about musician personalities and temperament may not necessarily align with those of musicians working in this field.

Schnare et al. (2011) used an online survey to examine the possible selves of 204 musicians from a wide range of genres. The survey included demographic questions, scales to measure motivation, and open-ended questions with prompts to explore possible selves. Although this was a large-scale study that provided further insight into modern musicians' self-concepts, the use of an online survey did not allow the participants the opportunity to explore all aspects of their musical self and the questions did not focus on the challenges and motivations faced by musicians belonging to a specific music genre.

Keeping within the realms of social psychology, Davidson (2005) draws attention to musician identity in terms of the 'performer', in particular, as this relates to a professional soloist. By analysing the existing literature on musical performance skills and examining possible external influences including environmental factors, she aimed to answer the question 'what makes a performer identity?'. She explored what was understood to be key factors, and these included musicians' exposure to music and performance contexts, the role of key others, and personality traits that led individuals to want to move into performing. What this study and others that have looked at musician identity overlook is research into the musicians who *choose* a career in chamber music as their main artistic output rather than a steady orchestral career or solo performer. The literature on musical motivation and identity reveals that there are many reasons musicians choose

certain paths. Therefore, chamber musicians who choose not to pursue orchestral or solo careers could have possible different personal motivations and preferences for their musical contributions, and may identify as having different skills and abilities to large ensemble musicians.

Other than artistic factors, Sicca (2000) argues that small groups that have no conductor require the members to be directly and collectively responsible for the group and its relationship with the general public, taking on a self-management or entrepreneurial role. These elements require chamber musicians to develop skills beyond those attributed to artistry. Sicca concludes that

... such a direct involvement of the musicians means that the performing groups function as auto-organisations, and this has important implications for the definition of the concept of value in the perspective of the performing arts.
(p. 147)

The concept of value is considered in detail in Sicca's research. It is noted by Sicca that the concept of value will vary depending on whose point of view is taken – instrumentalist, vocalist, conductor, audience, sponsor, press, and so on – and no two conceptions of value will be the same. From the perspective of the performer in this case, Sicca claims 'we can view the concept of value as something which tends to the ultimate goals of art itself rather than purely economic or monetary goals' (2000, pp. 156-157). Considering Sicca's comment that the ultimate goal of musicians is the production of art, he also presents the

argument that chamber ensemble musicians are ‘entrepreneurs and managers of themselves’ (p. 147); therefore, there are other factors that must be considered in order to achieve this artistic goal. Small ensembles, often not having a management structure, require a fair amount of self-investment in time, and often finances. Sicca also uses the concept of value to describe the communication between the musical score and the performer (as interpreter), and focuses the information around a chamber music festival and the reflections of the festival director. This self-investment and definition of *value* may vary between musicians who are involved both in these ‘unconventional’ ensembles as well as more conventional ensembles. This difference deserves further investigation.

It is widely documented that classical musicians require a broad base of skills to remain employable (Bennett, 2008b; Hays, 2013; Jarvin & Subotnik, 2010; Oakland et al., 2013; Pun, 2014; Westerlund et al., 2013), and performers who are core members of chamber music ensembles are less likely to be employed full-time than those of an orchestra (Loft, 2003). Musicians whose career paths do not lead to salaried positions in orchestras or other full-time performance work are often termed ‘portfolio musicians’, or are described as having a ‘protean career’ (Bridgstock, 2005; Hall, 2004). That is, musicians who embrace a collection of different musical activities including (but not limited to) performance, management, and teaching (Bartleet et al., 2012; Bennett, 2008a, 2009; Creech et al., 2008; Smilde, 2012). These studies show that a portfolio career requires a certain amount of enterprise because such musicians are often working as individuals and balancing a number of jobs of a different nature, so they have less stability and certainty and are personally responsible for their own employment

(Bain, 2005). The freelance, self-employed nature of musicians presents an interesting view in terms of understanding identity. Whether or not individuals define their identity not only as a musician but also as an entrepreneur is something raised in Coulson's research. Coulson (2012) points out that in terms of her study

none of the participants had made an entire living from music-related work such as teaching. It emerged from the in-depth interviews that if this had been the case, they would not have been able to think of themselves as musicians, since they generally recognized the status of 'musician' as strongly linked to the paid making of music.
(p. 251)

Recent research considers the importance of preparing music students for protean careers. Many of these studies survey musicians asking them to reflect on the amount of training they had within the academy in the areas of business, technology and communication (Bartleet et al., 2012; Bennett, 2008a, 2009; Carruthers, 2008; Creech et al., 2008). These researchers found that the working lives and career trajectories are different for the 21st century musician compared to in the past, and that there is a need to examine the factors that help make musician careers sustainable (Reid, Dahlgren Abrandt, Dahlgren, & Petozc, 2011). The factors identified include the impact of technology and the gap that can arise in portfolio musicians' repertoire of skills (Bartleet et al., 2012; Bennett, 2009). Further research has focused on portfolio career musicians in terms of their levels of anxiety (Papageorgi, Creech, & Welch, 2013) and a comparative study between

portfolio career musicians and student musicians in their perception of musical skill and expertise (Papageorgi et al., 2010). Little research has considered how with the little training provided, musicians are able to learn these skills *on the job* outside the conservatoire, and apply them to specific circumstances or aspects of their portfolio (i.e. small ensemble performance and management). The research also does little to explain how in relation to small ensemble work musicians personally balance these jobs and manage working with other music colleagues, including those who are collaborators in the same freelancing position.

Studies indicate that musicians identify as musicians, rarely taking into account other activities, professions and identities; for example, having an ‘entrepreneurial identity’ or identifying as a ‘teacher’. Musicians find these descriptions difficult to accept and incorporate into their self- or professional identity (Beaven & Jerrard, 2012; Coulson, 2012; Oakland et al., 2013). J. Mills (2004) revealed that ‘professional identity’ is what someone presents to the outside world, whereas a musician identity or musical identity is more individualistic and personal. What musicians do, and what they believe they are, are two aspects that make up musician identity. Mills’s study uses performer-teachers as an example, whereby the participants in the study identified as performers or musicians, regardless of their main income received from teaching. As mentioned earlier, Coulson’s (2012) study of musicians in the United Kingdom adds to the research on the complexity of musicians’ professional identity and explores the notion of musicians’ understanding of entrepreneurship and whether they identify themselves as being entrepreneurial. The study revealed that although musicians take on such enterprising activities as networking, management and other

business-like ventures, they saw themselves as musicians foremost and did not think of themselves as entrepreneurs, even showing ‘considerable opposition to regarding their working lives in such terms’ (2012, p. 257). The study is somewhat limited in its scope because it does not reflect other aspects of a musician’s self-identity within a portfolio career, in terms of artistic output and the benefits of self-investment. However, this British study did show that the balance between artistic integrity and enterprise needs to be explored further and that this should give a voice to professional musicians who understand through experience what is required of themselves in order to remain successful artists.

Beaven and Jerrard (2012) conducted a reflective, ‘restorying’ study of twelve music students over two years who were in the process of developing music-related ventures. Restorying is a form of qualitative research involving retelling of individual stories and stories about others. They found that in the participants’ re-composition of personal stories, it was a challenge for these musicians to think of themselves as entrepreneurs as well as, or rather than, musicians. Their findings suggest that classically trained musicians felt ‘different’ or uncomfortable taking on new ventures outside what their teachers had expected of them (competitions and orchestral careers). The participants of their study also perceived that they would not be considered ‘real’ entrepreneurs by those typically identified as entrepreneurs and that by embracing the entrepreneurial side of their work they would ‘not be behaving as musicians should’ by other musicians (2012, p. 71). These struggles were of interest to me, to see if within a larger population sample, established, professional chamber musicians reflect the same sentiments noted by Beaven and Jarrard.

Coupland (2015), Hoedemaekers and Ybema (2015), and Beech, Gilmore, Hibbert, and Ybema (2016) through their identity work present the challenges of revealing self-identity amongst musicians and the conflicting identities they hold in terms of creative authenticity versus commercialism. In particular, these studies focus on popular music artists and indie musicians exploring the intrinsic demands of ‘longing for authentic self’ and extrinsic demands to make a living (Beech et al., 2016; Hoedemaekers & Ybema, 2015). The issue of the creative self and commercialism, or the need to earn a living, spans not only the popular music/commercial music sector, but is also considered a struggle for classical musicians.

Coinciding with entrepreneurship, a larger struggle is that of creating art and generating an income. Hoedemaekers and Ybema (2015) also discuss tension between being an ‘authentic’ musician and the demands of the commercial world:

Musicians’ identity work is here shaped by cultural notion of creativity and art, but also by the daily demands that are placed upon them and the diverse sets of tasks that their craft requires ... Identities are shaped not only in relation to the immediate demands of work, social relations and personal relationships but also in relation to more abstract ideals that present themselves to us through our everyday practice. (p. 179)

In particular, they discuss this in terms of one case study that follows the leader of a popular music band. Unconventional chamber music ensembles often perform unknown repertoire, or new works, commissioning composers to write works specifically for their ensembles. By not performing known ‘standard repertoire’, the notion of ‘art for art’s sake’ has a big influence on the way in which these ensembles, and the individual members, operate. While musicians may view themselves as artists first and foremost, processes in which the authentic artist and the commercial viability of their art can be shared and shaped by internal and external influences are realities that also need to be taken into consideration.

2.3.1 Group identity

Although this study takes an individual perspective of what it means to be a part of an ensemble, the concept of group identity must also be considered when investigating group processes – taking into account the results of ensemble case studies mentioned earlier. Wenger (1998) explains that ‘the concept of identity serves as a pivot between the social and the individual, so that each can be talked about in terms of the other’ (1998, p. 145). K. K. Smith & Berg (1997) explain their *paradox of identity* in group life as a link between the individual and group identity and say that it is ‘expressed by the struggle of individuals and the group to establish a unique and meaningful identity where each is an integral part of the other’ (1997, p. 90). They note that the struggle arises when having to relinquish individual identity in order to conform to that of the group and belong. However, Wenger (1998) disagrees with this paradox, claiming that this is only an

assumption and that although there may be conflict within a group, the individual and the collective identity can ultimately enhance and support each other.

Hoedemaekers and Ybema (2015) and more recently, Beech et al. (2016) have considered the paradox of identity between individual and group identity in musical groups. Hoedemaekers and Ybema not only discuss the conflict that arises between the 'authentic musician' and commercial needs discussed earlier, they also consider conflicting individual and group identity. Through their case study of a popular music artist, they discovered that as a 'band leader'; running the band and composing and arranging repertoire for the band, the artist 'finds it difficult to articulate his own role against dominant notions of what a 'band' is: individuality versus collectivity' (2015, p. 179). As their study was set within the backdrop of popular music singer-songwriter, Hoedemaekers and Ybema view this in terms of the genre's historical developments. Considering the wide range of roles and functions of musicians within different musical genres, this source of conflict is one which can be considered in the classical music world, investigating whether it exists, and to what extent it has an effect on classical musician identity.

For classical musical groups, there is little literature specifically addressing ensemble identity. Lim (2013) explored the balance of identities and ego in her vocal octet study and discovered that individual identity was not lost within the ensemble. The ensemble studied carefully chose repertoire to balance solo and accompanying parts within the ensemble, ensuring a balance between individual

and group identity. Tal-Shmotkin and Gilboa (2013) also looked at the balance of identity in their study of string quartets as self-managed teams, claiming:

On the one hand, each SQ [String Quartet] player preserves his or her identity while playing... but, at the same time, members of a SQ work as a team to create a cohesive and compelling musical performance. This duality is stimulating not only from the musical perspective but also from organizational and social aspects. (p. 60)

The balance of individual and collective identity is certainly of importance when looking at a musical ensemble. Group processes and the dynamics of musical ensembles appear to reflect the broader research on group dynamics (Hackman, 1990). D. R. Young's book *The Music of Management* (2004) successfully combines musical ensemble processes with organisational theory. When discussing group identity, D. R. Young writes in terms of 'excellence', claiming 'the common element is that excellence seems to require both clarity and consensus about identity on the part of those who do the organization's work, and commitment to that identity' (p. 127). Further exploring the theme of excellence, he states

An ensemble only seems to achieve excellence when its members share a special sense of identity ... [and that] ...

In the musical world, an organization's identity is what

distinguishes an ensemble, in the eyes of its own members, from other such groups. (p. 127)

Knowing and sharing the identity of the ensemble is recognised as one objective; the second objective is to commit to this identity. D. R. Young also argues that a shared identity, or common purpose, is a source of motivation for members of an ensemble, and comments that ‘motivation of ensemble members is also substantially derived from participating in a joint endeavour, inspired by a common sense of identity and purpose’ (2004, p. 127). This is true of most musical ensembles; however, D. R. Young is speaking quite generally, not identifying possible goals and motivations for different groups nor how individuals develop a group identity. The commonalities from a number of perspectives will lead to discovering how a group identity is established and how individual/group motivation is developed.

Despite the commonalities of organisational identity, group identity and musical ensemble identity, little of the literature discusses other aspects that influence or *shape* the identity of a musical ensemble beyond shared goals and values, nor does it deeply explore what these possible goals and values are. The concept of a group’s identity in terms of respective roles in deciding upon such things as repertoire, style or genre is also rarely shared. Considering some ensembles cannot be categorised easily (unlike a string quartet), identifying particular groups and what they produce musically can be a complex undertaking.

2.4 Group behaviour

In studies of group behaviour, musical ensembles that have been used as examples to demonstrate intricate group processes have been described as a ‘work group’ because they are self-governing bodies in regards to management (Hackman, 2002), and members are interdependent on each other (Tal-Shmotkin & Gilboa, 2013). Research shows that forming an ensemble, group or team in any field coincides with particular human behaviour (Gréhaigne, 2011; Kotey, 2007; D. R. Young, 2004), and any type of small team comprises a number of individuals striving for a shared goal or outcome. Through the unification of individual talents, skills and knowledge of each member, they must work together to achieve shared goals (Gerber, 1999; Gréhaigne, 2011; Lim, 2013; Sicca, 2000). Similar to any small organisation or team, ensemble musicians recognise that each individual contribution is an essential component of the overall musical result and could not exist in isolation (Butterworth, 1990; Gréhaigne, 2011; Kokotsaki, 2007; Murnighan & Conlon, 1991).

2.4.1 Group behaviour beyond music

Teamwork research in areas other than music draws on a number of concepts, including team processes and outcomes, which underpin the effectiveness of working groups (Hackman, 1990, 2002; Kerr & Tindale, 2004; Xiao, Parker, & Manser, 2013). Hackman’s collection of studies in his book *Groups that work (and those that don’t)* (1990) presents an analysis of 27 work groups from customer service teams to performing groups, including Butterworth’s study of

the Detroit String Quartet. Hackman explains that to perform well, a group must meet the *process criteria* of effectiveness, which is described as being able to:

- exert sufficient effort to accomplish the task at an acceptable level of performance,
- bring adequate knowledge and skill to bear on the task work, and
- employ task performance strategies that are appropriate to the work and to the setting in which it is being performed. (p. 9)

When evaluated according to these criteria, a group can be assessed in terms of effectiveness, and issues of productivity can be resolved by identifying whether the problem is effort, talent or strategy based. Hackman defines an effective group in terms of its productive output and the response from those that receive this output. For musical ensembles, this is an interesting perspective, as the process is often part of the output because the music is produced anew each time, and to an extent, is ephemeral (Greig & Nicolini, 2015; Sicca, 2000).

Xiao et al. (2013) investigate teamwork and collaboration in the healthcare system. They discuss features that may compromise team effectiveness in healthcare, including

- inconsistent team membership,
- whether a team is task-centric or more concerned with long-term effectiveness,
- the locality of team members,
- *Team Mental Models* (shared understanding of knowledge associated with their common work),
- team monitoring, and
- team leadership.

Although there are differences between the health sector and the creative arts, many of the issues facing complex working teams are relevant to all team-based organisations and can be explored in terms of musical ensembles.

There are a number of aspects of multidisciplinary research studies that are pertinent to music research and the role of self and group dynamics. Researchers across different disciplines have explored specific social elements, such as the role and function of ‘ego’ and the factors that influence self-worth. For example, Duarte, Araújo, Correia, and Davids (2012) and Gréhaigne (2011) discuss group dynamics within sporting teams. Gréhaigne (2011, p. 37) highlights ‘functional differentiation’, whereas, Duarte et al. (2012, p. 635) use the term ‘interindividual variation’ as a requirement of team membership. They point to the way that drawing on the different skill sets and strengths of each individual allows for a distribution of different tasks within the group in order to achieve a common goal. However, there must be a balance of individual strengths and group worth. Gréhaigne (2011) examines the role of ego in sporting teams and highlights the importance of a shared understanding of team goals and commitment. Gréhaigne considers the formation of groups including: ‘The Fused Group’ and the ‘Organised Statutory Group’, each having its own conditions, either an organic forming group or organised group (2011, pp. 38–42). Duarte et al. (2012) compare sporting teams with natural superorganisms, focusing on interpersonal relationships during performance. They determined that sports teams had emergent collective behavioural tendencies similar to biological systems, specifically when it came to perception, action and intention of individuals.

Observations from the animal world define a superorganism as ‘a group of individuals self-organised by *division of labour* and united by a *closed system of communication*’ (emphasis in the original, 2012, p. 635). These are two common themes related to successful group work that were also examined by Gréhaigne.

Research shows that the external environment in which a group works also affects its productivity. K. K. Smith and Berg (1997, pp. 152–153) discuss the contextual influences on groups, emphasising that groups do not form in a vacuum and the relationship a group has with its context can have an effect on the performance of the group. They specify three different ways context is important:

- some frameworks are brought into a group from the outside by an ‘advisor’;
- individual members are usually members of other groups, carrying different ways of working; and
- the group must fit into a larger environment in order to survive, therefore it must subordinate certain internal processes to the demands of the external.

These three contextual elements also relate to chamber music ensembles and the external environment they work in because each ensemble is unique in its membership, structure and environment. By looking at representatives from a number of different ensembles in various contexts, a greater understanding can be gained about the effects that contextual elements have on different ensembles and how they might impact on the levels of collaboration fostered between members.

Reviewing the literature on the psychosocial aspects of collaborative music making and comparing these with studies undertaken in different fields, including sport and medicine, highlights important characteristics of group formation, teamwork, leadership and communication that are also shown to be relevant to current music literature. However, questions related to chamber music ensembles specifically, (such as, how and why certain groups form and remain together, and what outcomes drive successful ensembles), still remain ambiguous. Communication methods and the need for ‘functional differentiation’ as aspects of working groups may also play a vital role in developing a group identity for a successful performing ensemble.

2.4.2 Collaboration

Collaboration within business organisations has been extensively researched, especially due to the increasing use of communication technologies and the need for sharing of resources between different organisations. Authors including Lank (2006) and Huxham & Vangen (2005) provide comprehensive, yet varied, examples of collaboration in organisations. Lank gives an overview of various aspects in relation to collaboration *within* an organisation, including developing a common language, leaderships and specialist roles, resourcing and joint outcomes. Huxham and Vangen look at effective collaborative relationships *between* organisations for mutual benefit, forming what they term *collaborative advantage*. These texts outline crucial aspects of collaboration that will be investigated throughout this research in respect to music ensembles, including shared aims and purpose, structures and dynamics, trust, power, identity, leadership and

communication. Both of these perspectives on collaboration – either within or between organisations – will be assessed as to their relevance for understanding musical ensembles as organisations.

Sociological studies on collaboration are well established in the context of the artistic realm; however, they need to be translated into the specific music context. Becker's 1982/2008 text *Art Worlds*, is a sociological study about the collaboration and social organisation of contributors in the creation of a work of art (music, visual arts, literature, theatre, and so on). Becker explains that the term *art world* is used to 'denote the network of people whose cooperative activity, organized via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things, produces the kind of art works that art world is noted for' (2008, p. x). Becker's study is extremely important in providing insights into the collaborative efforts required throughout the life of an artwork from inception to public acclaim, and it considers the number of people involved with this process. However, Becker does not focus upon the internal collaboration of music making, leaving further scholarly studies to investigate collaboration at this level. Greig and Nicolini (2015) explain the combined effort of numerous people in order to produce a musical performance and state, 'whether making something material like concert programmes, arranging travel for performers or performing to make the intangible sounds themselves, musical work involves a range of people through whose cumulative work the final product is made' (p. 191). They use *Cultural Historical Activity Theory* (CHAT) to explore the organisation of new ways of music making, in particular, the flash mob phenomenon, with the aim of developing theories that can inform management processes in other work situations.

Collaboration within musical ensembles researched by King (2004) focuses on the rehearsal of chamber music ensembles and discusses collaboration in detail, explaining that it 'is an integral and defining part of the culture of chamber music-making in so far as co-performers necessarily interact both musically and socially without the direction of a conductor' (2004, p. 12). King's study is theoretical, and based on findings of other research. Lim (2013) takes a more empirical approach through an in-depth case study involving a professional vocal ensemble. Lim finds that as work groups, ensembles

... perform complex and highly collaborative tasks: the nature of ensemble playing is such that a minor slip in coordination, even for a fraction of a second, is sufficient to undermine the quality of the performance. (p.308)

This is true of most ensembles; however, Lim's study is specific to vocal ensembles, demonstrating an instrument-specific form of communication and the characteristics of vocal ensemble singing.

Collaborative creativity and improvisation has been central in a number of studies (Barrett, 1998; Sawyer, 2006, 2008; Seddon & Biasutti, 2009a; Wilson & MacDonald, 2012). Sawyer (2006, 2008), a leading scholar in collaboration, focuses on three characteristics of group performance in his study of jazz and theatre. These are improvisation, collaboration, and emergence. Sawyer claims that the 'creativity of a group cannot be associated with any one person. All members contribute and their interactional dynamics result in the performance'

(2006, p. 148). Sawyer (2006) examined the social nature of music and how music educators can learn from the collaborative processes of music ensembles. Again, he refers exclusively to jazz ensembles, which often include elements of improvisation and develop improvisational conversations as a form of group collaboration. However, he does not focus on collaboration required on other levels, including organisational matters. Sawyer (2008) details the importance of group creativity and the importance of collaboration in music education using a model referencing empirical studies in jazz and improvisational theatre. In addition to Sawyer's characteristics of group creativity, Khodyakov (2007, p. 1) claims, 'research on creativity shows that successful collaboration is based on trust and willingness to cooperate' and that trust and control are components of coordination and cooperation within organisations. In the context of a specific self-managing ensemble (the Orpheus Orchestra), trust incorporates professionalism and interpersonal characteristics. Control is maintained by careful choice of instrumentalists in terms of musical skill and sociability, and rotational core groups create temporary hierarchy to control behaviour.

As noted earlier, Sicca (2000) studied chamber music and collaboration in regard to organisational theory. Again, emphasising the meaning of the concept of value for musicians, value is shown to have an impact on the collaborative process between the musicians and other partners outside the ensemble. He states,

... value sharing is a prerequisite for any activity of collaborating with others, and is thus a crucial factor in the process of artistic production in general and chamber music in particular. But in artistic organisations the

problem of 'value' is a difficult one, for it has a very different meaning to that current in other organisations. (p. 155)

Sicca considers collaboration from the point of view of the group as a whole and suggests that their collaborative advantage is through their 'collective consciousness', 'common culture' and shared definition of 'value'. It is this view of collaboration that makes musical ensembles unique (Khodyakov, 2007). This applies even more to ensembles that lean towards the art itself rather than achieving financial success (Sicca, 2000, p. 157). The particular collaborative aims of music ensembles have been increasingly used as an example of teamwork goal setting and productivity, giving a new focus for larger corporations (Nissley, 2010).

Previous research has revealed that ensemble musicians who work well together have a sense of 'group flow' (Bloom & Skutnick-Henley, 2005; Clark et al., 2014; Sawyer, 2006; Sinnamon, Moran, & O'Connell, 2012; Wrigley & Emmerson, 2013). Sinnamon et al. (2012) define 'flow' as 'a highly coveted yet elusive state of mind that is characterized by complete absorption in the task at hand as well as by enhanced skilled performance' (p. 6). This quantitative study used the *Dispositional Flow Scale-2* to measure the frequency of flow amongst musicians, sampling over 200 participants. Students were asked to rate statements provided based on their experience while performing music. They found that the experience of flow was common amongst both elite and amateur musicians and that 'all dimensions of flow are important in the experience of flow for musicians' (2012, p. 19). In contrast, Clark et al. (2014) used interviewing methods to obtain their

statistical data for flow experience amongst musicians. Their results indicate that aspects of positive and negative perfectionism, performance anxiety and ‘self-talk’ all affect the flow of performance.

The aforementioned studies on group flow build upon Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) *Flow Theory* – where the individual gains a sense of flow while undertaking a creative task. More recently, researchers have explored this state of flow as something that is a feature of a group as a collective entity. Sawyer (2006) explains how this sense of flow as a group differs from the individual flow state:

Group flow is an emergent group property and is not the same thing as the psychological state of flow. It depends on interaction among performers and it emerges from this process. The group can be in flow even when the members are not; or the group might not be in flow even when the members are. (p.159)

It is this sense that group flow and musical collaboration (which Sawyer claims can be a good basis of understanding all collaboration no matter which discipline) can be perceived as closely interrelated.

The relationship between flow and collaboration is taken into consideration throughout this research. Adding to the aforementioned studies, a qualitative approach is applied to learn whether the sense of flow is viewed by musicians as a factor in the success of an ensemble.

2.4.3 Leadership

There is a large volume of literature that has concentrated on the meaning of leadership, leadership theories and models, as well as leadership styles (Bass & Bass, 2008; Craig & Yetton, 1995; Mitchell & Boyle, 2009; Parry, 1996; Schein, 2010; Xiao et al., 2013). Beginning in the early 20th century, the focus of leadership was on the personal attributes and interpersonal skills leaders presented, including intelligence, energy, decisiveness, and performance (Craig & Yetton, 1995, p. 1185). After the Second World War, behavioural differences – rather than the traits one held – were the focus. Scholars were interested in employee-oriented behaviours (allowing followers to realise their motivational potential and fulfilling their needs) and/or task-oriented behaviours (focused on the organisational goals); many demonstrated that effective leaders use both types of behaviour (Craig & Yetton, 1995). Character trait and behavioural theories present a number of characteristics, abilities and actions that one might possess that allows one to become a ‘good leader’; however, they tend to ignore the social context in which leadership behaviour is taking place. Contingent and situational models were used towards the end of the 20th century, with the understanding that the situational context impacted on leadership and team outcomes. Theorists sought to determine which factors were most important in a specific situation in order to anticipate which leadership style would be most appropriately applied. Finally, more recently undertaken research has investigated charismatic and transformational forms of leadership: people who are visionary and motivational leaders who inspire followers (Craig & Yetton, 1995).

Parry (1996), for example, suggests transformational leadership happens

- by raising a follower's level of awareness and consciousness about the importance and value of nominated work outcomes and ways to achieve them,
- by getting followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the team or work centre or organisation, and
- by altering the follower's motivational need level, or by expanding that follower's portfolio of needs. (p. 31)

The foci of transformational leadership are *future* and *change*. Within a fast changing, unpredictable social environment, this style of leadership could be of value to ensembles that require a visionary artistic director or leader who can remain attentive to changes that occur internally within the group and to those things that are external to the ensemble but have a bearing on their survival and success.

Leadership in music, and the implication this could have on other organisational structures, has become a more common topic amongst theorists and researchers (Adler, 2006; Bathurst & Ladkin, 2012; Beech & Gilmore, 2015; Cook & Howitt, 2012; Kerres, 2012; D. R. Young, 2004). Great attention has also been paid to the conductor as leader and their relationship with the players of an orchestra (Boerner & Gebert, 2012; Faulkner, 1973; Green, MacKintosh, & Gilmore, 2015). This aligns with much of the behavioural research where leadership is seen as a transaction between leader and follower (Atik, 1994; Bass & Bass, 2008). The literature on charismatic and transformational leadership suggests these theories are better suited to the teamwork of classical chamber music groups and those that have artistic directors. For example, Kawase (2015) found that a common

performance interpretation is needed in ensemble practice and performance. Leaders of an ensemble who guide a group in a particular direction or towards a specific goal without force therefore demonstrate ‘directive-charismatic leadership’ qualities (Kawase, 2015).

D. R. Young (2004) discusses leadership in terms of different ensembles of varying sizes. He argues that smaller ensembles aim for a more egalitarian setting, where larger ensembles require more formal leadership roles. Whether there is an allocation of a ‘conductor’ or not, D. R. Young claims no ensemble is without leadership, whether it is the responsibility of one member or collective amongst all players. D. R. Young makes generalised comments on different ‘stereotypes’ of ensembles, including a professional symphony, amateur chorus, pickup jazz orchestra, high school marching band and professional string quartet, in order to provide examples of various coordination attributes and strategies (2004, p. 30). He specifies one ensemble, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra (a conductor-less orchestra based in New York City) as an example of a larger group coordinated through shared leadership tactics (2004, pp. 25–26). Hackman (2002), on the other hand, asserts that ‘effective team self-management is impossible unless someone in authority sets the direction for the team’s work’ (p. 62). His belief is that even if the group is self-managed, someone must have the authority to set the direction of the team.

Bathurst and Ladkin (2012) also look at shared leadership within a music group, but in this case, it is a jazz ensemble. Bathurst and Ladkin’s study, to use their

own words, targets ‘the phenomena of group leadership where no particular person takes responsibility for motivating or guiding group actions by examining how musicians behave in performance’ (2012, p. 100). The basis of plural leadership, they found, was *respect* and they described how ‘an ethic of respect underpins all activities – respect for the individual’s instrument, their profession and their co-performers ... this environment of mutual respect is foundational’ (2012, p. 114). Bathurst and Ladkin, however, focus on leadership within performance, and the professional qualities needed to be able to coordinate a jazz group, with the aim of highlighting the implications for non-music business managers.

Stout and Gilmore (2015) discuss leadership within the ‘art of improvisation’ in which they highlight how *trust* is an important factor in leadership and collaboration and that while

having a leader is not essential but it can be an important factor in achieving a performance of a high musical standard: “It is good to have a leader’s vision and to create a framework within which the musicians have plenty of room to manoeuvre”. (p. 301)

In popular music, Prime and Keenan (2015) present evidence in the form of a case study that the leader of a band was often the main songwriter. The notion of leadership both artistically in preparation and during performance, and in terms of organisational matters, is enriched in my research because it focuses on small,

classical chamber music ensembles that are often self-managed. This represents a unique circumstance not considered in either Stout and Gilmore's or Prime and Keenan's research.

Little is specified in the traditional music ensemble literature about people who are identified as artistic directors. This suggests the artistic director structure could be more particular to more unconventional ensembles where there is a need for someone to have a greater say in the decision-making process and management. The notion of the 'artistic director' and the leadership role this person takes on is discussed in my research from the perspective of those that are artistic leaders, and those that are not. The relationships and responsibilities involved are explored, adding further examples of leadership styles in music.

2.5 Musical organisation and its association with business practices

Research developments in organisational theory, teamwork and organisational culture, and leadership theory demonstrate that analysts and researchers have turned to the performance arts to demonstrate or illustrate effective teamwork and partnerships. A study of chamber music and organisational theory by Sicca (2000) reveals his belief that 'arts producing organisations' are a good representation of organisational theory while also providing input into new organisational theoretical methods and analysis.

Existing research highlights self-managed classical chamber music groups as models for teamwork or organisational theory, yet often feature the string quartet (Gilboa & Tal-Shmotkin, 2010; Tal-Shmotkin & Gilboa, 2013; D. R. Young, 2004). Tal-Shmotkin & Gilboa (2013) claim that string quartets may

serve as a benchmark for excellence bridging between creative inspiration and skilful performance, thus providing important insights regarding teams with similar demands, mainly teams characterized by intensive work and relations. (p. 57)

Their study is valuable in that it shows important shared characteristics between self-managed teams and string quartets. They also discuss egalitarian approaches to management within string quartets ‘even though the first violinist traditionally has more salience over the other three members’ (2013, p. 61). It is this traditional prominence of one member over another that points to a need to look deeply at other heterogeneous ensembles to discover how ‘non-traditional’ self-managed ensembles work successfully in a more transparent team structure.

As mentioned previously, there are a number of music studies that suggest the modern organisational leader is like the conductor of an orchestra with a set of instructions (the musical score) who leads a team of people (the orchestral musicians) towards a result (Tal-Shmotkin & Gilboa, 2013, p.66). Further studies have also found the orchestra as a suitable analogy for managed teams and leadership style (Boerner & Gebert, 2012; Cook & Howitt, 2012; Faulkner, 1973).

For example, Beckwith (2003), in her article on arts-based training, discusses the conductor and orchestra as a metaphor, with the conductor holding both macro and micro management of the orchestra. Beckwith equates this to the chairman of a board of eighty directors.

However, Barrett (1998) explains that newer models are needed due to the greater levels of uncertainty and the more flexible working environments that now impact upon organisations. Barrett's studies of jazz musicians and their ensembles suggest that the idea of an improvisatory group or an ensemble that does not read off a score and take suggestions from a conductor might be more appropriate as a model for flexible and unpredictable organisations. Ensembles that perform experimental or improvisatory music (of a classical nature) also share the same traits as jazz musicians, including making fast, irreversible decisions, being highly interdependent on one another, and showing a capacity for producing innovative ideas at both an artistic and administrative level. The same could also be said for performing groups that focus on contemporary exploratory music involving the use of contemporary instrumental techniques and improvisation, or historically informed performance practice. In these instances the score is used as somewhat of a guide on aspects of *continuo* realisation and improvisation, as well as melodic diminution, augmentation, and unpredictable improvised ornamentation, rather than a specific set of instructions.

Scholars Nic Beech and Charlotte Gilmore compiled a number of studies in their book *Organising Music: Theory, Practice, Performance* (2015). This book

presents various perspectives that exist within the creative industries in relation to organisational theory, organisational culture and other considerations such as marketing and branding (Hackley, 2015). In particular, the examples provided are those of classical orchestras, folk, indie and punk bands. Little is mentioned of classical chamber music ensembles and although many of the theories and concepts presented in the research can be applied to these ensembles, the small to medium classical music industry has many differences compared to popular music or large-scale organisations such as an orchestra. The currency of this work, albeit with a Euro-centric focus, implies there is a gap that can be filled by my current study, through introducing organisational processes specific to unconventional and non-traditional chamber music ensembles, introducing organisational processes of classical chamber music ensembles internationally.

More recently there has been increased research, and practical application, of arts-based learning in large businesses and corporations, mainly in the United States of America and the United Kingdom (Adler, 2006; Bartelme, 2005; Beckwith, 2003; Nissley, 2010; Schiuma, 2012; Seifter, 2004, 2005). In the course of interviews with Harvey Seifter and Tim Sockil, who are leaders of arts-based learning in business organisations, Bartelme (2005) discovered that their organisation reflected a change in business structure from a manager/employee structure (conductor/orchestra) to what can be described as ‘high-performance teams’ that can solve problems occurring during fast-paced workplace changes. These ‘high-performance’ teams require employees to participate in decision-making and accept responsibility for work that would not normally be assigned to them. The high-performance model that Bartelme articulates is appropriate to my research

because it recognises the hierarchical roles and positions of musicians in ensembles that do not have a conventional structure. This is particularly so for ensemble groups that need to vary personnel, skills and repertoire regularly over time and are therefore dependent on changes that can bring a level of uncertainty to the survival of the organisation. Scott (1992) and Cooksey (2003) present models of systems of organisations and their complexity that signify the influences on organisations both internally and externally. These frameworks allow the chamber music ensemble to be placed within these systems, to identify factors that can contribute to the performance of music ensembles, and also inform other organisational practices.

Due to the uncertainty that artists experience in trying to establish themselves in the art world, especially for members of an unconventional ensemble, it is worth learning more about how arts-based learning can better support graduates moving into this type of career. Research of unconventional or non-traditional ensembles could lend weight to the argument that including arts-based learning in other fields of business will help guide corporations in dealing with undefined performance outcomes and the value of making allowances for failure and risk taking (Nissley, 2010).

2.6 Defining success as a chamber music ensemble

In order to understand the social and professional aspects of chamber music groups and the musicians who form them, the term *success* needs to be addressed. For the purposes of my study, a successful chamber music ensemble is defined as

(i) a viable group that has established itself in the live music scene for a number of years (for the purpose of this research, at least five years) and (ii) an ensemble that has secured an audience base and created a reputation amongst its peers as an ensemble *par excellence*. As noted earlier in the section on portfolio careers, it is rare to find a chamber ensemble in which its members are engaged full-time and are not required to do other forms of work. Although the musicians interviewed in this research are core members of at least one ensemble, this is not always their full-time work. Many musicians who are not orchestral players are teachers, tutors, and freelance musicians, or have other part-time work – referred to as a portfolio career musician. It is important to note the necessity of building of portfolio careers to understand the background of freelance musicians and the part-time nature of any chamber music ensemble. Therefore, success is not defined within this research in monetary terms.

There are other measures of success by musician performers, including the positive collaboration of players and a satisfying performance experience. Kawase (2015, p. 361) states, ‘conflict management, equality among members, and the satisfaction of members with their performance or roles are crucial to the successful ensemble performance’. This statement highlights the constructive and effective *process* of making music as a form of success for the members of an ensemble.

2.7 Conclusion

The review of the literature identified important findings relating to chamber music ensembles, musical identity, group processes, and the way in which the unique skills musicians possess can inform organisational cultures outside of the arts. However, the discussion in this chapter has also pointed to limitations in terms of the sample groups and participants chosen for these studies. Typically, research has involved examples of musical hierarchy within established and more conventional ensemble organisations, such as orchestra/conductor, string quartets, wind quintets, vocal ensembles or piano duos. What the broad base of music literature reviewed does not consider is how non-conventional or non-traditional ensembles (that are now more prevalent in the current Western music scene) may add to forming an understanding of interpersonal relationships and development of professional skills, such as, decision-making and leadership. What also appears to be missing in the music research are personal accounts of experts from these types of ensembles working in the music field who are constantly addressing and balancing these issues throughout their musical careers. The unique ability musicians have to listen and respond to both their own work and their place in the ensemble puts them at an important vantage point in respect to collaborative undertakings.

Chapter 3. Theoretical Context

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical context and foundation of this study of classical chamber ensemble musicians and the resulting methodology that guided how the data was collected, including the particular approach to data analysis and interpretation employed. The framework presented in this chapter highlights the importance of this study in the gathering of musicians' individual thoughts, ideas and experiences in relation to the collaborative effort of professional music making in specific social and cultural contexts. The focal points of this research are trifold and include explorations of:

- the professional identity and personal meaning ascribed to being a chamber musician and forming group identities;
- interpersonal relationships, communication, collaboration, and group behaviour of an ensemble; and
- the measures taken towards organisational and artistic decision-making.

By adopting a theoretical model that privileges the unique experiences of a range of musicians and acknowledges both intellectual and emotional responses, this research allows implicit musical knowledge and skills to be brought to the forefront to form an account of what occurs within a range of classical chamber music ensembles, in particular those that are 'unconventional' or 'non-traditional' in their construction.

In order to understand the cognitive, physical and emotional facets of working in high-level classical chamber music ensembles, a heuristic approach is required, whereby personal accounts of professional ensemble musicians are collected, analysed and shared. This framework is particularly important because musicians find themselves in unique circumstances when they collaborate; no two situations are alike. It is recognised that social interactions are complex, and each participant will provide a different interpretation of the experience. Therefore, it was considered that ‘researchers need to ask those involved in a situation what it means to them, and to look for both similar and different meanings’ between participants (Beech et al., 2015, p. 10). The intention is not to find solutions to the problems and issues faced by ensemble musicians. Rather, the objective of this research is to provide more depth of understanding about the phenomenon of music collaboration within chamber music ensembles and establish theoretical concepts as they evolve from the lived experiences of active professional ensemble musicians in the field.

This chapter places the research within a qualitative methodology. A discussion of sociomusicology is presented highlighting the collaborative nature of ensemble practice and the importance of allowing participants to share their personal experiences. Strategic and organisational theory provide the framework in which the chamber music ensemble is considered a complex organisation affected by internal and external influences. The interpretative lens is considered, beginning with the understanding of lived experience of the individual, to the social construction of individual and group identity through the collection of experiences.

3.2 Sociomusicology

Understanding, explaining, and interpreting the everyday experiences of people is the basis of sociology. Qualitative research is a method whereby these sociological explanations and interpretations can be effectively collected, analysed and presented. The goal of these endeavours is to have a better understanding of why and how people behave and understand their world (Marvasti, 2003).

Sociomusicology (or the sociology of music) is defined as the sociological theories and methodologies that examine the role of music in society, and the observable behaviours and attitudes within the constraints of social structures (Bresler, 2008). Sociologist, philosopher and musicologist, Theodor Adorno, defines the sociology of music as ‘knowledge of the relation between music and the socially organized individuals who listen to it’ (1976, p. 1). Conversely, when specifically describing the sociological aspect of chamber music, he states, ‘I start out neither from the type of work – whose boundaries fade into one another – nor from the listeners, but from the players’ (1976, p. 85). In his book *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* (1976), Adorno focuses his interest on the ability of musicians to concentrate on their own music making as well as collective music making, and how they modify their individual performance in relation to its function within the ensemble amongst other co-performers. Likewise, philosopher and social phenomenologist Alfred Schutz in his essay *Making Music Together: A study in social relationship* (1964) provided insight into the social interactions of all actors within the creation and dissemination of music (composer, performer

and listener). He claims that ‘social relationships among the participants in the musical process is a prerequisite for any research in this field [sociology of music]’ (1964, p. 159). Schutz, however, details the importance of social relationships within the musical process from composer to audience, including the *intermediaries*: the performers, and their highly attuned social interaction structure (1964, p. 159). The social interaction structure of players and the musical process was discussed decades later in Becker’s 1982 *Art Worlds* (2008), which analysed the complex cooperative networks involved in creating art. Becker also introduces the relationships between co-performers and external parties from both an artistic and administrative perspective. These social theorists provide the foundations upon which a sociological study of chamber music performers and their ensembles can be based. It is intended that the empirical evidence provided in my research will add further understanding and insight into contemporary musicians, and in doing so, will critically determine the value and relevance of these earlier sociological accounts.

Within the compass of sociomusicology, this study particularly considers the internal dynamics of working ensembles from the perspective of different ensemble musicians, and how they experience collaborating with other artists. These collaborative experiences involve social relationships, insights into shared music making, and the participants’ ability to perform organisational tasks to shape an ensemble and create a successful, sustainable group.

In terms of performers, Schutz (1964, p. 161) refers to a *mutual tuning-in relationship* as a socio-cultural feature of interaction: an acute collaborative skill musicians possess not only in terms of performance but in understanding each other's expectations within an ensemble on and off the stage. This relationship concerns not only each performer's ability to interpret and communicate the notes on their own musical score, but also to anticipate and react immediately to their co-performer's interpretation of the musical notation through aural and visual cues. Successful listening, seeing and responding to indications from each other and the musical score necessitates that they must be prepared to be a leader or a follower at any time. The *mutual tuning-in relationship* according to Schutz, describes a generated shared life world by which 'the "I" and "Thou" are experienced by both participants as a "We" in vivid presence' (1964, p. 161). Sicca (2000) builds on Schutz's mutual tuning-in relationship and refers to *listening ability*, not only in terms of the professional ensemble musician's ability to listen simultaneously to their own performance and that of their co-performers and be perfectly balanced, but also in terms of how the performers set up co-ordination and communication mechanisms. This experience is unique to music ensembles, and extremely individualistic because the dynamics of ensembles vary endlessly and do not fit within accepted hierarchies controlled by the presence of a conductor or other musical 'leader'. For this reason, learning about the personal viewpoints of musicians participating in this phenomenon is crucial to understanding how individuals experience this *mutual tuning-in relationship* and *listening ability* in the range of ensembles today, as well as how ensemble musicians cooperate professionally in a highly demanding and unpredictable environment.

Sociologists have contributed important knowledge about the aforementioned intrinsic skills that musicians possess in order to successfully perform in balance with one another as a team. Adorno (1976) comments that

A dedication to the players as shown in the very gist of chamber music means reckoning with persons who in performing their own parts will be aware of the whole and will adjust their performance to its function in the whole.
(p. 85)

This intrinsic skill and knowledge is learnt through years of rehearsal and performance with other more experienced instrumentalists, developing advanced technical and more acute and adaptive listening skills. From the results of sociomusicological studies it seems that the provision of explicit knowledge from experienced musicians developed through personal experience, by engaging with different musicians in different contexts (such as that of a freelance performer), are absent within the training of musicians (Jarvin & Subotnik, 2010).

The cultural environment in which the person or ensemble is situated can also affect the successful outcome of a performance or the sustainability of the ensemble. A. Taylor (2015) notes that within sociomusicology, a qualitative study gives the participants a voice: a chance for the players to share their personal experiences and the opportunity for the researcher to interpret the information and draw factors of comparison and difference from these accounts. A. Taylor also states that in a qualitative approach,

The richness of the data and the directness of the quotations would allow readers to see through the eyes of the research participants and explore their individual differences in the context of their commonalities in a shared music-learning world. (p. 438)

In keeping with this approach, my research extracts the experiences of the participants and conceptualises them in order to explore a greater understanding of the different factors that are pertinent to chamber music ensembles. It also identifies the implicit knowledge that informs the practice of experienced musicians. As Becker writes in his preface to *Art Worlds*,

I think it generally true that sociology does not discover what no one ever knew before, in this differing from the natural sciences. Rather, good social science produces a deeper understanding of things that many people are already pretty much aware of (2008, p. xxiv).

3.3 Collaboration and organisational theory

Sociology and sociomusicology refer not only to the internal but also the external relationships involved with music making. At a professional level, musical collaborations occur within wider networks of arts organisations, and these often follow the social structures found in other organisations. The field of organisational behaviour is therefore pertinent to this research. To inform the

theoretical framework used for this research, the following section explores these concepts and theories.

Huxham and Vangen (2005) suggest that inspiration comes from the world of collaboration, and that strength in collaboration can come from shared resources and expertise of the collaborators. This could extend to any formed group or musical ensemble, for collaborating with others provides a shared experience of expertise, knowledge, and interpretation. Davidson (1999) discusses collaboration in terms of interdependence as a necessity for a coherent musical ensemble: as musicians combine their different skills, ideas and interpretations to create a unified whole. Taking into consideration the inspiration provided by collaboration and the necessity for interdependence in musical ensembles, this study also looks at the chamber music ensemble as an organisation – a group of people who are brought together to achieve a shared outcome or result. It provides an explanation of the collective effort involved in creating and maintaining a successful contemporary ensemble and performing music together, from the perspective of individual key protagonists – ensemble musicians. It is this collaborative process and the creative outcomes of this process that the research aims to illuminate in part via the more prosaic elements of organisational theory as it is applied to a range of businesses or other organisational structures.

In the field of organisational theory, Scott (1992, p. 23) defines organisations as ‘collectivities oriented to the pursuit of relatively specific goals’. This definition coincides with that of earlier music psychologists and sociologists, in that music

ensembles demonstrate a strong sense of collaborative commitment and shared goals while working within a formalised structure (Blank & Davidson, 2007; Butterworth, 1990; Lim, 2013; Murnighan & Conlon, 1991; Sicca, 2000). The diagram below (Figure 3.1) represents the organisational structure of a chamber music ensemble as an arts organisation that is adapted from Scott's five organisational elements: social structure, participants, goals, technology, and environment (1992, pp. 16–21). The elements in Figure 3.1 are used to encompass the social, emotional, professional and collaborative factors that should be taken into consideration when studying a musical group. From this figure, we can see that each of the elements has an effect on the organisation (ensemble), as well as having a direct affect upon each other – an ensemble is, therefore, a completely interrelated, complex system.

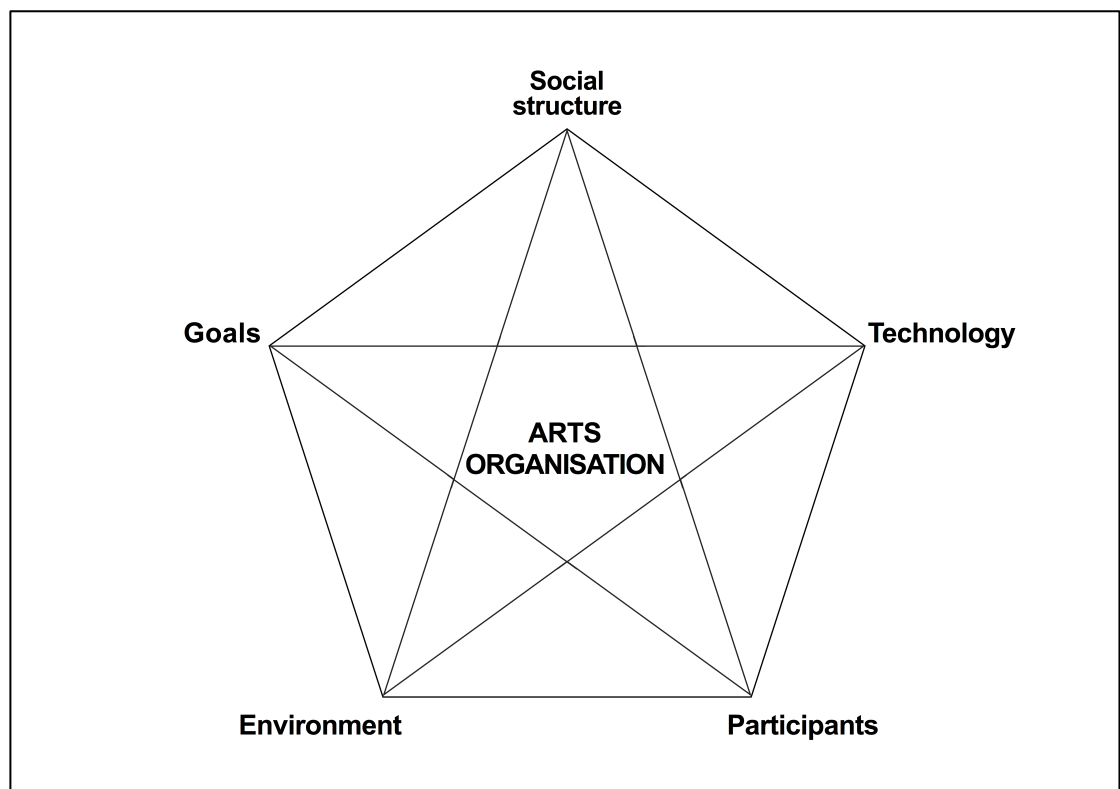


Figure 3.1 Internal and external elements of organisations model

The environment in Scott's concept of organisations is represented by the external factors that impact an organisation. This is what Becker (2008) describes as the 'art world', and consists of 'all the people whose activities are necessary to the production of the characteristic works which that world, and perhaps others as well, define as art' (p. 34). Becker not only describes the roles people play in creating this art, he also discusses important practical aspects of internal organisation, including distribution of time, the conflicting concerns of creating art and economic survival, the division of labour within a group, and cooperation and decision-making within a group. The external environment is significant to a chamber music ensemble as it is uncertain and constantly changing. Within this environment, *community of practice* is a term used to describe the social network identified by the joint effort of people who are involved with an activity and have a shared background, and expectation, as well as a mutual understanding and a common pursuit or interest (Wenger, 1998). According to Scott's components of organisations, a community of practice will encompass participants, goals, environment and social structure. These communities can differ according to each individual's involvement; therefore, it requires investigation at a personal level, most effectively carried out by listening to musicians' stories and experiences. The effort and specialised skills required to bring together a number of people to form a creative group such as a chamber music ensemble is extraordinary. The inner workings of successful ensembles and the awareness of such processes at both a creative and administrative level can only be found from the stories and background from those who participate.

Cooksey (2003) further refines the influences on a complex organisation into four areas: environment, organisation, groups and individuals. Figure 3.2 shows that each of these influences on the organisational activities has a number of elements within it, demonstrating the complexity of non-linear dynamic systems (2003, p. 205). This model is used for designing strategic activities and decision-making, beyond the old, simple linear view of business processes. It clearly captures the uncertainty organisations face when establishing future processes and predicting outcomes. Through this model, Cooksey takes into account the ‘human side of strategic activities’ (Cooksey, 2000). As a chamber music ensemble is a small working team, and members rely on, and work closely with, each other on a personal and professional level, it is important to acknowledge this ‘chaotic view’ of planning and decision-making and take into account human considerations in order to ‘reinforce the necessity for understanding the essential humanity of strategic processes – people first, numbers later, not *vice-versa*’ (2000, p. 7).

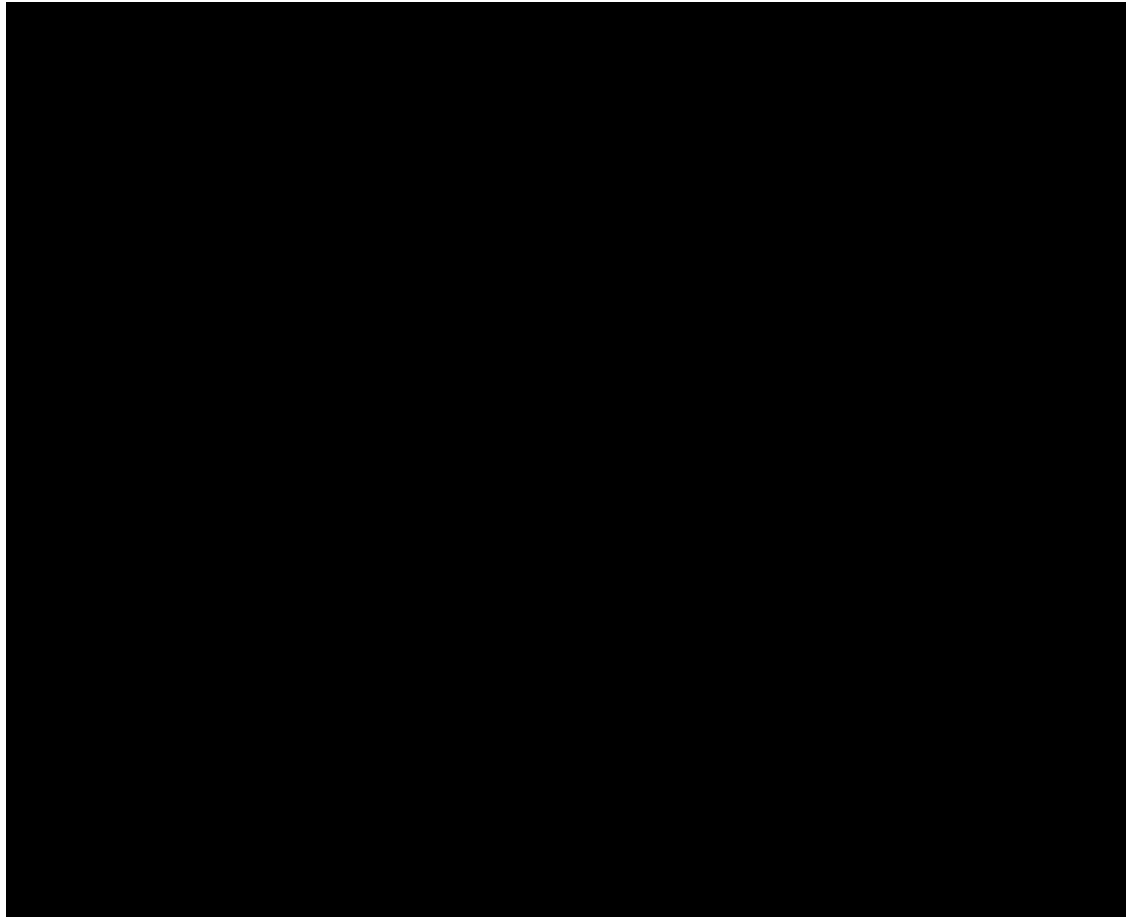


Figure 3.2 Contextual complexity of organisational activities

Source: Cooksey (2003, p. 205)

These interrelated elements and influences on the organisational activities effectively represent the influences on chamber music ensembles. Using this model, clarity can be sought in the strategic planning of ensembles and further insight can be developed into the possible understanding-gap between the conscious intentions of musicians in their practice and the potential consequences of their actions. Applying this model to my research and refining it to influences the participants consider to be important supports the exploration of participants' experiences: what they have been doing, and whether their current working model/situation constitutes a successful, sustainable ensemble. It highlights the

necessity of knowing and understanding, or even developing, further skills and insight into chamber music ensembles as organisations.

3.4 Using a qualitative framework to explore the scope and dimensions of chamber music ensemble phenomena

This research uses qualitative frameworks as a way to investigate the events, realities, meanings and experiences of a chamber music ensemble as a social world, with the intention to ‘understand, describe and interpret social phenomena as perceived by individuals, groups and cultures’ (Holloway & Wheeler, 2013, p. 3). Firstly, an interpretative phenomenological framework is used to understand the meanings the participants give to their lives as chamber musicians. Secondly, a social constructionist view provides an understanding of how ensemble members maintain social and organisational realities in their interactions with other musicians (co-performers) within their ensembles, and in the wider environment.

Qualitative research focused on human behaviour is a form of social inquiry that looks at how individuals ‘make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live’ (Liamputtong, 2013, p. xi). The qualitative researcher is interested in how people experience events and the meanings they give to those experiences, therefore, there is less of a distinction between the researchers and the researched than is customary in quantitative methods; the researcher, as an interviewer, is part of the reality studied. As a result, it is acknowledged that neutrality is

impossible, and researchers must be conscious of their biases and prejudices and monitor this throughout the research project in order for them to not misrepresent the data (Bresler, 1995; Maxwell, 2005).

Music making is a personal experience, as is an individual's perception of working and performing music with others. This means that the methodology adopted needs to be particularly sensitive to capturing individual variation. Minichiello, Sullivan, Greenwood, and Axford (2004) explain that the study of human interaction and behaviour requires a different method to the collection of biological or environmental data due to the fact that humans are able to

- think and reflect on their behaviour;
- use language to describe their thoughts and experience; and
- control their reactions to situations, in line with the meaning they ascribe to situations. (p. 61)

These factors are open to further manifold influences: a person's social background, education and knowledge can influence their perception of a situation, for instance, and their reaction to various phenomena or events is often dependent on their previous experiences as well as their position and role within a collaborative group or team (S. Taylor & Bogden, 1998). Therefore, the *meaning* attributed to an experience of collaborative ensembles by a participant cannot be quantified. Qualitative methods, on the other hand, encourage researchers to gather data directly from participants. In order to know how people see their world, we need to talk with them; therefore, data collection includes strategies such as participant observations, as well as open-ended and semi-structured

interviews. Human beings have always told stories and recounted events and situations; through open-ended questioning, these stories and recounts are brought forward.

The research focuses on classical non-traditional or unconventional chamber music ensembles as there is less of an accepted hierarchy compared to that of traditional ensembles. Therefore, the interaction of interviewing and reflective narrative is an important process in developing an understanding of the positions different musicians find themselves in, depending on their role within various ensembles. The musicians interviewed for the purposes of my study come from a variety of (and often numerous) ensembles with different organisational structures: from collectively self-managed ensembles to those with artistic directors or decision-making boards. Within the confines of this study, each individual experience is treated as equally important and valid for discerning common themes and phenomena, no matter how varied the experiences are, and the methodology of semi-structured questioning aims to capture differences without prescribing particular responses.

The line of questioning this research takes is referred to by Van Manen (1997) as *meaning questions*, i.e. they do not attempt to problem solve. These are described by Van Manen when he writes,

Meaning questions can be better or more deeply understood, so that, on the basis of this understanding I may be able to act more thoughtfully and more tactfully in

certain situations ... they will always remain the subject matter of the conversational relations of lived life, and they will need to be appropriated, in a personal way, by anyone who hopes to benefit from such insight. (p. 23)

My research explores the lived experiences of current, active ensemble musicians in the cultural environment in which they find themselves, allowing the reader to draw relevant material from these spoken accounts and understand how this particular sample of people make sense of their own experiences. Meaning questions draw out these experiences, allowing the participants to consider *why* they feel, react or do something.

3.4.1 Phenomenology: the interpretation of lived experience of the individual

This qualitative study into the meaning the participants give to their identity as chamber musicians uses interpretative inquiry informed by phenomenology. The focus is upon people's lived experiences, and the research aims to develop an understanding of the phenomenon of ensemble collaboration through the specific human experience of that phenomenon, in order to better understand what it is like to be a part of that 'life-world' (Bresler, 1995, 2008; Liamputtong, 2013; Minichiello et al., 2004; Van Manen, 1997).

Phenomenology is grounded in early 20th century philosophy and is predominantly associated with the writings of German philosopher Edmund

Husserl (1973). Husserl's main interest was using human consciousness to understand social reality: that is, how an individual thinks about his or her experience. In keeping with a phenomenological theoretical perspective, the emphasis in my research is on the meaning of the everyday lived experiences of ensemble musicians as they interpret them. Through gathering multiple accounts of lived experience of a phenomenon – chamber music ensemble collaboration, development and performance – knowledge is gained about aspects of collaborative music making and the field within which this exists. When applying this type of approach, it is important to develop a deeper understanding of these experiences in order to describe the meaning of several separate experiences and not one individual story or narrative (Creswell, 2009). This research therefore takes the perspectives of numerous participants through an initial focus group and thirty individual interviews, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

The term *verstehen* ('to understand' or 'to interpret') is closely tied to Max Weber (1949) within the human or social sciences, and in this capacity it is used to describe the perspective of an individual on his or her experience of culture, history and society. German sociologist Georg Simmel used *verstehen* as a form of sociological research, explaining that within this methodology:

... an outside observer systematically gathers information on a particular phenomenon from the perspective of insiders, rather than interpreting it in terms of the researcher's outsider view. (cited in Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2011, p. 6)

By acquiring the insider's view from a range of musicians sourced from a variety of ensembles, this research will develop deeper insights into the world of present day ensemble musicians. This insider's view is achieved through examining a range of different cultural experiences in diverse environments and gathering individual perspectives, generalisations, comparisons and interpretations in order to shed light on the factors that influence the success or otherwise of modern ensembles.

In the study of interpretive sociology, Wilhelm Dilthey (1988) used the term *verstehen* as a first person's perspective and understanding of an individual's experience through their own participation in phenomena. '*Verstehen* is thus the mode of understanding all things human, both on the individual or interpersonal levels and on the level of societal bodies' (1988, p. 24). Dilthey took an interpretative approach to understanding through the context of hermeneutics: a theory of human interpretation and understanding. While Simmel and Dilthey's philosophies are based on the perspective of only the *insider's* view, my research goes beyond their approach to also include the researcher's interpretations of spoken accounts of the participants. Martin Heidegger, a student of Husserl's, combined both hermeneutics and phenomenology; the combination of the two resulted in an interpretative phenomenological concept (J. A. Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Heidegger believed in the phenomenological concept of *intersubjectivity*, meaning: the 'shared, overlapping and relational nature of our engagement in the world' (J. A. Smith et al., 2009) and this was crucial to his views on phenomenology. He considered that we are related to our world and we cannot choose to separate ourselves from it.

Phenomenology supports qualitative methods of gaining data through in-depth interviewing to produce detailed descriptions of the participant's experiences as told from a first-person perspective. Through phenomenology, thematic core components of the experiences of ensemble musicians evolve because data is not forced into pre-existing paradigms or structures. The use of semi-structured interviews allows the participants to follow a flow of thought and explore in-depth experiences, revealing personal meaning and giving voice to their reflections. As Bresler (1995) advises, 'in phenomenological studies, the researcher defines general categories, but it is the co-researcher [participant] who expands and fills them with deep personal meanings' (p. 16). Clear, open-ended questions are provided to the participants, allowing them to provide their own information, stories, and thoughts rather than responding within pre-ordained categories or assumptions. Through experiential knowledge, and the reporting of this knowledge and experience in the words of music practitioners, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the processes of chamber music and the internal dynamics of different group experiences.

3.4.2 Social constructionist paradigm

Social constructionist paradigm takes the view that people are not separate from the social world in which they live and everyday interactions and conversations shape and maintain social and organisational realities. The complexity of social life also means there are different ways to interpret reality; therefore, researchers

look for similar and different meanings from those involved in a particular situation (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

The organisational frameworks provided by Scott (1992) and Cooksey (2003) clearly highlight the relationship of different elements and factors that can be pertinent to chamber music ensembles when considered as arts organisations. If a chamber music ensemble is considered as a complex system, one which is already subject to a number of influences, and is further complicated by the different interpretations that the members of the group provide for the phenomenon, a social constructionist paradigm can logically be applied to a study of music ensembles. This subjectivist view considers that the social world is not separate from us, and social and organisational phenomena are shaped by everyday interactions and conversations. The study of individuals experiencing these social realities within the context of assorted ensembles and how they interpret and shape what is going on around them is thus brought to the forefront in my analysis. The research model established in my research takes the social constructive perspectives of Beech et al. (2015). They state that, ‘good knowledge from a social constructionist perspective means developing rich and in-depth descriptions and explanations, and possibly different interpretations, of what’s happening in a particular context’ (2015, p. 11).

A key assumption of social constructionism is that we create meanings associated with the objective world through our interaction with others. A sociological constructionist view underscored investigations into how interpersonal

relationships affect group identity; how communication, collaboration and group behaviour are developed; and how organisational and artistic decision-making are conducted. By allowing the participants to reflect on their relationships with people and considering how this shapes their ensembles, this approach led to a greater understanding of how the interactions between co-performers impacted upon different social and creative outcomes.

3.5 The researcher as practitioner

As Maxwell (2005) explains, the experiential knowledge of the researcher – their technical knowledge, research background and personal experiences – provides a ‘major source of insights, hypotheses, and validity checks’ (2005, p. 38). C. W. Mills (1959) writes in his essay, *On intellectual craftsmanship*:

The most admirable thinkers within the scholarly community ... do not split their work from their lives. They seem to take both too seriously to allow such dissociation, and they want to use each for the enrichment of the other. (p. 195)

As a professional collaborator and chamber musician for over fifteen years, I have experienced a number of different scenarios whereby personal, artistic and professional differences can determine the fate of an ensemble, for better or worse. In my experience, ensembles generally manage these issues through learning ‘on the job’ and built experience, and there is often a lack of

understanding or knowledge-sharing amongst musicians as to how to avoid the pitfalls of initiating an ensemble or group project.

As a practitioner, this research is informed by my experience and knowledge within the field of ensemble playing at a professional level. This first hand experience in the field has led to a level of informed inquiry into the behaviour of ensemble musicians. This does not legitimise the impact of my personal beliefs and opinions on the data; however, it crucially allows me to use the element of ‘critical subjectivity’. According to Reason (1988), critical subjectivity refers to

A quality of awareness in which we do not suppress our primary experience; nor do we allow ourselves to be swept away and overwhelmed by it; rather we raise it to consciousness and use it as a part of the inquiry process.

(p. 12)

Therefore, I am able to draw on my extensive and diverse experiences as a professional collaborator and chamber musician to help inform the inquiry process while also recognising that this has shaped the lens through which I interact with the research data. In this case, my musical training and performance experience focuses the current study on the performance of both historically informed and contemporary Western art music.

Furthermore, my positioning in the field enabled me to access a broad range of artists both nationally and internationally. A major benefit for the collection of

data for this research was the rapport established during the interviews where the participant felt they were talking to an expert who would understand and appreciate the significance of things felt, seen and heard.

3.6 Conclusion

These theoretical constructs and paradigms provide a framework for the collection, analysis, evaluation and interpretation of the research data. This framework will offer valuable insights into the lived experience of professional chamber ensemble musicians, what their collaborative music making means to them as a musician, and how they interpret the meaning and significance of the interpersonal relationships that are formed within the music groups that they work with, from both an artistic and organisational perspective.

Using a sociomusicological perspective acknowledges that music ensemble development and performance are social experiences; therefore, studies of human interaction and sociology within chamber music ensembles should be pursued from the point of view of the musician. A qualitative methodology guided this sociological investigation through a social constructionist paradigm using particular philosophical foundations from phenomenology to inform the procedures and methodological decisions made throughout the study.

Cooksey's model of cause and effect for strategic planning of complex organisations was perceived to be the most appropriate paradigm that could be

employed to demonstrate the different factors discussed within the research. The use of this framework, and the information provided by the participants, formed the basis for thematic analysis of the data (explained in the next chapter). Further understanding was gained from Becker's (2008) sociological study of art worlds, as his scholarly work connected these philosophical viewpoints to the field of music and musicians.

The chapter that follows provides details of the qualitative research design used to collect, analyse, and interpret the data. It provides profiles of each of the participants who were interviewed and explains the analytical tools and processes that assisted in interpreting the data to form the key themes that underscore the discussion of findings.

Chapter 4. Research Design

4.1 Introduction

This study compiles data from professional practising classical chamber ensemble musicians. As many of these musicians are freelance performers and work within a number of different groups both as core and casual members, the intention is to understand the *individual's* experience of working within different classical chamber music ensembles, and not to attempt a collective observation of particular groups or collaborations. The phenomenological perspective of this research focuses on the individual: what they experience, and how they interpret the world of unconventional or non-traditional classical chamber music. There is an assumption that, although the study is based on each participant being unique, an essence can be discerned in their collected experiences: a common understanding of a shared phenomenon (Patton, 1990). In order for the participants to provide experiential stories or 'give voice' to this experience or phenomenon (that is, to speak to their personal thoughts and opinions), a qualitative research design was employed. As is consistent with qualitative sociological inquiry, the data collection began with an initial focus group comprising practising musicians, followed by a series of individual in-depth semi-structured interviews with other professional musicians in the field.

This chapter presents the design of the research, including how the sample was chosen, the description of the participants of the study, the developed topic guide for the in-depth interviews, the stages of data collection, and the sequence of analysis using thematic analysis based on grounded theory principles to identify, analyse,

interpret and report on the data. The information in this chapter is presented in a linear fashion; however, the analytical process itself was actually recursive: constantly moving between the raw data, codes, and themes. Once data was collected and organised into themes, the interpretive process continued throughout the reporting stage, in a series of constant checks, refinements and references back to the data, literature, and research questions.

Although chamber music performance is a collective activity, Allesch and Krakauer (2005), in their research on understanding musical experience, explain that experiencing music generates unique accounts from each individual and not only refers to listening to music or being influenced by music, but also ‘experiencing music while actively producing it’ (2005, pp. 41–42). The cultural backgrounds of each individual, and the environment in which they are situated also have an impact on their perception of musical experience. This means that a chamber musician’s particular social and cultural context will be related to his or her interpretation of the meaning of past musical experiences. Consequently, it is necessary that a study of professional identity, musical experience, and social relationships between musicians takes a deeper investigation into their personal thoughts, opinions and interpretations using a different method of data collection and analysis to that of the natural sciences. The choice of interviewing as a method of data collection is consistent with a phenomenological approach that recognises that the personal interpretation of each participant’s experience can have an effect on the data received in terms of how the individual perceives a phenomenon within their individual context. A participant’s ability to explain or interpret their understanding of a situation, or what it means to them, is important to this study, and cannot be represented through other qualitative

research methods that require closed or leading questions, such as survey research that includes questionnaire data collection techniques.

Through phenomenological and hermeneutic principles, the data was analysed and interpreted to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning the participants attached to their professional identity as a chamber musician, their behaviour within an ensemble, and how their social music making in rehearsal and performance is constructed and set within the contemporary cultural and commercial environments.

4.2 Ethics application

Before any data was collected, I sought university Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval (HE14-283) for the project in November 2014. The ethics approval, participant consent form and information sheet have been included as Appendices A, B and C to the thesis. Participants were informed that they would not be identified by name in the reporting of the research and that pseudonyms would be used. Care was taken to remove any identifying information from the participants' responses, including instrument, name of ensemble, and names of co-performers or any third-party discussed. Although the responses are personal and individual, the study collected numerous accounts in order to provide insight into the phenomenon of individual identity within chamber music ensembles. Therefore, including specific examples identifying particular music groups was not deemed to be necessary.

4.3 Research sample

This study did not aim to represent a general population; therefore, purposeful sampling was used to select participants. It was important for this study that the participants were *information-rich cases* (Patton, 1990, p. 169) resulting in the selection of experts in the field of classical chamber music, who represented perspectives unique to the people in that field and context. The sampling strategy was *homogenous*: specifically selecting musicians who had chosen chamber music as their primary artistic output, essentially a *subgroup* of career musicians (1990, p. 173). Patton explains that using a homogenous sampling strategy ‘focuses, reduces variation, simplifies analysis, [and] facilitates group interviewing’ (1990, p. 182). This choice of sampling is intended to provide in-depth information and understanding about this specific group of people and is suited to both focus group and individual interviewing collection methods. Within this subgroup, the study’s aim is *idiographic*: its primary focus is capturing aspects of the individual’s unique experience. As Charmaz (2006) notes, ‘interpretative qualitative methods mean entering research participants’ worlds’ (p. 19). Idiography therefore also informed the method of analysis whereby each single case was analysed in depth, exploring the world of each individual before moving on to the next in an attempt to generate more universally applicable claims related to the subgroup.

Participants were sourced from professional music networks and tertiary institutions, and were established mid-to-late career musicians who performed in chamber music ensembles regularly. Recent graduates, current students, and early-career musicians were discounted due to their inexperience as the study specifically targeted the stories of musicians who had been working in this area for a long period of time, had

developed and maintained relationships between fellow ensemble musicians, and had been exposed to many different circumstances. Musicians who did not participate in a chamber ensemble as a regular activity, or those that participated in an amateur setting were also discounted due to their lack of consistency in the former case, and their lack of professional experience in the latter. *Snowball* sampling was used where from the primary homogenous sample a number of participants identified and recommended other individuals of interest to be information-rich cases; these individuals were subsequently investigated and if they matched the criteria outlined below, an interview invitation was forwarded.

A detailed view of the criteria for participant selection is explained below with respect to age, gender, location, instrument, and musical genre/style/period:

- Age: The participants were mostly between the ages of 29 and 65. This age range reflects findings from the Australia Council for the Arts 2010 economic study of professional artists in Australia, which indicates that musicians of this age range are considered established musicians (Throsby & Zednik, 2010, p. 21).
- Gender: There were no specific reasons to favour one gender; nevertheless the study included an approximately even sample of both genders.
- Location: Participants were chosen from a number of different countries and cultural backgrounds, including Australia, The Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom.
- Instrument played: A variety of instruments were selected; this ensured a mixture of musical backgrounds was represented. The principal instruments the participants played included orchestral and non-orchestral instruments, as well as voice. None of the participants were employed full-time in an orchestra or an opera company.
- Musical genre/style/period: All musicians were active in non-traditional ensembles. The majority of musicians participated in mixed-instrumental,

contemporary classical ensembles performing new music. Others were members of classical or early music ensembles that did not have a fixed instrumentation. Musicians that predominately worked in 'traditional' ensembles such as string quartets, piano trios or other fixed ensemble genres established by the conventions of the Classical period were discounted.

Participants were sent an invitation via email together with an explanation of the study, an assurance of anonymity and statement of ethical considerations, an explanation of the approach that would be taken to analysis and the intended use of results (see Appendix C). Participants were asked to respond by giving voluntary informed consent to participate in either the focus group or individual interviews (depending on the invitation). There were five invitations presented to potential focus group participants, (of which all five accepted) and 44 invitations were sent out to potential individual in-depth interview participants. Nine participants responded with interest in the research; however, they were unable to be interviewed during the available interview period due to conflicting commitments including concerts interstate or internationally, family commitments, and a CD recording. Three of these participants offered to be interviewed via Skype, phone, or at a later time. Two invitations were not acknowledged, and one was rejected by the respondent due to a self-confessed lack of confidence in communicating in English. For those that responded and accepted the invitation, a time and place suitable for meeting was then organised.

The study reached an individual interview sample size of thirty. Although the ideal sample size in qualitative research is ambiguous (Patton, 1990, p. 184), the primary intention of this study, and its important contribution to scholarship, is to gain *depth*

of information from the participants. Therefore, there was no strictly anticipated number of participants, and after thirty individual interviews it was clear the study had reached a point of *redundancy*. In keeping with purposive sampling, interviews ceased when a point was reached at which the participants introduced no new information. Lincoln and Guba write,

In purposeful sampling the size of the sample is determined by informational considerations. If the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units; thus *redundancy* is the primary criterion. (cited in Patton, 1990, p. 185, emphasis in original)

In the case of my research, after completing one focus group to explore initial ideas and views to formulate an interview schedule, and conducting thirty individual interviews to collect in-depth data, it was judged that there was no benefit in pursuing further interviews. Preliminary analysis showed that a point of saturation had been reached and it was likely that no new information would be provided to further explain the experiences of chamber musicians in a professional environment.

4.4 Stages of data collection

Data was collected in three stages. As explained earlier in the chapter, the process of data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously in practise, although they are set out in a linear fashion here. Figure 4.1 gives an overview of how data were collected and analysed.

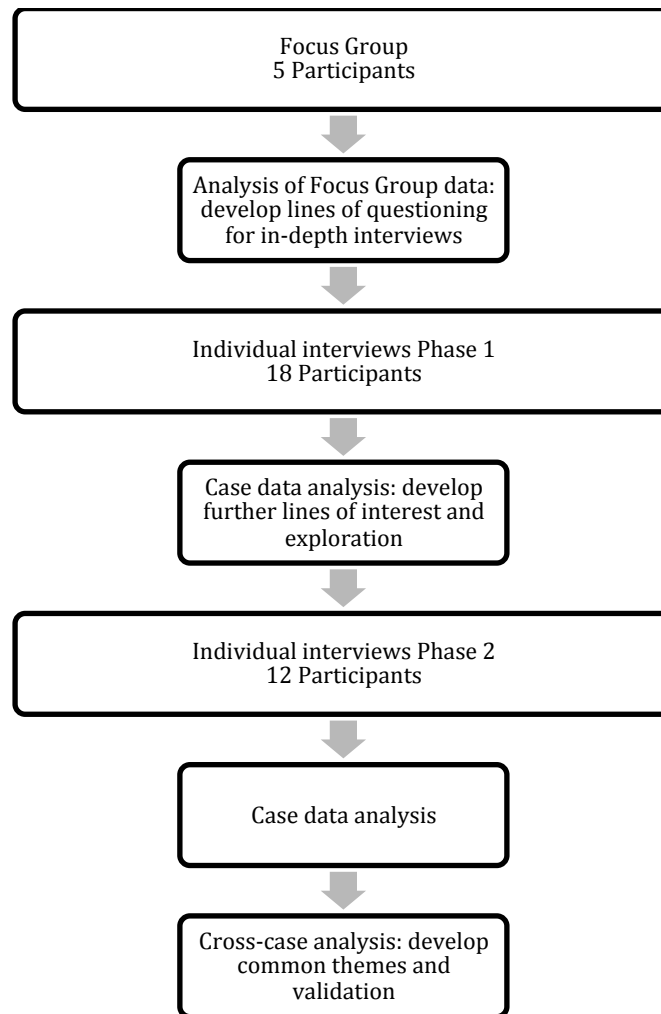


Figure 4.1 Stages of data collection and analysis

The process of incorporating data collection and analysis meant that while descriptive information was gathered from an initial set of interviews, interpretative analysis of these allowed for further investigation in subsequent interviews, thus developing an *inductive* approach to analysis and allowing patterns and themes to be actively identified within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 1990). During the interview process, the inductive method of data collection resulted in deeper questioning, more focused interviewing, and further refinement of topics; for example, ideas of professional identity, group dynamics, or external influences on an

ensemble. As continuous reading of relevant literature and developments in research accompanied data collection, an element of *deduction* where patterns and themes reflected aspects apparent in the literature required further clarification and detail to be sought from the participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The simultaneous data analysis and data collection also contributed to *triangulation* of data sources, cross-checking with information provided in the focus group and between participants in the in-depth interviews and monitoring consistency of descriptions and interpretations over time (Patton, 1990). A *multimethod* form of data collection such as this aims to ensure that each method contributes something unique to the study (Liamputtong, 2013; Morgan, 1997).

4.5 Focus group

Previous studies on the social behaviour of musicians within ensembles have also relied on one-on-one interviews, and these have proven to be an effective technique of gathering data (MacDonald & Wilson, 2005). As this research investigates the interpersonal relationships of co-performers, and how opinions, decisions and knowledge are shared between members of an ensemble or group, the first phase of data collection began with interviewing musicians in a group environment. Considering that one aim of my research is to understand the group behaviour of musicians, a focus group allowed me to witness group behaviour firsthand by directing an open, shared discussion of topics, while observing the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies and interaction of a group of professional musicians. The focus group also allowed the participants to direct their own line of conversation resulting in ‘group interaction to generate data’ (Kitzinger & Barbour,

1999). As the goal of a focus group is to encourage conversation among the participants and not have the questioning controlled by the researcher/moderator, this minimised any influence and preconceptions I may have had (MacDonald & Wilson, 2005).

A focus group of five participants was organised and designed to include professional musicians from a variety of backgrounds. Five participants were chosen as this was thought to be a manageable number, and the participants were easily available at the same time due to their joint presence at a music workshop. The focus group participants were not members of the same ensemble; therefore, it was defined as a *heterogeneous* focus group. A heterogeneous group was chosen so that the conversation was not directed towards the workings of one specific ensemble, and that the commonalities and differences of individual experiences of working in a variety of groups could be discussed.

The participants were asked to share experiences, thoughts, observations and opinions informed by their own world of ensemble performance. This heterogeneous group provided insight into the structure of different types of ensembles, including classical contemporary groups and early music groups, allowing me to draw contrasts and similarities between each of the different genres. Each musical genre proved to have a unique way of working toward different goals and values; this was evident within the focus group.

The participants were professional performing musicians and teachers of varying ages, backgrounds, and country of residence. The participants had specialisations in a range of musical genres, styles and experience, including small to medium ensembles, early music, classical contemporary music, and interdisciplinary performance. All participants had been involved in ensemble performance prior to the interview, and at the time of the interview four of the five participants were core members of at least one musical group. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the attributes of the participants in the focus group.

Table 4.1. Focus group participant overview

Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Participant Profile
John	60	M	Core member of 1 ensemble
Sarah	60	F	Core member of 2 ensembles
Zara	45	F	Core member of 1 ensemble
Naomi	30	F	Casual ensemble player
Clare	32	F	Core member of 3 ensembles

Morgan (1997) explains that focus groups can be used as a self-contained research method or combined with other methods. By linking a focus group with individual interviews, I was able to note any unexpected thoughts and experiences in the focus group that were worth exploring more deeply in the individual interviews that followed. The focus group helped identify and generate key concepts and issues for further investigation and assisted with defining specific areas for exploration. Through answering the questions listed below, the focus group provided information

that was developed into a topic guide for the individual interviews. The questions presented were based on the original research questions:

- (i) How is it that highly skilled, highly creative and professional members of a self-managed chamber ensemble cooperate to develop a successful and cohesive working group?
- (ii) How is leadership developed?
- (iii) How does decision-making occur (both administratively and creatively)?
- (iv) How do ensembles today develop their professional identity?

Former studies that have used focus groups have also acknowledged that participants can often find the experience more stimulating and fulfilling compared to individual interviews (Madriz, 2003, p. 364), because it enables a comfortable environment so participants will want to engage in conversation and learn from both their colleagues and the experience. The participants knew each other, so a friendly, collegial atmosphere was instantly established. The conversation of the focus group was recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. The analysis of the focus group data was purely *inductive*, actively focused on searching for meanings and patterns in the data. The following topics came to the forefront and were used to inform the next stage of data collection:

- The amount of communication within an ensemble regarding creative ideas and aesthetics lessens over time due to greater musical experience and understanding of style, period and genre. Listening skills are developed and a common aesthetic is established amongst musicians who have worked together consistently for a reasonably long period of time.
- Generational differences occur due to different training backgrounds, experiences and opinions of ‘professionalism’.
- The role of the artistic or musical director has changed over time, and dispute over whether there is a need for this title or role.

- Musicians when working with others need to demonstrate professionalism, respect and trust towards other musicians in an ensemble.
- Leadership and division of labour within ensembles, both artistically and organisationally, work on different levels and require different approaches, skills and challenges.
- The different goals, aims and priorities of musicians present challenges within ensembles.

Interestingly, upon the opening of the focus group interview, the topic of the study was validated with one member stating

Yeah, I often think about that, why are there people that often, you... for example this is not perhaps illusion but you can get up and play with, and others you just... struggle.

(Sarah)

The recurrence of this type of response amongst participants throughout the study showed that it is a phenomenon that musicians often experience when working with others. The opening statement from Sarah confirms that it is unclear what it is that makes performing or working with other musicians easier or more difficult, and the area is therefore worth investigating.

The participants discussed personal and social aspects of working in music ensembles; these focused on professionalism, respect and trust. The participants highlighted the importance of these attributes when it comes to music making and how they need to be balanced. Professionalism, respect and trust seemed to be of most importance for musicians, and were therefore important topics to explore in the

individual interviews in order to gain further insight. The question of the role of the artistic director, and leadership hierarchy within a group was raised repeatedly, yet not discussed in full detail.

It was thus clear that the comments made during the focus group session about changes in hierarchy and the need for a leader or director within chamber music ensembles needed to be discussed in more detail as an aspect of the in-depth interviews. Therefore, this question was taken forward from a number of different viewpoints – those of players, those of directors, and those that have had experience in both roles.

From the information provided in the focus group, data were collected to inform and develop a list of topics central to the initial research questions and guide the discussion in the individual interviews. The large amount of data collected from the focus group directed the interview schedule to cover three main topics:

- professional individual and group identity,
- social factors of working in a chamber ensemble, and
- professional factors of working in an ensemble.

The exploration of these three topics aimed to develop a sense of how musicians see themselves, or identify, as chamber musicians today, how these different identities, beliefs and skills impact group dynamics in a contemporary or early music chamber ensemble, and in what ways ensembles work as an organisation in terms of the division of tasks and the systems that take place. It was important that these three

layers were more deeply understood in order to discover what factors contribute to forming and maintaining a successful, sustainable and cohesive ensemble.

4.6 In-depth interviews

Minichiello, Aroni, and Hays (2008) state, ‘a primary focus of in-depth interviewing is to understand the significance of human experiences as described from the actor’s perspective and interpreted by the researcher’ (p. 11). In this case, as mentioned earlier, through in-depth individual interviews close attention could be paid to how individuals experience working with different musicians in a variety of ensemble settings. In order to receive the maximum amount of information, it was decided that individual interviews from a number of different participants would be more beneficial than observing the behaviour of selected ensembles as a whole. Through interviewing individuals, a number of perspectives could be discerned, unique to that person, providing a deeper understanding of the commonalities and differences amongst chamber musicians’ experiences, without any bias or concealed behaviour that might appear in observing a group environment.

The interviews were conducted in two phases over ten months in 2015; the first phase involved eighteen participants comprising seven women and eleven men, the second involved twelve participants comprising six women and six men. All participants were professional musicians and active, regular members of professional chamber music ensembles. Each participant was a ‘core’ member (a regular member) of at least one ensemble. The interviews lasted for approximately one hour at a location suitable for the participant: their home, teaching studio or educational

institution. It was important to ensure the participants were comfortable in their environment in order to be honest and open in the individual interviews. The interviews were anonymous, audio recorded, and transcribed verbatim.

Table 4.2 gives an overview of each of the participants, including their pseudonym, age, gender, and the number of groups discussed by the participant in the interview. The number of groups discussed by the participants represents past and current ensembles of which the participant has been a member. The number of ensembles discussed may not represent every ensemble the participant has performed with in their career; however, this study only includes the ensembles acknowledged in the interviews, on the basis that these were evidently of most significance to the participant. Some participants were members of, or had played with the same ensembles as other participants within the group; however, altogether 58 *different* ensembles were discussed.

Table 4.2. Interview participant overview

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Number of ensembles discussed by the participant
Stella	31	F	3
Julia	unknown	F	1
John	29	M	1
Jessica	34	F	1
Alan	58	M	1
Brett	40-45	M	1
Conrad	50-60	M	1
Dennis	50	M	3
Evan	45	M	2
Francis	31	M	2
Graham	40	M	2
Harry	64	M	3
Alice	40-50	F	2
Xavier	35-40	M	2
Jack	32	M	1
Bridgette	unknown	F	2
Lucinda	35-40	F	3
Kirsty	35-40	F	2
Derrin	34	M	2
Robert	35-40	M	1
Zoe	32	F	3
Olivia	29	F	3
Isabella	30	F	4
Mia	32	F	1
Ethan	49	M	6
Chloe	32	F	5
Liam	39	M	1
Connor	36	M	2
Gavin	42	M	1
Kylie	32	F	5

The interviews followed a free flowing, conversational style focusing on the participant's personal experience of working in chamber ensembles and how they

perceived themselves as musicians. This *recursive model* of interviewing is described by Minichiello et al. (2008) as,

a form of questioning which is consistently associated with most forms of in-depth interviewing. It enables the researcher to do two things – to follow a more conversational model and, by doing this, to treat people and situations as unique. (p. 88)

The interviews were semi-structured following the interview schedule based on the results of the focus group (Appendix D). The use of an interview schedule allowed a more conversational approach to interviewing, ensuring specific topics were explored in each interview, but also allowing the participants to discuss the issues most pertinent to their experience. The interview schedule also provided freedom to refine the questions asked later in the interviews. Additional questions were formed throughout the interviews that further probed the responses given by the participants. This style of questioning is ideal for interpretative research as it provides flexibility and focus on the participant's reactions to their experiences (Minichiello et al., 2008).

It is important to reiterate that the purpose of individual interviewing is to gain insight into the world of someone else, rather than putting preconceived ideas into someone's thoughts (Patton, 1990, p. 278). Following a list of topics central to the research questions, in addition to those further identified within the focus group, as well as using unfixed wording or ordering of questions gives more flexibility to

the interviews and ‘provides a more valid explanation of the informant’s perceptions and constructions of reality’ (Minichiello et al., 2008, p. 51). The questions based on these topics were designed to allow the participant to openly discuss their experiences of chamber music development and performance. The interviews began with an opening statement followed by an open-ended question, for example ‘Let’s start with your ensemble experience and the types of ensembles you are involved in, how did they begin?’ This allowed the participants to set the framework for their experience, focusing on what was most meaningful for them as well as ensuring I did not impose my personal understanding of the experience on the participants’ stories (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011; Patton, 1990; J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

The questions asked of the participants varied for each interview in order to respond to individual differences and situations. However, the questions aimed to address the six types of questions that Patton describes as pertinent to any topic (1990, pp. 290-293):

- (i) Experience/Behaviour Questions (e.g., the opening question posed above, asking about background and experiences as a chamber musician).
- (ii) Opinion/Values Questions (e.g., asking about goals as an ensemble musician, or the future endeavours of an ensemble, intentions and values).
- (iii) Feeling Questions (e.g., asking for feelings about certain situation, such as how does performing feel in particular ensembles).
- (iv) Knowledge Questions (e.g., eliciting factual information, organisational or administrative processes).

- (v) Sensory Questions (e.g., asking about listening ability, or how one reacts to the musical ideas and expression of another).
- (vi) Background/Demographic Questions (e.g., questions about educational background, age, career.).

These types of questions covered the nature, context, experience and thoughts of the participants. J. A. Smith, Harré, and Van Langenhove (1995) also give three suggestions regarding the construction of questions:

- (i) Questions should be neutral, not leading.
- (ii) Avoid jargon, think about who the participant is and use language they are comfortable and familiar with.
- (iii) Ask open, not closed, questions. Avoid Yes/No answers and allow the participant to open up about their thoughts and feelings. (pp. 13-14)

By constructing questions in this way, I was able to obtain a large amount of information from each participant and access deeper thoughts and feelings about their experiences.

During the interview process, the timing and range of questions posed varied. Van Manen (1997) suggests that it is not required of the researcher to continually ask questions but that ‘patience or silence may be a more tactful way of prompting the other to gather recollections and proceed with a story’ (p. 68). Giving space to the participant allowed them to think about their experiences and collect thoughts and opinions that were not present straight away. This enabled the participants to reflect and provide a deeper meaning to their experiences.

For each interview, field notes were taken documenting the background of the participant, general aspects that were discussed during the interview, and an overall impression of the main topics pertinent to each individual. As each interview was audio recorded, care was taken to allow the recorder to continue through to the end of the meeting, acknowledging that talk after the end of the interview can often provide further information or afterthoughts.

4.7 Phenomenological perspective towards analysis

This is a study of lived experience, the ‘human scientific study of phenomena’ (Van Manen, 1997, p. 11). Van Manen defines phenomenology as ‘scientific in a broad sense, since it is a systematic, explicit, self-critical, and intersubjective study of its subject matter, our lived experience’ (1997, p. 11). He continues to explain that

- it is systematic in that it uses specially practised modes of questioning, reflecting, focusing, intuiting, etc;
- it is explicit in that it attempts to articulate, through the content and form of text, the structures of meaning embedded in lived experience;
- it is self-critical in the sense that it continually examines its own goals and methods in an attempt to come to terms with the strengths and shortcomings of its approach and achievements; and
- it is intersubjective in that the human science researcher needs the other (for example, the reader) in order to develop a dialogic relation with the phenomenon, and thus validate the phenomenon as described. (p. 11)

Section 4.8 will present a detailed account of the method of analysis applied to this study and reflect the above components defined by Van Manen.

Van Manen also explains that themes highlighted in qualitative phenomenological analysis could be considered '*structures of experience*'; when determining what the themes are in the data, the researcher is searching for the 'experiential structures that make up that experience' (1997, p. 79). Alongside these structures of experience, phenomenological approaches search for meaning: 'to be human is to be concerned with meaning, to desire meaning' (1997, p. 79). Patton (1990) also determines phenomenological inquiry to be asking the question 'What is the structure and essence of experience of this phenomenon for these people?' (1990, p. 69). To extract meaning, descriptions and interpretations of chamber music experiences are supplied by both the participant in their account, and myself as the researcher in the analysis of the transcriptions.

Meaning is central in qualitative research, with the aim of a study being to understand the intricacy and essence of these meanings. Throughout the analytical process, to extract and interpret this meaning, the data was analysed with the following questions in mind as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006):

- What does this mean?
- What are the assumptions underpinning it?
- What are the implications of this theme?
- What conditions are likely to have given rise to it?
- Why do people talk about this thing in this particular way?
- What is the overall story the different themes reveal about the topic? (p. 94)

These questions apply a depth of investigation, thought and interpretation to the data, uncovering the underlying content and complexity of individual meanings, thoughts and experiences given by the participant chamber ensemble musicians by listening to them and entering their world.

4.8 Analysis of data

The purpose of an interpretative analysis of the interview data was to explore the ways in which the participants identify and find meaning as chamber musicians. It was also to discover how ensembles work together both artistically and organisationally in order to develop what they believed to be ‘successful ensembles’.

The data was initially analysed through an inductive process of analysis, meaning that patterns and themes were actively sought from the data, and were not established prior to analysis (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46). The complex nature of music ensembles means that no ‘one size fits all’ theory can be applied; however, there are some common aspects between groups that have proven to be viable over long periods of time, and it is these aspects, as well as the attendant failures, that need to be brought forward in analysing the data. Thematic analysis was employed as the method of analysis because, although it may use the principles of grounded theory analytical methods, it does not subscribe to the bounded theoretical underpinnings of a true, grounded theory analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A thematic analysis of data is ‘a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data’ (2006, p. 79), and it develops these themes to

describe and interpret the experiences and understandings provided by the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Tuckett, 2005).

Each interview was transcribed verbatim. Qualitative researchers regard the transcription process as a 'key phase of data analysis within interpretative qualitative methodology' (Bird, 2005, p. 227), and a way for the researcher to become immediately immersed in the data. As the transcripts were actively read and re-read multiple times, I became familiar with the data, and during this process any initial ideas, thoughts, meanings and opinions were noted on the transcript. This process of familiarisation with each transcript from the first phase of interviews informed me of further lines of enquiry. The same process was then repeated for the interviews in the second phase.

The interview transcripts were coded using a system of open coding typically applied in grounded theory research. This process required that I remain open to the participants' accounts and not apply pre-existing categories; therefore any word, sentence or phrase that was believed to be relevant and interesting, and could be assessed in a meaningful way, was noted and coded on the transcript (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Charmaz, 2006). This process resulted in 95 different codes. Extracts of data were often coded multiple times as they represented different thoughts, opinions and reactions towards their experiences.

On the basis of the systematic analysis of each transcript, Table 4.3 provides a comprehensive list in alphabetical order of the aspects coded in the first stage of analysis. These codes refer to topics that had occurred a number of times throughout the interviews in both negative and positive cases. The codes represent all attitudes, opinions and feelings expressed in regard to the experience of being a chamber ensemble musician, for example: ‘creative process’ referred to descriptions of music making or programming, musical experimentation, and collaboration; ‘honesty’ referred to feeling the need to be open, fair and genuine within the group; ‘art versus money’ referred to the values they placed on creating and performing music rather than focusing on the bottom line or producing music for purely financial gain; and ‘future planning’ was discussion about the future, the goals, aspirations and aims of their personal professional life as a musician, and that of their ensemble(s). The definitions of all codes can be found in Appendix E at the end of this thesis.

Table 4.3. Initial codes from the 30 individual interviews

Age	Control	Group identity	Organisational structure	Self-investment or self-sacrifice
Art vs. money	Creative process	Group size	Ownership	Self-reflection
Artistic Director	Cultural differences	Hierarchy	Performance	Shared interests
Artistic Freedom	Cultural Environment	Honesty	Personal identity	Shared values
Artistic Integrity	Decision making	Inspiration	Personal vs. professional relationships	Skills of players
Artistic Output	Division of labour	Instrumental Roles	Personality of players	Someone managing from outside
Arts Organisation	Early vs. Contemporary music	Leadership	Portfolio career	Sponsorship and funding
Audience	Education	Learning	Pride	Stress
Branding	Ego	Long-term vs. project work	Priorities	String quartet
Budget	Entitlement	Management	Professional/outside help or coaching	Teaching
Chamber musician skills	Entrepreneur	Membership	Professionalism	Teamwork
Collaboration	Experience	Money	Programming	Technology
Commitment	Flexible Ensemble	Motivation	Rehearsals	Time
Communication	Freelancing	Musical background and education	Relationships between players	Trust
Composer	Frequency of performance	New or contemporary music	Repertoire	Understanding
Compromise	Future planning	Non-Western Traditions	Resentment	Unusual vs. Conventional ensembles
Conductor	Geography	Opportunities	Respect	Value
Conflict	Goals/vision	Orchestra	Responsibility	Venue
Connections and networks	Group dynamics	Organisational aspects	Risk	Vocal opportunities

Once all thirty of the interview transcripts were analysed and coded case-by-case, the information was imported into an NVivo software file. This software allowed me to reassign each code to the data excerpts, keeping the surrounding context of the code, and then conduct a thematic analysis across and between all cases. Text searches, word frequency counts and coded references were used to find commonalities between cases, and through the interpretation of the data relationships, further codes were established. Figures 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 display examples of codes discussed by three selected participants, Bridgette, Stella and Dennis. These NVivo hierarchical charts demonstrate code frequency counts. The data has been grouped into four main concepts: groups, organisation, individuals and environment, with other codes being represented next to these. Each coloured square is proportionate in size, the larger the square, the more frequent that code was assigned to the interview text.

The hierarchy chart for Bridgette (Figure 4.2) shows that leadership, communication, chamber music skills and the audience were discussed most frequently in her interview.

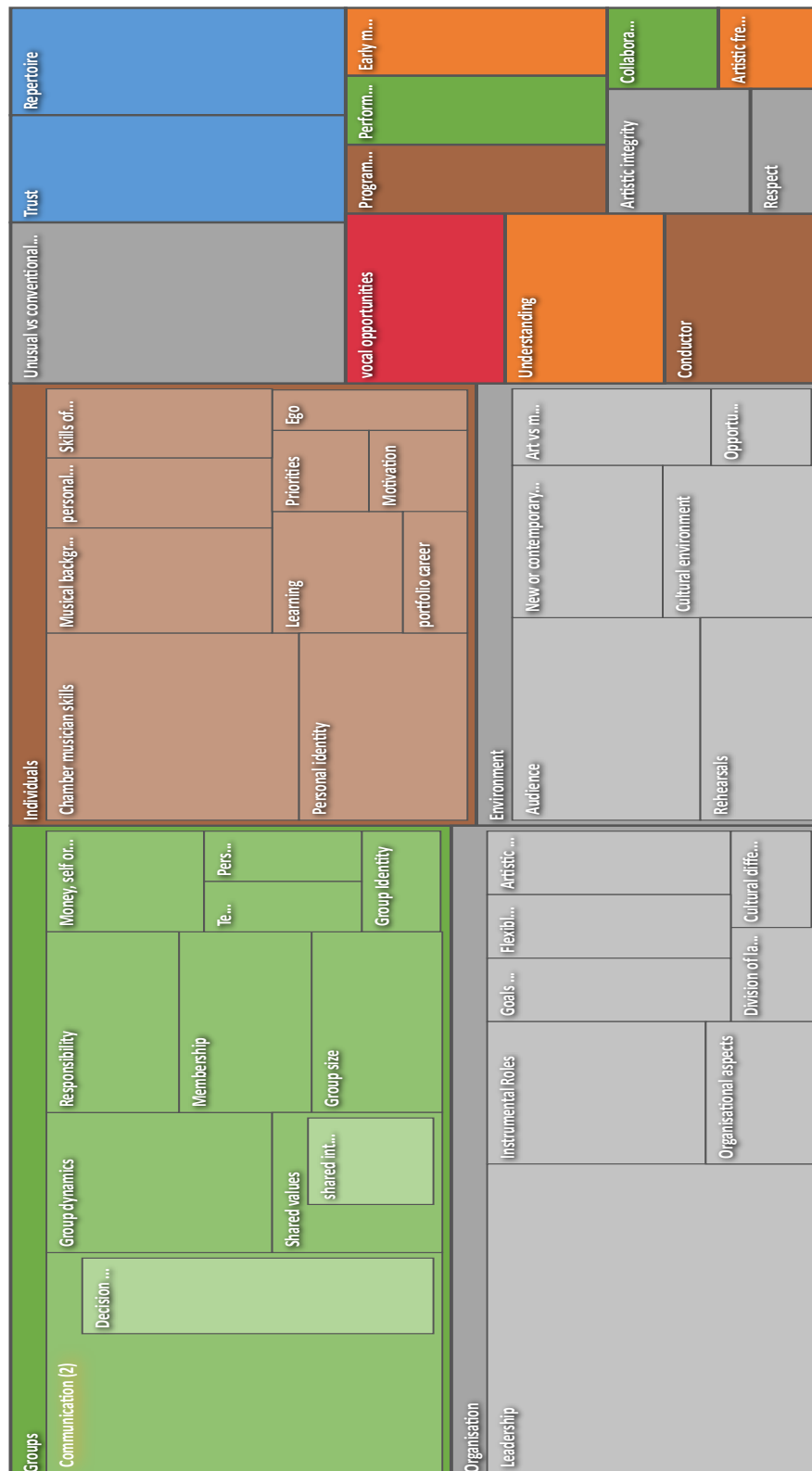


Figure 4.2 Relationship of codes for Bridgette's interview

Dennis (Figure 4.3) discussed personal identity, group identity, communication, leadership, and goals and vision most frequently.

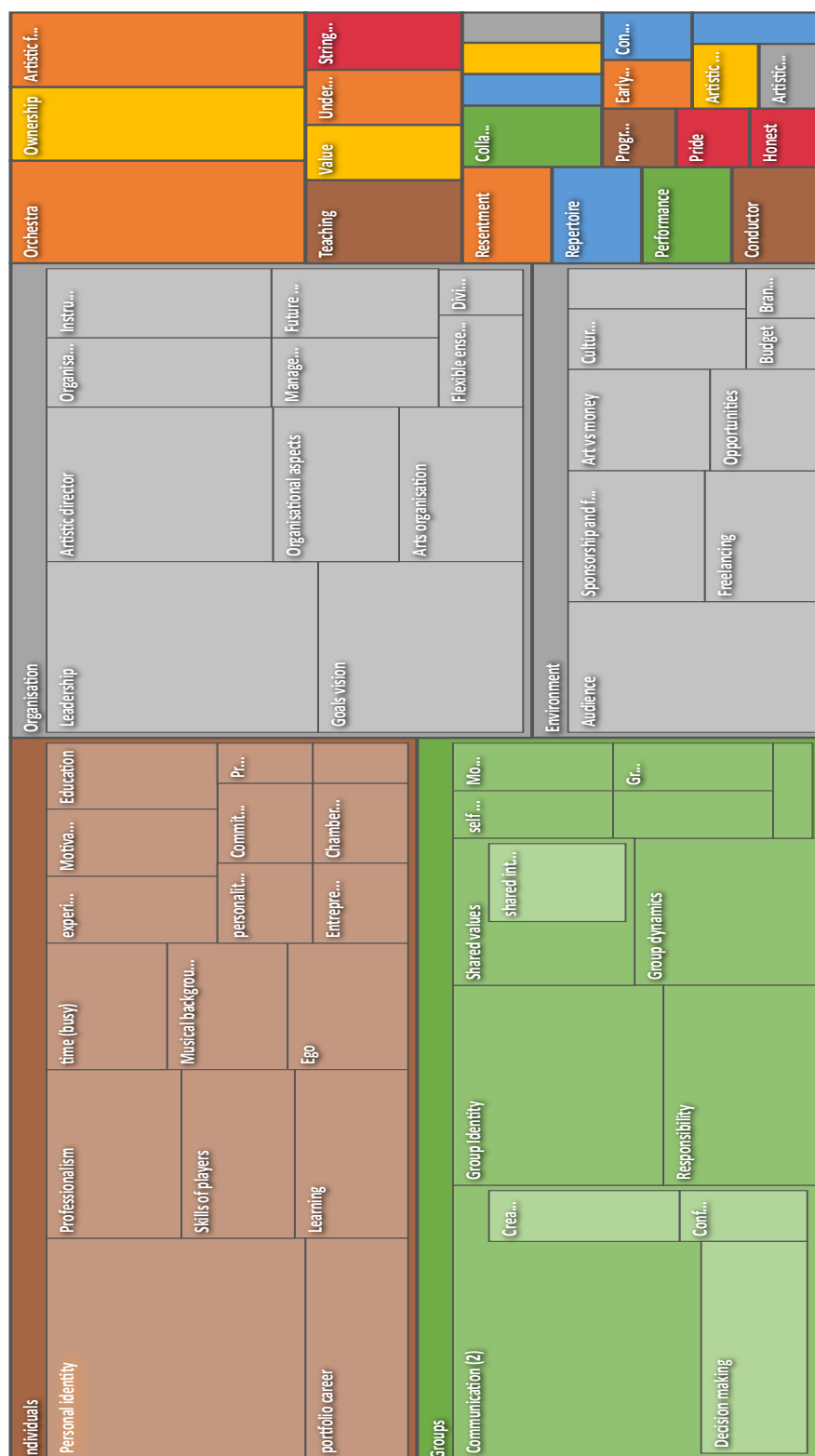


Figure 4.3 Relationship of codes for Dennis's interview

Stella (Figure 4.4) discussed communication, group dynamics, performance, repertoire, audience and rehearsals most frequently in her interview.

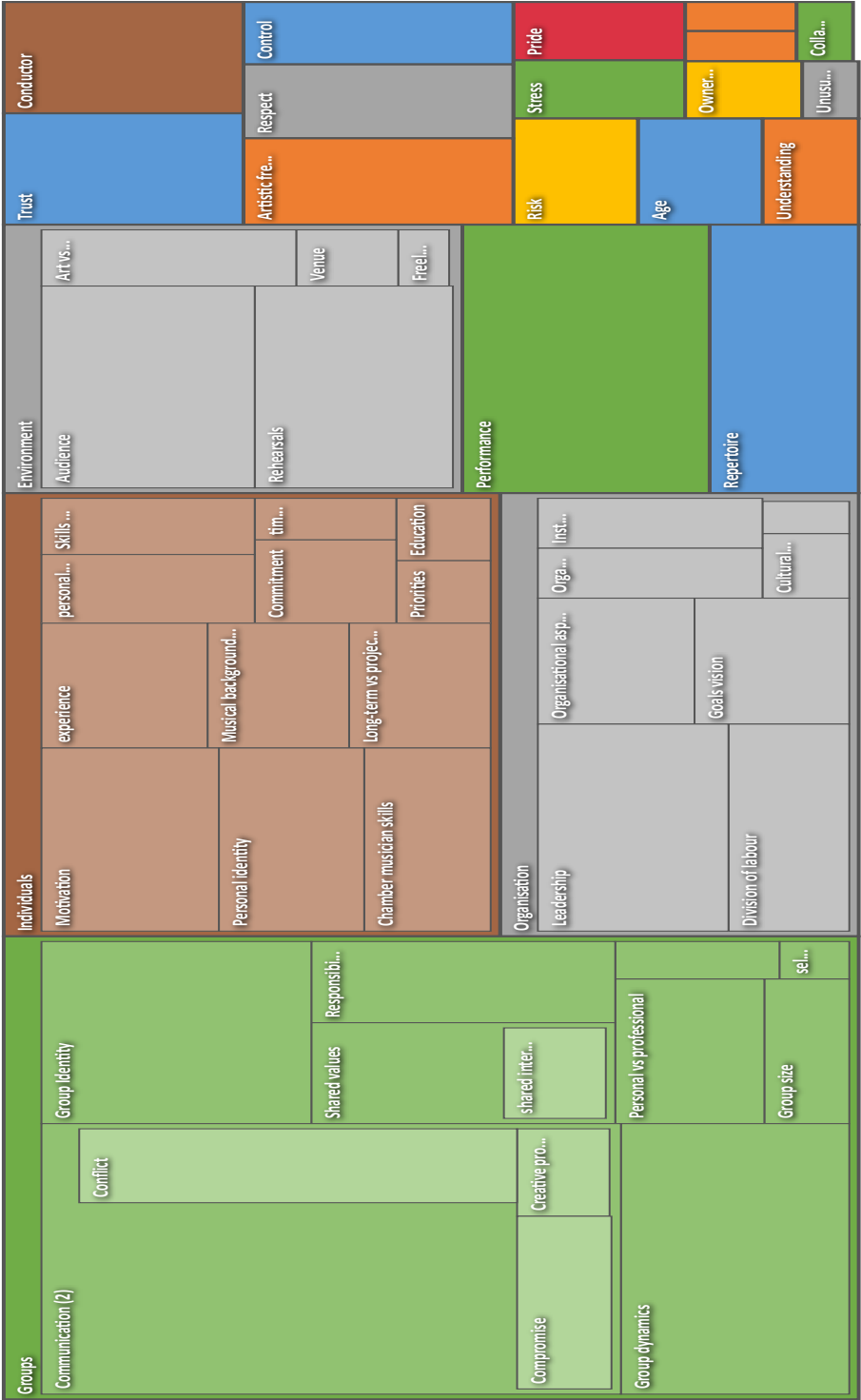


Figure 4.4 Relationship of codes for Stella's interview

Once the codes were developed through open coding, the data was again reviewed at the coded level; this helped to establish whether there was enough data within a code to make it significant to the research, or if two or more codes should be combined. These initial codes were then sorted and grouped to form five themes: individual professional identity, group identity, organisation, environment and collaboration, with subthemes within each category. By grouping the codes and placing them into larger main themes and subthemes, this task reflects axial coding in grounded theory where the purpose is to ‘sort, synthesize, and organize large amounts of data and reassemble them in new ways after open coding’ (Charmaz, 2006, p. 60). The main themes and their associated subthemes can be seen in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Thematic table, showing five main themes and associated subthemes

Individual professional identity	Group identity	Organisation	Environment	Collaboration
Control/ownership	Goals/aims	Organisational structure	Government funding	Communication
Portfolio career	Programming	Roles	Private sponsorship	Group dynamics
Skill	Repertoire	Management	Audience	Shared goals & values
Chamber musician identity	Background & experience	Ensemble history & future planning	New music/unconventional ensembles	Expectations
Values			Technology	
Experience				
Entrepreneur				

These five main themes were then revised and refined by looking closer at the relationships between the themes, subthemes and codes again across all the cases, in addition to reviewing and assessing the literature and referring back to the original research questions. It became evident that the themes emerging from the data linked closely with the literature on influences on organisational behaviour: individuals, groups, organisation, and environment (Cooksey, 2003; Scott, 1992). It was clear from the data that the participants stressed their professional identity as chamber musicians and how this combined with other musicians to form a group identity. Therefore, this core theme needed to be held separate to the influences of organisational behaviour even though there was some overlap in the description. Renaming and reassigning codes to these influences, and keeping professional/group identity separate, provided a clear framework in discovering

the personal and organisational aspects of chamber musicians and the ensemble(s) in which they work. Close consideration revealed that there are two core themes overarching the data: identity (the attributes and characteristics of chamber musicians and their ensembles) and organisational influences (the structure of ensembles and administrative aspects). These core themes found in the data link to concepts and ideas discovered within the literature, and the sub-themes are major concepts and phenomena produced by the participants. Figure 4.5 provides a visual representation of the final thematic map, capturing all themes developed from the data, grouped hierarchically and sorted according to either identity or organisational influences.

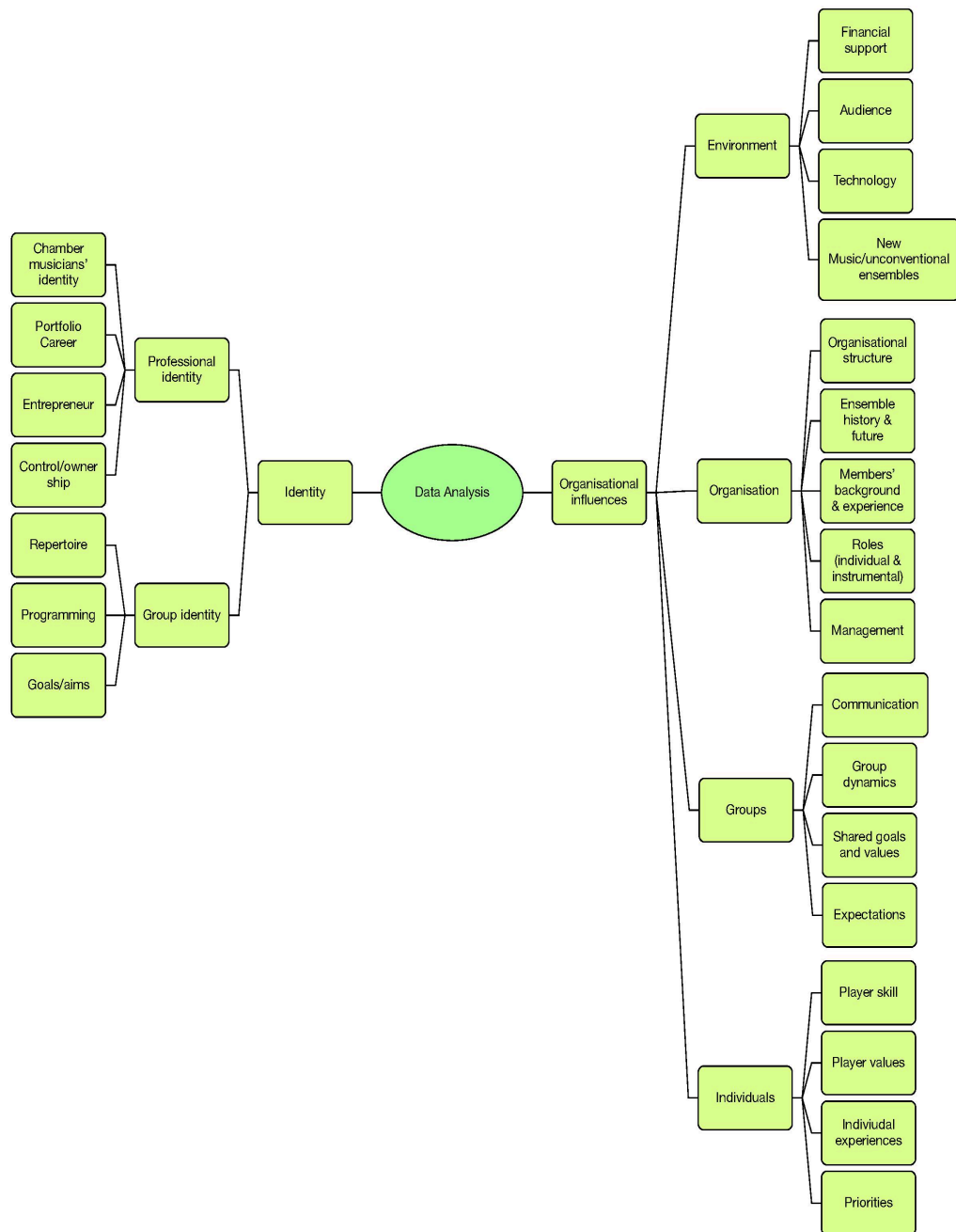


Figure 4.5 Final thematic map, showing final two core themes and sub-themes

The refined themes in Figure 4.5 can be defined as

- (i) *Identity*: the way in which a musician describes themselves as a chamber musician, and the personal attributes believed to be important to life as a chamber musician and to achieving musical collaboration (e.g., respect, compromise, understanding, trust and motivation). Identity also refers to the way in which a collection of musicians form a group identity, how this affects the success of an ensemble and what it means in terms of marketing, programming, repertoire choice and collective goals, aims, vision and values. Identity therefore encompasses both individual professional identity and group identity.
- (ii) *Individuals*: what the members of a group can contribute in terms of skill, experience and background, together with the values and priorities the individuals place on their own profession and the impact this has on the group.
- (iii) *Groups*: the communication and group dynamics of an ensemble, collaborative work, and shared goals, values and expectations.
- (iv) *Organisation*: the way in which an ensemble is constructed, the hierarchies and roles of the musicians and the practical issues that are identified in the management of an ensemble.
- (v) *Environment*: the opinions about the cultural environment in which they work (e.g., money, venue, sponsorship & funding, time and opportunities).

The links between the themes and subthemes became more apparent as analysis progressed and a clear framework in which to explore the meanings and experiences of the participants was developed.

These five themes relate to the initial research questions regarding how an ensemble is established (personal qualities, professional identity), group dynamics, and organisational aspects. They form the basis of the study of

organisational behaviour of chamber music ensembles, and will be discussed in relation to the participants' experiences in Chapters 5 through to 8. The presentation of results will comprise verbatim quotes to illustrate and validate the issues produced by the participants. J. A. Smith et al. (2009) describe interpretative phenomenology as a 'dialogue between participant and researcher', which is 'reflected in the interweaving of analytic commentary and raw extracts' (2009, p. 110). Therefore, it is important to remain close to the raw data, providing evidence when themes are introduced, and providing interpretative analytical commentary and transparency for the reader. The discussion of the analysis of the data will therefore include quoted material from the interviews. Patton (1990) explains that quotations are essential in qualitative studies as they 'allow the reader to enter into the situation and thoughts of the people represented' (1990, p. 430). The quoted material will provide descriptions from the point of view of the participant but these verbatim extracts of dialogue will also be supported by interpretative discussion.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented information about the design of the research – how participants were selected, how data was collected, coded and analysed. In summary, it explains that the analysis began with induction, where codes were actively sought from the raw data transcriptions, which then formed two core themes: identity and organisational behaviour. It was then possible to group the codes into themes and relate these to subthemes based on two aspects of identity

(individual and group) and the four essential organisational elements developed by Cooksey (2003) (environment, organisation, groups, and individuals).

The interpretative process of the data uncovers ‘why’ something is the way it is. It attaches significance to what the participants say and describe. Together with description and interpretation, the following four chapters present findings gained through qualitative analysis that highlight the factors that affect the sustainability, success and viability of classical chamber music ensembles operating in the current field of music. Through exploring the personal accounts of professional musicians, the research findings articulate the role of personal identity, group dynamics, interpersonal relationships and professional development as well as methods of communication, leadership, decision-making and teamwork and the ways in which these factors may, or may not, contribute to a highly attuned, collaborative musical ensemble.

Chapter 5. The Professional Identity of Chamber Musicians

5.1 Introduction

The second and third chapters of this thesis established the context and framework for investigating the individual and group perspectives of professional identity and the organisational processes of chamber ensembles. Chapter 4 outlined the research design and approach to thematic analysis in order to interpret and make sense of the data provided by the participants' personal stories, obtained through semi-structured interviewing. The following four chapters examine the two core themes brought forward during the analysis of the data: identity and organisational behaviour. This chapter presents an in-depth investigation of why the participants in this research identify as chamber musicians and how they understand their role and place in their cultural environment. Using personal accounts of the participants, this chapter draws out commonalities and disparities amongst them and provides informed interpretations and explanations of their personal views of professional musical identity. The chapter explores the attitudes and personal attributes of the participants, along with their described professional needs and perceived status as chamber musicians according to their level of musical skill.

Figure 5.1 demonstrates how the themes presented in the data analysis – personal identity, group identity, the organisation, and the external environment – are all intertwined and related to the activities undertaken by a chamber music ensemble.

The figure illustrates how important it is for ensembles to consider and address all four key elements to attain longevity and success.

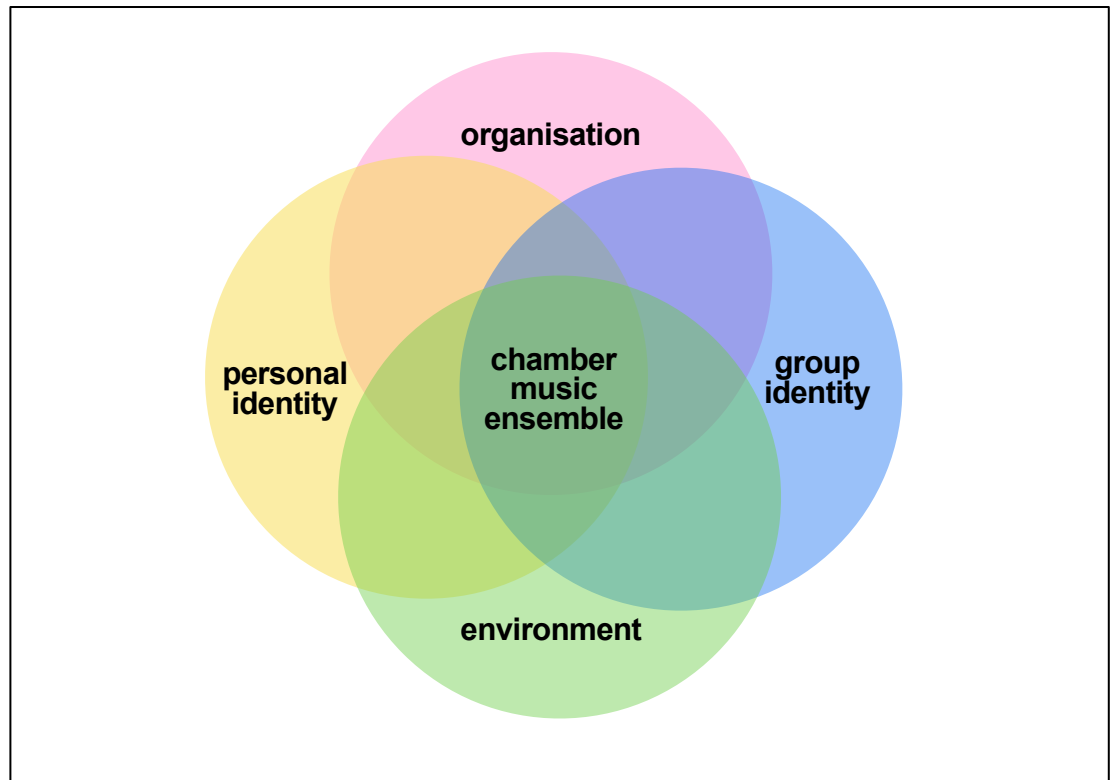


Figure 5.1 Interconnecting elements of a chamber music ensemble

The identity of the individual members involved in an ensemble and how they come together to form a group identity correlate with two influences on organisational behaviour considered by Cooksey (2003) – individuals and groups. Therefore, these influences have been combined with identity related to the individuals and identity related to groups in this representation. The strong personal and emotional connection to interpreting and performing music in an ensemble, as evinced by the participants' accounts, demonstrates that some of the influences of individual and group elements in organisational behaviour (individual experience, personal values, shared goals and values) are deeply

individualistic. These influences have an impact on how one identifies as a chamber musician, how these identities are then used to form a group identity, and the effects these have on the expression of musical performance. It is for this reason that some components of the ‘individuals’ and ‘groups’ elements within organisational behaviour represented by Cooksey will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 focused on identity, while others will be discussed in Chapter 7 ‘Group Organisational Behaviour and Collaboration’ and Chapter 8 ‘Organisational Structures and External Influences’.

In order to explore chamber musicians and the ensembles in which they are members, we need to gain a greater understanding of how and why individuals identify as musicians and what their commonalities might be. We need to have a sense of how they view their world and the variety of characteristics, attitudes, beliefs and desires that define these musicians. What are the reasons that a highly skilled musician chooses to head towards the trajectory of a chamber music career? Is it a choice? Or, are there particular experiences that direct musicians towards a career of this nature? This chapter explores particular features of the chamber musicians who participated in this research and from their own accounts carefully explores what it means to them to be a chamber musician (especially that of a non-traditional ensemble), what affect it has on their musical identity, and how the personal qualities, attributes and skills of musicians contribute to the development of an ensemble.

However, this is not a psychological study; the musical identities described by the participants are a part of their self-reflection and based on past and current professional experience. They draw on knowledge and understanding from their different backgrounds and interpret the meanings from encounters with particular phenomena. These personal recounts and reflective self-awareness represent some common assumptions regarding the particular features of chamber musicians.

5.2 Musical identities

As noted in Chapter 2, musical identity is defined as ‘an aspect of the self-concept that integrates perceptions, beliefs and schemata about a person’s musical abilities and possibilities’ (Schnare et al., 2011, p. 95). It is evident from previous research into musical identity, and confirmed by the participants in my research, that most musicians identify themselves using a domain-specific self-image such as ‘a violinist’ or ‘a performer’ or ‘a music teacher’. MacDonald et al. (2005) describe this self-concept as ‘Identities In Music’ (IIM) and define these identities as ‘the social and cultural roles within music’ (2005, p. 12). The way in which the participants identified themselves was generally as ‘a performer’, with most identifying themselves according to the instrument they play. The following section looks at the reasons why musicians choose to become chamber musicians, the motivations behind these decisions, and the self-fulfilment they get from working in this environment.

5.2.1 Motivation

Fourteen of the thirty participants interviewed described themselves primarily as a ‘chamber musician’, making the distinction from other forms of music performance. For example, nine of these were players of orchestral instruments and had either chosen from the beginning of their professional life to be a chamber musician or after working within an orchestra chose to pursue small ensemble work. Some made outright claims, such as Bridgette, who clearly labelled herself as a ‘chamber musician’. She has a preference for this more intimate musical environment; she chooses to work closely with other musicians, interacting in a smaller setting, a sentiment prevalent in many of the participants’ responses:

I call myself a chamber musician first and foremost... I much prefer to be in a situation where a collection of musicians [are] all interacting... (Bridgette)

Participants also made conscious decisions to be chamber musicians early in their career. Jack and Connor had no desire to be orchestral musicians; it was not a goal they were striving for. They explained that normally a course of performance study prepares students for orchestral careers; therefore, a career in chamber music is a conscious decision that can be made early on during professional training. These musicians believe that these decisions strengthen their identity as chamber musicians and set them apart from orchestral musicians and soloists.

I wasn't really interested in pursuing an orchestral career really. (Jack)

I started studying just normal [instrument] in the orchestra because the teacher was good for that. Not that really was the target, playing in an orchestra. (Connor)

All participants provided specific professional and sentimental reasons as to why they prefer to work in smaller settings, emphasising an appetite for the distinct features particular to chamber music. It is these elements that resounded with the participants and affirmed their identity as chamber musicians above all. To provide further background on the participants, Table 5.1 categorises them according to the category of instrument they play. Two participants were vocalists, choosing to work in smaller, multi-instrumental groups rather than choirs, vocal ensembles, or opera companies; thirteen participants played orchestral instruments; and fifteen played instruments not found regularly within an orchestra. Despite some participants having worked full-time, part-time or casually with an orchestra in the past, none had held a full-time position within the past ten years.

Table 5.1 Categorisation of participants

Instrumental Category	Number of Participants
Vocal	2
Orchestral Instrument	13
Non-Orchestral	15

The decision to choose chamber music as part of their career in music included a number of personal and artistic reasons shared by the participants:

- They felt like they had a more valid ‘voice’ within a small ensemble, contributing interpretations and opinions about the musical material.
- There was less of a sense of anonymity within a small ensemble compared to larger groups.
- They were more likely to have time in rehearsal to explore aspects of repertoire and collaborations.
- They felt they had a closer interaction (communication) with other players during performance.
- Musically it was more satisfying (freedom to choose and explore repertoire).
- They had a sense of ownership of the ensemble.

The reasons listed above contribute to an overall sense of *belonging*; being in an intimate environment and working closely with co-performers whereby all players are recognised within an ensemble, thus eliminating any feelings of anonymity. The interdependence that came with trust and respect for co-performers, having a voice in the decision-making process, and contributing opinions towards the interpretation of repertoire and performance, provided this sense of belonging.

Of the thirteen players of orchestral instruments, only five participants had previously held orchestral positions. The other eight had made a decision during their professional studies not to work in an orchestra but rather to pursue other performance activities. Those that had worked within an orchestra described being ‘unhappy’ or ‘bored’ at times during their orchestral career as a result of the repetition of repertoire, a lack of time to pursue other musical interests, having

interpretative musical decisions directed by one leader or conductor, and the 9am to 5pm employee or ‘corporate’ mentality. All of these past orchestral musicians felt that chamber music ensembles provided more artistic freedom and that their artistic investment within the group was recognised more by other members. This was a sentiment shared by all participants. For example, Conrad believed chamber music allows a musician to have an individual voice, which based on his experience, is not necessarily the case in an orchestral environment:

...in an orchestra, especially as a casual, if you're not the principal of a section you don't really have a voice and you're not asked to have a voice, you're meant to fit in. That's the role of orchestral music, they don't want you to stick out. Whereas in any ensemble in chamber music, you are an individual voice rather than part of a section.
(Conrad)

The ‘voice’ Conrad is referring to is the musical voice of his instrument and the role it plays in orchestral and chamber music. From his description it can be understood that he clearly differentiates between the two roles. As a member of a section in an orchestra, it is about blending in, fitting in with other instruments. His account also divulges a sense of hierarchy within orchestral sections: that more superior musicians are more important, playing a more prominent part. He believes that even between full-time and casual players; a casual has little impact within the large ensemble. Conversely, in chamber music the instrument has its

own line or part, it is not part of a section amongst other identical instruments; therefore, it can indulge in its own interpretations of its musical line. As each instrument in the ensemble is equal in this way, more importance is ascribed to each individual and each have a more equal role.

Working in a chamber ensemble undoubtedly provides a more intimate musical experience. It allows the members to also have a verbal voice in terms of artistic influence in the rehearsal process and the organisational decisions, but also it is clear that relationships are more likely to develop, unlike in a large ensemble situation. Evan felt playing in an orchestra created a sense of anonymity and that there was less camaraderie than in a small ensemble.

... you go in there and people barely even notice you, or look at you. You're just a bum on the seat and they just sort of trust that whoever's made the decision about who should be playing the part knows what they're doing.

(Evan)

Evan experienced feelings of being invisible and isolated within a large group; his description of 'just a bum on the seat' displays a sense of disconnect towards the group. This excerpt also demonstrates a shift in trust and accountability from the player to the 'decision-maker'. It is not the responsibility of the player to demonstrate skill and worthiness, rather the person who chose the player is trusted to have made the right decision. The player is seen as an employee, with little

social or musical relationship existing between other members. There is no perceived intimacy within a large ensemble.

Although not common to small ensembles, participants who had worked with a conductor in a smaller setting had discovered that this created a barrier between the ensemble and its audience, and between performers. Chloe and Gavin explained that the intimacy and collaboration were seen to decrease as the focus for the musicians turned to their own part, listening less actively to co-performers and they aimed their attention at one person in front of the ensemble. Chloe also notices that trust between co-performers is heightened when not playing with a conductor and that trust adds to the intimacy of a group.

[Without a conductor] *You're hearing better. You're listening better. You have more contact, and when it's all focused on one conductor then it's difficult. In the end, we had a little bit of a chain effect, that everyone would look at the conductor, and then just before, look to the person who's actually leading the piece ... Playing with conductor and from music, you're very much focused on your own line ... It also takes a lot of trust. I mean that's the other thing. Playing without a conductor, you need to trust the other people are prepared and actually doing what they're supposed to do. (Chloe)*

Chamber music, it's about listening and reacting. And if you have a conductor it's all centred on someone and his own playing.
(Gavin)

This intimacy sought by Chloe and Gavin, amongst many of the participants, is also found on an artistic level. The participants reported that chamber music provides a space where performers can collaboratively explore the score and identify and hear the nuances and textures in a smaller ensemble setting. To be able to respond to subtle changes in performance and make informed choices about the role their instrument or voice plays within the texture of a piece of music was important to many of the participants and provided a source of motivation. This is also emphasised in unconventional or non-traditional ensembles, as the textures and musical colours are more varied. This is illustrated in the following comments:

...one of the things I love the most about working with a chamber group of instrumentalists is that it's all happening on a scale where I can hear individual timbres, and a big part for me of the nuance of performing is making judgments and decisions about my timbral proximity to those individual sounds, I just get off on that, big time. (Bridgette)

... the whole fun of working in chamber music is you get to make sounds that go with an oboe, or with a guitar, or percussion. You actually get to respond to the colours around you and that's what we really like... but there is stuff that when you hear things coming out of the texture that you innately respond to. (Alice)

'Love' and 'fun' were used to describe working within chamber ensembles – positive sentiments when reflecting on what it meant to work in a small music ensemble. Participants enjoyed the ability to hear subtle changes, nuances, sounds and textures and the ability to react, respond and make critical '*judgments and decisions*' based on the closeness and concurrence of the musical lines and performers. The openness and flexibility of these collaborations add to the intimacy found on an artistic level.

One participant described a different motivation for chamber music. Xavier identified that his strengths as a musician were strongly aligned with the cognitive skills needed in chamber music. He was inspired by the intellectual opportunities presented in small ensemble playing, where he could exercise more skills in musical knowledge, rather than solely demonstrating a high technical ability on his instrument.

My forte was always chamber music and I like the improvisation and the freedom, and the research side of it, the thinking side of playing... (Xavier)

Although his main motivation might have been different to the other participants at first, Xavier provides another example of a preference for ‘freedom’ and flexibility, experimentation and working through the *process* of preparing music for performance.

These motivations focus on the artistic side of chamber music performance, as well as building professional relationships. The pleasure of sharing an opinion or interpretation based on specialist knowledge and background experience gave a feeling of pride and artistic integrity.

I love playing chamber music, and the chance to work with amazing composers and help create that music with them, and that being a legacy is a once in a career possibility... A sense of pride being part of some of the work that I've done there and so they're really sort of career defining things and [ensemble] you know is the very special one, the central one for me ... It's been the main thrust I guess, it's been the constant throughout my professional career and if it were to stop I'd really miss it, not a lot else motivates me that much to be honest with you. (Conrad)

It can be seen through Conrad's opinion of chamber music that the close artistic collaboration and experimentation evokes pride: pride in creating something new, being part of the process with others, and leaving a legacy. Ownership is taken through the collaborative work the musicians have done together. The developed connection with ensemble members, relationships, contributions, responsibilities, and interdependence make ensembles quite special for participants like Conrad and forms an essential part of their career and identity as a musician. As he stressed in his response; '*not a lot else motivates me that much*', suggesting these aspects are important motivational factors for chamber musicians. These aspects also contribute to the importance of the *process* of music making for chamber musicians – not only the performance, presentation or product, but the process of music creation, collaboration and relationship building.

When the participants had devoted a lot of time, effort and specialist knowledge to an ensemble, they began to identify closely with that ensemble. Pride encouraged these musicians to continue working within a group and provided a certain amount of motivation for the participants to maintain and develop the group further. Without a sense of pride in what the ensemble was doing, many participants indicated that there would be no reason to continue. The following comments highlight this sense of pride from the participants in their group's achievements:

I'm really, you know, proud of the past few years and what we've achieved with what we're doing now (Jack)

... you need to feel proud of the work you've done and especially work that you might have worked 6 months on, or a year on. So yeah, I think that's important that that feeds and nourishes the ego. (Alan)

I'm very proud of what we've done, and I'm very pleased that we've kept the artistic integrity and every program we can be happy with. (Alice)

If you do really well and you're really satisfied you're like 'hm, that was um', you know, 'that was a great [moment] in my life there' (Liam)

Pride results from the fruition of something (a project or performance) that has taken a long period of time to develop. The participants found motivation through reflecting on the development and growth of their ensemble over time. The ability for a group to couple artistic goals with accomplished outcomes and the personal satisfaction of musical achievements within the ensemble added to this motivation. These considerations reflect the reasons why musicians choose chamber music as an artistic career and the aspects these musicians incorporate as part of their professional identity.

The series of comments above relate mainly to what the ensemble had achieved artistically; however, Conrad specifically expressed his pride in being part of a particular ensemble for almost thirty years; this pride informed his own professional identity as a performer.

... for me, as a performer in the group, and I know the others share this, there's just an enormous sense of pride that you're part of something, and you're able to do really important work and have an influence. And we just started out as a bunch of friends wanting to make music. But now the group is worldwide known as one of the leading groups...

I think, I mean people have wide ranging careers and none of them would give up music or anything but it occupies a central role in people ... that sense of pride and identity, identification within the group especially those of us who have been in it for so long, and the pride in what it has achieved. (Conrad)

Conrad's sense of pride comes from watching the ensemble grow over time, being part of something that had begun from friends wanting to make music together and later developed into a successful ensemble. The importance of the work the

ensemble contributes to musical culture also provided Conrad with pride. His inclusion in this ensemble and being a part of the work it does shapes his identity; he identifies with the group and is known as a member of this ensemble.

The participants discussed self-reflection and continual learning: learning more about themselves and others. Their musical and emotional selves were constantly developing, especially as freelance musicians in multiple ensembles and working in different contexts. Many of the participants spoke of '*constant learning*' not only in technical or musical skill needed to maintain an ensemble but also in challenging and learning about themselves, discovering what they are capable of and where they want to proceed in the future.

For example, Zoe's interdisciplinary ensemble took inspiration from the members' backgrounds and experiences, combining them into different projects. This meant Zoe spent a lot of time reflecting on her development, her attributes, and her limitations.

*With people, personally, to really reflect on yourself,
where are you, yourself. I feel I have to do that often,
because of my limitations. And I often feel very bad about
it, because I feel that's just my general psychology, I think.*
(Zoe)

With self-reflection, Zoe *'feels bad'* because she can see how her perceived limitations impact upon the group, but she also recognises that she needs to continue to work on improving and maintaining healthy relationships with her co-performers and friends. It is almost that she feels guilty taking the time to think about where she is, who she is, and what her situation is within the context of the ensemble. Zoe's comment emphasises the close, personal connections many of the participants had with particular ensembles.

Conscious self-reflection appeared to help the musicians communicate better and form stronger bonds or relationships with the other members of their ensemble. All participants expressed a need to have close contact and an intimate music making experience with co-performers, and these bonds were significant contributors to the formation of their musical identity as chamber musicians. Although working within an ensemble, the small group collaboration and interdependence allows musicians to develop a voice by sharing ideas and opinions during the rehearsal period. The sense of belonging came from investing time, knowledge and opinions into the group, creating a sense of ownership and for some, control.

5.3 Artistic control and ownership

Small ensembles often perform without a conductor. The exception to this typically involves contemporary or new music ensembles where occasionally a conductor is necessary to keep time in complex repertoire. Studies into the relationships between conductors and ensembles show that the conductor's role is

to lead the ensemble and impart their own interpretation and artistic vision on to the orchestral players (Cook & Howitt, 2012; Kerres, 2012). The participants, as members of small ensembles, claimed the power and value in their preparation and performance is having shared control over the musical material and working collaboratively to reach the final goal. Pride is taken in perfecting the repertoire, employing subtle and effective communication between the ensemble members and then conveying this message to an audience.

Interestingly, although all participants chose to make chamber music their primary activity – preferring to have a more intimate musical experience or setting and wanting an equal part in the artistic decision-making – for some, having *control* over the artistic and organisational aspects of a chamber music was reported as both rewarding and challenging. The participants spoke of a number of areas in chamber music that afforded them control. They enjoyed control of

- their instrument, where they can explore and create sound in any way they please as it is not part of a section;
- making their own decisions, as they do not adhere to a section or convention;
- specific, individual projects and having the freedom to see their own artistic vision through;
- overall artistic decisions regarding repertoire and choice of co-performers/collaborators; or
- their musical life, whereby they are able to choose what projects they want to be part of and have the freedom to be involved in different activities.

The closeness of collaborating in musical performance allows the musicians to focus on their own playing, exploring the sounds their instrument is capable of

and adapting this sound to the textures and timbres within the group. These decisions become the responsibility of the player, without having to consult other players of the same instrument within an instrumental or vocal section.

For some, the close connection they have with the ensemble on artistic and organisational levels renders a need for control. Two participants, who were co-artistic directors of different groups, described themselves as ‘control freaks’, feeling the need to be responsible for both performing in and managing the ensemble. One participant, Julia, described being in control of both aspects of her ensemble as ‘*incredibly liberating*’ and giving her a sense that she ‘*can do anything*’. During rehearsals, she prefers that all musicians have something to contribute in terms of opinions and interpretations of the music, although the integrity of the group lies with her. She explained that she has the final decision on all repertoire choice, musician choice, and programming so the ensemble is shaped towards her vision:

... but it's just my vision of the group needs, more than me performing. It needs that sort of direction. It's the integrity of the group really, it's just everything. (Julia)

Julia's role is both performer and co-artistic director. The dual role means that her identity and the group's identity are tied in together; this gives her more control of the group and how it is presented. She believed that she must uphold this dual

role; they are so intertwined that she and the group are identified through each other. The vision and direction of the group satisfies personal artistic endeavours.

The participants expressed a deep emotional connection with groups that they either established or had been part of for a long period of time. Chloe, who is the co-artistic director of one of her groups, confessed throughout her interview that over the past three years she has discovered that she *'quite likes control'*. She is a core member of three different ensembles and co-artistic director of two of these ensembles. Chloe described all the tasks involved in producing her concerts. She felt she initiated most of the projects and took it as a personal failure if the concert is not a success. Despite this, she enjoyed the responsibility, ensuring the tasks were completed and that they met with her standards. She explains,

The thing is also, if you do these things, if you, for instance, have a self-organised concert, and you're responsible for doing the PR and no one comes, then you take it as your own failure... but at the same time it's also really nice, because it gives you control over things. I discovered for myself – I wouldn't have said three years ago – that I quite like to control things, that they go the way I like. [laughs] (Chloe)

The emotional connection and alignment of unsuccessful performance to personal failure accentuates the crucial role small ensembles play in forming a chamber

musician's professional identity. Representing their own musician identity through a group's identity creates a complex relationship between the two.

Fourteen participants were primarily part of an ensemble where they worked collaboratively on both an artistic and an organisational level. These participants felt more sense of ownership of the ensemble, as they were responsible for musical interpretation, programming, concert organisation, and the vision of the ensemble. They were willing to invest more time in the ensemble; they were also more willing to sacrifice financially. In order to do this Evan explains,

It's all about willpower and the ability and commitment to self-invest which is leading them to sort of move forward.

(Evan)

This commitment of self-investment is referring to time and money; being willing to do this demonstrates engagement with the group, prioritisation, and a sense of obligation and devotion to the vision of the ensemble. The results of the participant interviews show that regardless of whether the group had an artistic director or not, the participants believed that there needed to be a sense of ownership and belonging for everyone within the ensemble in order to produce a good performance and to encourage, influence, and motivate musicians to remain part of a group.

Control and ownership are certainly factors that appear to be important to chamber musicians. The participants clearly indicated that chamber musicians typically aspire to making choices regarding artistic decisions. The participants asserted control over repertoire choice and the use of their instruments, as well as revealing a desire to work within unconventional ensembles. The role of the artistic director and his/her role within the ensemble will also be discussed further in Chapter 8.

5.4 The musical skills and attributes of a chamber musician

At the beginning of this thesis is a quote by Maestro Salvatore Accardo, and it is repeated here because it connects to the following discussion about the musical skills that participants believed are necessary and often unique to a chamber musician. Accardo says:

Among musicians, to refer to a colleague as a good chamber music player is a real accolade, implying that he or she is a particularly sensitive musician who enjoys working closely with a few other colleagues. First you have to master your own part and then put the piece together and agree on interpretation jointly, because the final performance is not just your affair but a truly joint effort. (cited in Sicca, 2000, p. 149)

Accardo speaks of the ‘sensitive musician’ working intimately with others. He then describes the process of learning an individual part before working collaboratively with other musicians to make decisions about interpretation, style and performance practice. Within a classical chamber music ensemble, sensitivity also comes from being able to listen and react to the other players in an almost spontaneous environment. When asked to explain what assets are necessary in order to be a successful chamber musician, the participants focused on skills such as active listening, communicating and reacting to co-performers’ decisions; professional knowledge including specialist knowledge in a particular instrument, genre of music or style; and trust.

The musician-participants developed sophisticated aural and technical skills throughout their professional training and continued to develop these through years of practical experience, implementing the ideas imparted in their initial training. Instrumental proficiency, accurate intonation, ensemble balance and rhythmical synchrony are abilities learned and practised considerably during the life of a developing musician. When collaborating with other musicians, a number of highly complex processes are occurring simultaneously, and these skills all have to be used and adapted in a fluent and responsive manner; an individual must actively listen, adapt and react to the musical lines and interpretations of the other members. While the musician is focusing on their own line, and adapting to the musical responses of other performers, they must contribute to the ensemble by expressing their own interpretation through melodic shape, articulation and character. Intonation and rhythm are not the only aspects of musical performance and interpretation that require listening and reacting; the participants discussed

texture and timbre as especially important in modern compositions and for ensembles that are comprised of instruments from different families. The ability for performers to listen and react to intonation, phrasing, dynamics, interpretation, texture and timbre were to some more important than technical proficiency on an instrument or their ability to handle a certain skill, for example, contemporary improvisation. Graham explained,

... that intensity of listening... when you're playing chamber music to me the best chamber musicians, or at least the people I enjoy working with the most, are the ones that are contributing strongly what they want to say in the music, but at the same time they're really acutely attuned to what you're doing in the music, how you're shaping it or what sort of articulation you're using or what character you're bringing to it at that time, they're prepared to react to that and vice versa. (Graham)

Graham is in an ensemble that primarily performs improvised contemporary music. It was explained that contemporary improvisation does not necessarily follow the same form or bounds of the stricter genres of jazz or folk; the approach of Graham's ensemble is free contemporary improvisation, requiring the performers to listen intently for the subtle changes of pitch, rhythm, melody, harmony, texture and timbre after being given a stimulus from which to build the improvisation. From Graham's experience of working in a chamber music

ensemble – no matter the genre or style – he believed the best collaborators are those that have their own musical ideas and are willing to share those while responding to the subtle changes made by the other members of the ensemble. A professional chamber musician, in his view, is a musician who has something to bring to the ensemble musically, an idea, style, interpretation, or technique.

Timbre and texture were important musical elements discussed by Graham. Earlier in this chapter it was mentioned that being able to work in an ensemble where tonal colour was central to the music was a motivating factor for musicians. Here, the ability to react and adapt instrumental or tonal timbre is seen as a skill, an important ability to be learnt and applied. This is even more appropriate for unconventional or non-traditional ensembles, as the mixture of instruments is often very different in sound production and tone.

Timbre and texture are not only important elements in contemporary improvisation; they are also prominent aesthetics in modern composition. In ensembles that include instruments from different families, changes in texture and timbre have a profound effect on the sound of the group. Alice has worked as a musician for 25 years. In her experience, students are *'trained to make one sound and one colour, and that's all that matters'*. To her, this way of thinking and performing is contradictory to the purpose of chamber music where on the whole it is believed that musicians need to develop flexibility in sound, reacting and responding to different musical colours and textures within the group. She talked about changing the timbre of her instrument to match those that are in the

ensemble, and ‘innately’ responding to the different colours and the *‘things coming out of the texture’*; an awareness and skill needed to create variety in the music and give justice to the musical score. This means chamber musicians explore their creativity further, listening more acutely within the ensemble at more subtle nuances rather than reacting only to pitch, expression and time. Bridgette also appreciated the nuances of timbre-driven music, believing that timbre must be an important element in new music for unconventional ensembles as it reflects the composer’s sound intentions:

... and it’s [the compositions] written by composers who I like to think of as like-minded because they are, I guess, they’re writing for combinations of sounds that are sort of one off and rare, and to me it seems that it must be the case that that combination is timbrally [sic] driven. They want to kind of play with the way a voice sounds put with this very specific timbre rather than on a bed of colour.

Approaching music in this way emphasises a serious and professional approach to chamber music performance. Professionalism was a topic raised as an important feature in twelve of the interviews, particularly emphasising the need for musicians to have a professional demeanour, possess professional skill and contribute professional knowledge. Although discussed frequently within these twelve interviews, it was not discussed in depth. The participants suggested that being professional, or having specialist knowledge in a style, genre, or chamber

music in general, came from experience. They also thought that as musicians reached a professional level of collaboration, verbal communication between members of a group lessened and there was more of a general understanding as to how the music should be performed. In addition, both technical proficiency and specialist knowledge of repertoire or style contributed to the establishment of trust within an ensemble.

The nature of trust was discussed frequently by participants because of the importance of forming one musical ‘voice’ as a group. While playing an individual line within the musical score, each musician is expected and trusted by others in the group to have a full understanding of their line – there is no one else to rely on. Being able to trust your colleagues therefore makes for a more successful performance. Stella explained that by having this trust, she is able to focus more on her own performance, who she is on stage, and whether she is able to take musical risks without the performance falling apart.

*...there is also an extreme feeling of trust, from my side.
When I'm on stage with these people I know that most
likely nothing will go wrong and if it goes wrong it will be
immediately fixed in the best possible way. So I can really
focus on who I am on stage and I can take risks knowing
that I am going to be understood and this I feel is the
privilege of working with, with very good people for a very
long time. (Stella)*

This trust and professional approach allows Stella to feel comfortable on stage, she can relax and concentrate on herself and her own performance; she can feel more enjoyment in her own performance knowing she can take risks as there is little space for error. Trust in the ensemble allows her as a musician to focus on her musical line, and her contribution to the group, rather than worrying about the other members. Her individual musicality and musician identity is able to permeate throughout the ensemble.

After working with the same musicians for a long period of time, Lucinda discovered that there was a lot of intrinsic trust within the ensemble; there was less discussion and the professional skills of the members coalesced.

Trust is definitely a big part of it. I think it's so big that you almost don't think about it. You certainly don't talk about it. It's just like, because you enter into it, you sit around in a rehearsal room you're playing together, there's so much intrinsic trust that you agree about tempo and you agree that you're just going to play this piece at all, it's an interesting concept I think. (Lucinda)

Lucinda is referring to the ease of rehearsal and performance with professional musicians that she trusts and respects. Trust in this case goes so far as to become a given; professional musicians trust that others are at such a high standard within

their field that little discussion about technique, approach and musical understanding is needed.

Chamber musicians refine their skills as a musician through intimate performances and working regularly in a close group environment. Listening ability, reaction and adaptation within rehearsal and performance are attributes that were described by the participants as distinguishable differences to performing in larger groups, requiring acute application in such an intimate setting. It was revealed that these skills, however, are not the only skills needed in order to produce a successful ensemble. Discussion about the lives and experiences of the participants and the various activities they undertake suggests that musicians need non-musical skills including entrepreneurial knowledge. The participants explained that as part of their ensemble(s) they have to search for opportunities and develop them in a way that makes the group(s) marketable to the public as well as being artistically satisfying for the performers. Musicians develop these skills either through training or in the 'real world' outside the academy, and as it is with the majority of musicians, use them in a number of different areas making up a portfolio of creative and non-creative activities.

5.5 Portfolio careers

All participants interviewed for the research are freelance chamber musicians and reported that they continually work with a number of different ensembles and many different musicians. They have to adjust accordingly to different dynamics within a number of groups and to the various relationships between the individual

members. The thirty participants of this study represented 58 different ensembles. Table 5.2 provides a condensed overview of Table 4.2 in the previous chapter, indicating the division of how many groups were discussed by each participant in the interviews. As the participants are freelance musicians, this does not represent all ensembles they have ever performed with, but those that they spoke of in the interview. The table therefore represents the ensembles that are the most significant to the participants' experiences of ensemble performance. The *total* number of groups discussed by the participants in the interviews (67) was higher than the number of *different* ensembles covered in the study (58), as some participants were members of the same ensemble.

Table 5.2 Number of ensembles discussed by each participant

Number of ensembles discussed	Number of participants
One	11
Two	9
Three	6
Four	1
Five	2
Six	1

A large number of participants focused their discussion on participation in only one ensemble. This occurred where chamber music performance was their main (or sometimes only) source of artistic output. These practitioners typically maintained a busy teaching schedule or other forms of employment alongside

their participation in the one chamber ensemble. The other dominant reason many participants identified with one particular ensemble was that this was the ensemble they performed with most often and invested the most time in.

This investment of time, and the role within different ensembles, affected their attitude towards performance and their sense of *belonging*. Lucinda, for example, described factors that contributed to her sense of investment and ownership within different ensembles, including having an equal share in the process of creating music, such as the collaborative nature of experimentation ('jamming') and creating songs together. Her background is divided between popular music bands, orchestral work and classical chamber music, namely contemporary music. With reference to her rock band history, Lucinda presented a reflection of the difference between 'gigs' and playing a more prominent role in an ensemble and how this has had an effect on her sense of belonging to an ensemble, or as Lucinda phrased it, 'ownership'.

And with my own rock band, we worked on all the songs together. We jammed together and it was really collaborative and we all owned it, to equal amounts. So you kind of invest in it because it's what you want to do. Whereas playing other people's bands it was just immediately a distinction... (Lucinda)

Although Lucinda is referring to a different musical genre, her sentiments were echoed in her classical ensemble work, as well as the other participants.

The level of investment clearly reflects whether or not the musician has a sense of ‘ownership’ in the ensemble. This is a consideration for musicians when determining their role and responsibilities within the creative production of the group. Upon reflection, some participants believed they had realised their desire to have greater artistic and administrative control within their ensemble. Their preference was to be more influential in relation to the operation of the group rather than have decisions made by a director or conductor. These participants were more often than not already recognised as the artistic or co-artistic directors (or leaders) of their group.

Chamber ensemble performance was often one part of a career ‘portfolio’ for the participants. Portfolio or protean careerists are professionals who work multiple part-time jobs rather than a traditional full-time job. For musicians, these tend to include performance, composition/arranging, teaching (music education), research, arts administration/management, and sometimes work in industries beyond music. This was the case for many of the participants, as musical careers in an orchestra, full-time ensemble or opera company were seen as quite competitive and becoming more rare. The participants labelled themselves as freelance musicians, referring to a range of performance projects. For example, when discussing members of one of her groups, Lucinda separated being a musician and teaching commitments stating, *‘every player is a freelance musician*

and some of them have teaching as well'. This separation demonstrates how musicians see themselves regardless of the other activities they undertake.

It was evident that musicians in freelance circumstances find it difficult to maintain a reliable income through performance alone. Despite these circumstances, the participants stressed that reasons for performing music often go beyond financial gain. The feeling of self-fulfilment and success through creating and performing art, rather than its economic value, was highlighted by all but one participant, and all showed contentment or acceptance towards having a portfolio career. This sentiment is reflected in Hall's (2004) study of protean careers where those in a protean (portfolio) career often match three criteria: they accept personal responsibility for their career, meaningful work makes up part of their personal identity, and success is measured internally (by psychological and subjective measures). They are also inspired by autonomy, personal values and psychological success (Bridgstock, 2005). The portfolios of the participants comprised of five main sources of income:

- multiple performance involvement,
- teaching,
- arts administration,
- composing, or
- conducting.

Table 5.3 displays how many participants took on one or more activities beyond their chamber music ensemble work.

Table 5.3 Number of career activities outside chamber music

Number of activities in addition to chamber music performance	Number of participants
Four activities	1
Three activities	5
Two activities	8
One activity	12
Ensemble director only	2
Unknown ¹	2

Figure 5.2 illustrates the distribution of activities in addition to chamber ensemble performance. Within each of the areas provided in Figure 5.2 there were a number of different roles; for example, teaching in a private studio or at an institution, solo performance and other casual or part-time group performance (orchestra, instillation art, music theatre), or arts management activities such as curating a festival/workshop, and editing/publishing a music magazine.

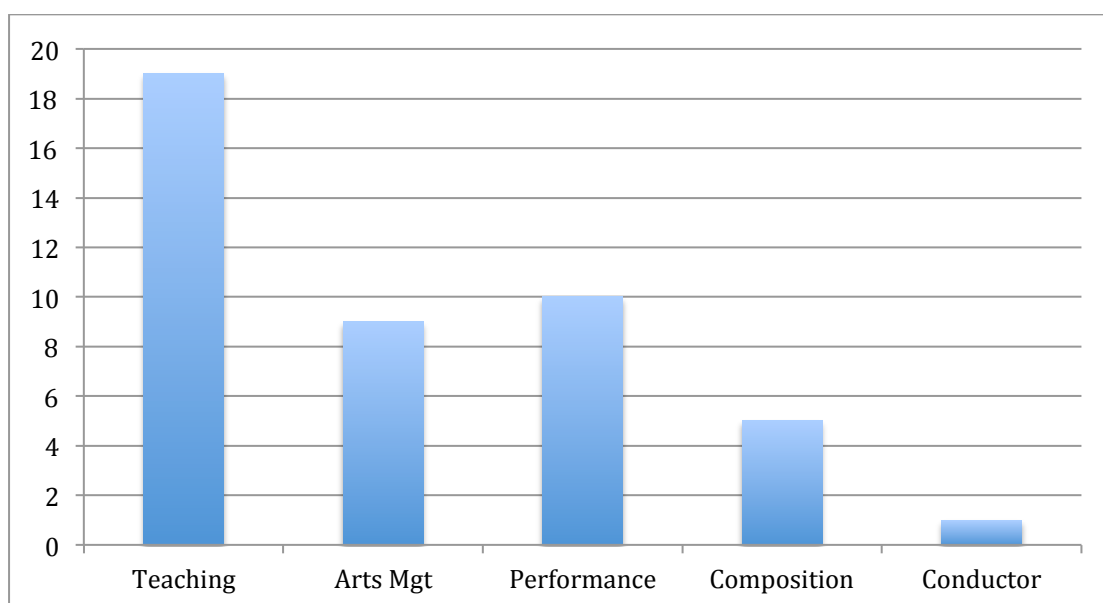


Figure 5.2 Common activities in addition to chamber music performance

¹ These participants did not explicitly discuss other activities in the interview

The information provided by Figure 5.2 together with that of Table 5.3 above demonstrates a relationship between most participants having one other activity other than their ensemble and the number of those that have teaching positions as their main source of income.

Despite the number of diverse activities included in their portfolios, all participants held a music degree or diploma from a conservatoire, and 29 participants trained as performers. One participant studied composition, however, now performs regularly in a chamber music ensemble. Preparing for a professional career in performance often includes hours of practising and rehearsing in order to become technically proficient at an instrument and develop an in-depth knowledge of the repertoire. It is this initial training that the participants referred to when identifying what type of domain-specific self-image they have. Despite being teachers, arts administrators, conductors or composers, this initial performance training tends to dominate their identity as ‘a performer’.

Undertaking numerous jobs or activities requires in part, a balancing act. The implications for having a portfolio career are not only for the individual, but when working with freelance musicians, it has an impact on the group. Brett gave a recount of trying to balance the lives of ensemble members between other projects, making a reliable income, and having time for the group.

They'll all be busy and doing other things so it's really hard to get together and do stuff. You've got to have this median, sort of a moderate level of involvement with their own projects and things, but not so much that there's no space for this. But then they've also got to have enough reliable income to kind of be, you know, able to sort of, yeah. But not a ridiculous job that stops them doing anything else. I mean [he's] sort of in that situation now but we're hoping it will calm down. It's got to sort of be a nice combination of elements otherwise I think it can get quite tricky. (Brett)

This affected the productivity of the ensemble for Brett, as members balance numerous jobs and other performing commitments. There is a sense of divide between having to support oneself financially and keep up artistic desires.

5.5.1 Musician as entrepreneur

It is clear that a chamber musician needs to incorporate a number of financial activities into their portfolio to supplement their creative fulfilment. For those that were performance majors at the level of higher education, most of these other activities were outside their primary area of training. There have been a number of studies suggesting current higher education programs do not necessarily encourage training in skills needed for building sustainable careers in music. A study by Bartleet et al. (2012) highlights skills such as social networking,

enterprise and career self-management as essential to musicians today yet not necessarily covered in tertiary programs. These skills appear to be important to musicians facing multiple and diverse work in different fields.

All participants admitted they had no formal training in administrative skills when it came to running a business or an organisation. They had learnt by trial and error. One participant, however, had studied management for musicians at university as a part of their music degree. Through the various activities reported by the participants, it was clear that they were innately ambitious and entrepreneurial, and they created opportunities for themselves through, amongst others, performance, composition or teaching. Few participants sought help from business professionals, mentors or more experienced musicians on organisational, business and strategic development skills. Many of the participants described their business skills as ‘trial and error’, having had no formal training in business or management.

Three participants referred to their primary ensemble as a business or an arts organisation. Whether a musical ensemble is a ‘business’ was controversial, with some seeing it as purely an artistic achievement and others as an arts organisation or company. Robert is the artistic director of an ensemble and saw it as a company, managing people, accounts, marketing and selling the *product*.

I always see music and ensembles and stuff as a company.

It is my company. It's not my, my beautiful making art

thing... So it's a company like any company, you know, you get business meetings, and then you get together. How much do you have in the account? How much are you going to invest? Where are you going to do? Where's your problem? How is it going... you have to take it very seriously of course. (Robert)

Referring to ensembles as companies causes one to think strategically, approaching it systematically and ensuring there is a realistic, viable vision and goal. Jack was of the same opinion as Robert:

... it's not a group of friends, it's a, it's an arts organisation, it's not a, you know, "yay, it's great that we have fun time in rehearsal and we have great concerts", that's a side effect of actually doing what we're doing.

The ensembles that did not have an artistic director resulted in all members working together on the creative and administrative side of maintaining the ensemble. Jessica had no formal education or training in business development or administration. She was one of the participants who actively looked for information and asked questions of various people who had been in more established groups. Her ensemble joined a business mentoring program where they learned to build a brand and ensemble identity, and they received advice from a strategic consultant and marketing manager who specialised in the arts.

These specialists were able to help establish a business plan, ensemble goals and performance criteria. Through these mentorships, Jessica has developed business skills which help manage the ensemble. She recognised that although these skills are essential in maintaining an ensemble, she finds it problematic trying to balance the ‘enterprise’ (strategic development of the business) and the ‘musical ensemble’ (artistic honour):

It's enabled me to develop a language that you need, which is a different language to performing... it's a different headspace, and it's a battle often to find a balance between that. Like, you don't only want to do things that are 'strategic' you want to do things that are artistically fulfilling but you need to develop strategic goals so you can create a framework and sort of, of resources to support you achieving that thing. Which I think is quite important.

Having trained in musical performance, she has realised that it is difficult for musicians to think systematically and in a business-like manner. It requires learning new skills and language. This disturbs the performer identity most musicians create, causing them to think differently and employ a new persona, one of an entrepreneur.

Jack was the only participant who had some training in business for musicians, and he remarked that even if they are not managing an ensemble, musicians need to be taught some business or administrative skills. He claimed they are

*...vitally important for any musician starting and it...
should be offered in every institution around the world,
'cause musicians, I can tell you from experience you
know, generally aren't good at emails, aren't good at
getting back to you, aren't good at, um, anything to do
with marketing or business development or anything like
that.*

Having done a business course for musicians, Jack realised that a musical ensemble is part of the entertainment industry, it is a product, and you have got to sell it. Realising this meant he needed skills beyond technical proficiency in an instrument in order to maintain an ensemble or carve out a niche in the music scene. Therefore, like Jessica, he understood the skills needed by musicians in order to do this. To some participants, the administrative side, although recognised as important, is quite daunting, and not having the support and business skills or the infrastructure can cause more stress, especially when much of this administrative work goes unpaid. It is not an enjoyable side to ensemble work for some, taking *'too much time'*, being *'a lot of work'* and simply not worth it if there is no financial reward. Most participants, especially those that are an artistic director of a group, commented on the lack of training at university in

preparing musicians for running a business or an arts organisation, leaving most to learn ‘on the job’. Considering each participant worked in areas outside their primary training, this highlights a need for incorporating more training in these skills into a musician’s education. These aspects will be further discussed within Chapters 7 and 8, as they will be seen as integral elements to developing a successful chamber ensemble in the light of organisational behaviour.

5.6 The value of chamber music from the perspective of the performer

It has been discussed that the various activities, and the skills needed carry out these, are all integrated into the musicians’ portfolio. As a portfolio career consists of numerous jobs, career success is often measured internally by the individual (Hall, 2004). The performance part of this portfolio is more difficult to measure as the value of something depends on the point of view we follow (Sicca, 2000). In the case of music, this could be the point of view of composers, performers, audience, concert organisers, sponsors or funding bodies. Any stakeholder in the production of a musical performance could have a different perception of the concept of value. Considering the focus of my research is that of the musicians and their collaborative processes in ensembles as organisations, the focus of value will be that of the performers.

The participants spoke of the nature of chamber music ensembles as the *process* of individually interpreting the musical score written by the composer, then rehearsing and discussing interpretation collaboratively, and finally transmitting

this musical message and meaning to an audience. This process is in some ways the *product* of a musical ensemble, and the creation and dissemination of music is the goal of the musicians collectively. In this respect, the value of a chamber music performance is not necessarily for purely financial gains. The value of an organisation or a product can be described as meeting the outcome or goals set out by its members. As the outcome or goals for a chamber musician may be intangible, value for the musician participants was not entirely economic, but rested on the process of collaboration and performance.

The participants were open and honest regarding financial issues as a chamber musician, often claiming '*you don't do it for the money*'. Some saw it as one of the only options for artistic output because a soloist career was a difficult pursuit. Jack, for example, who also teaches, began an ensemble over ten years ago:

At the end of the day I just want to be playing the [instrument] and I want to be enjoying developing my artform and, it's just, I, you know, financially, you know crazy having no funds at the end of 10 years to look at but it's, that's the arts world.

Participants discussed the internal satisfaction of performing their music, the desire to share unknown repertoire with an audience, performing to an appreciative crowd, developing new repertoire and working with close friends. Remaining true to the vision and values of the ensemble also brings satisfaction

and worth to the players within the group. Interestingly, the participants believed that this was more the case with non-traditional ensembles that performed contemporary or new music.

I think the joy of the music making and the presentation that's then given to audiences is worth that. Practically, practically maybe we should have made slightly different decisions along the way to enable us to be a little bit more um, viable, but we didn't. So that's where we are. And I'm happy with what we've done, yeah, so if you look at it as a financial thing, but you don't. You don't ever look at new music as a financial thing. You do it not for those reasons, you know. There are very few people that do new music for the money [laughs]. (Alice)

When I play concert for a full hall of people listening that are really enjoying that, even if I don't get paid, I still have a good feeling. When you play contemporary music you very rarely play to a hall full like, so it's you're really you and it's hard work. I mean playing music is not easy. It's- it's weird and it's- it's like everything happens like, you know, hours and hours of preparation on this like one hour. (Olivia)

The collaborative process is part of the ‘outcome’ of the ensemble; the need to share ideas and ‘have a voice’ add value to these endeavours. Therefore, the relationships need to be maintained; otherwise if it is no longer enjoyable, the group will not survive.

And the thing is also, like if you don't get on well and you don't have that, well if there are tensions in the group like that and they sort of go for a long time unresolved or, you don't particularly get on or whatever, there's kind of, it's pretty hard to maintain 'cause you know there's no money in it and like well, and you're, you know busting your gut to do things and make it work and sort of, if you don't get on at the end of the day it's like, well why am I doing this? Music is such a social thing when you're in a chamber music group and you know, it's like well, why would I do that? (Brett)

When the participants discussed their experiences as chamber musicians, it was evident that although they identify as performers, their lives are built on a number of different activities and skills. The discussion about the financial limitations of chamber music performance opened up the value and meaning of this pursuit for the majority of participants. The creation and performance of music is important to them, despite varied employment and projects within their portfolio, the

outcome of a successful performance is viewed as extremely important to their identity as performers.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the individual identity and qualities of chamber musicians and what characteristics and skills are needed to maintain a career in this field. The reasons for choosing a career in chamber music stated by the participants demonstrates a desire to be able to contribute personal opinions and musical ideas and work closely with other musicians. They enjoy the flexibility and the ability to take time to explore repertoire and musical sounds. This close collaboration musically provides a sense of belonging, giving reason and meaning to the players. With this sense of belonging comes a feeling of ownership, commitment and responsibility, something to feel proud of, something worthy of a substantial time and money investment. The development of relationships over time ensures an element of trust; knowing who they are working with means being able to take artistic risks and focus on their own musical self.

Chamber musicians possess a number of skills; active listening, communicating and reacting to the other members of the ensemble in regard to musicianship are the most important skills on a playing level, but when developing an ensemble, participants commented on the necessity for business skills for not only running an ensemble but also to support the portfolio career lifestyle. The concept of the portfolio career musician is important to understand as it provides a framework for recognising the features of someone who needs to think strategically, balance

a number of different activities, and apply a number of different skills. Musicians use all the skills mentioned earlier to develop a portfolio of teaching, management, writing, research, performance or composition activities. Chamber musicians display a sense of entrepreneurship (despite an often inadequate training in business enterprise), demonstrating a desire to develop unique performances, projects and collaborations in attaining their professional artistic goals. The challenge experienced by most is the balance of other activities to provide reliable income sources to support their artistic endeavours. Musicians are a fine example of portfolio careerists, emphasising their commitment to a number of pursuits and displaying a range of skills learnt outside their initial area of training. However, inner conflict of identity can arise when one identifies as a musician or performer, but has to employ skills outside the initial training.

The personal accounts of the participants pertaining to how they identify as a chamber musician is evidence that there is a strong awareness amongst chamber musicians that there should be an equally shared approach to rehearsing and performing music. It is clear that these musicians do not strive for large ensemble careers where they are producing music under one director or conductor, but rather prefer to share their specialist knowledge and skills within a small group.

The attributes presented by the participants and their desire to work closely in a small group environment facilitates a sense of belonging, developing a feeling of ownership and pride in what the group has produced and a sense of sharing in its successes and failures. Focusing on two types of ensemble: new music or

contemporary groups, and early music groups, the challenges faced by non-traditional groups encourage a strong affinity between the professional chamber musician, the ensemble, and its vision.

The next chapter will discuss the development of group identity through group definition, goals, repertoire, performance, style and niche finding. Chapter 7 will continue to discuss group dynamics and communication in relation to organisational behaviour.

Chapter 6. Group Identity

6.1 Introduction

Individual and group identity, although recognised in this research as two different elements of chamber music ensemble processes, greatly intertwine and depend on each other in a small ensemble setting. Chapter 5 presented the accounts of individual musicians who specifically identify as chamber musicians through personal descriptions of attributes, attitudes and purpose within their cultural environment, as well as expressing their own personal goals and objectives as a musician. The participants discussed why they made the decision to become chamber ensemble musicians and how their choices impact their professional life and form part of their musical self and portfolio career.

Group identity is seen as a way to distinguish one group from another. The participants linked group identity closely with the collective aims and vision of a group, and they were able to define an ensemble in terms of performing a certain type of repertoire, playing in particular venues (more prestigious venues were seen to suggest higher quality ensemble), recording output, audience demographic, and the branding of a group. Further investigation revealed that the participants often have a deeper connection with the identity of a group. They discussed identifying personally with repertoire, or a particular style of performance practice – this then inspired motivation within the group. It was also noted that these individual and group motivations aided in the preservation of the ensemble's group identity, which helped contribute to developing a performer's own professional identity.

This chapter presents an analysis of the participants' observations and experiences of different elements and individual identities coming together to form a group identity. Throughout the interviews the participants expressed the identity of a group in two main ways: members sharing similar characteristics, goals and objectives often based on repertoire choice and programming; and the sound or musical aesthetic developed through an interpretation of repertoire, instrumental combination, and the collective skills and knowledge of the musicians. Each of these factors plays an important role in not only setting each group apart (niche-finding), but also determining the commitment and priorities of its members and the expectations the group has as a whole.

6.2 Setting shared goals, objectives and vision

Participants who had been in an ensemble from its initial stages shared different experiences of their formation in terms of setting goals, objectives and vision. Some had been in groups that formed organically through no set structure or written plans and continued to develop this way, while other ensembles were strategic: planning and establishing clear futures and goals. It was clear from the experience of the participants that ensembles that are successful in terms of longevity and audience following had developed clear philosophies, goals and strategies. They embraced the strengths and weaknesses of each member, focused on excellence in performance, and they knew their audience in terms of whom they were attracting and what the audience expected from the group in regard to the type of repertoire performed and the performance standard of the ensemble.

It was understood from the participants' responses that the goals and visions of an ensemble were either clearly articulated or were informally shared by the members of an ensemble, who had a common understanding of values.

I felt a musical affinity... socially I think we've got a similar value system, so that was another thing that drew us together... We had a great professional respect for each other. (Jessica)

Jessica recalled being interested in working with the other members of her group because they shared a similar order of values. The members together formed a group identity based on these shared values and mutual professional respect; it provided them with clarity regarding what the group was about and allowed them to draw inspiration from this shared concept and each other. Conrad's experience of one of his ensembles was similar to Jessica's. In his account, Conrad reflected on how the group seemed to grow and develop 'naturally', experimenting with different composers and combinations of players and instruments. However, during these formative years, they were able to maintain a consistent shared perspective of the purpose of the group, which provided a stable and cohesive group philosophy:

It has just felt like this natural growth and expansion and yet we are sort of consistent through line and vision.
(Conrad)

Conrad refers to a ‘*consistent line and vision*’, meaning the ensemble is following a continual trajectory based on an agreed creative vision or goal. A ‘*consistent line and vision*’ proves essential in establishing and maintaining a group, as demonstrated later in this section with examples of groups that found this a challenge. Clear strategies designed by all the members aid in ensuring the vision and aim of the group is shared. Ethan provided an awareness of the importance of this when he discussed shared vision and leadership and the value of being clear as a group about the ethos and strategy of the ensemble:

Be clear about your strategies. So [it's] about defining who you are and what you really want. So you need the input of all the members in order to be able to define who you are, but you need a leader in order to structure it, and to make the statement clear. (Ethan)

Ethan demonstrates a group deriving a shared identity collectively; however, he also believes that a leader is required in order to implement the strategy and collective statement or vision. In contrast, Jack as a leader, personally set out clearly what the group’s incentives, motivations and expectations would be, taking a direct, business-like approach. From the beginning of the ensemble he

focused on infrastructure and assembling a constitution. This defined the objectives of the group, making it clear for joining players exactly what the aims and goals of the ensemble are, and the role they are expected to play within the ensemble. Consequently, establishing an ensemble this way enables the founding member to set the purpose of the group according to their preference. Joining members have to agree to the choices made, and a clear leadership is established. The result is that the group may be seen as one person, and less focus is on group identity as reflecting the choices of the individual members. This attention on one person, however, does help shape their individual identity as a chamber musician, for their professional identity becomes closely associated with the group.

I put a proposal forward of what I wanted to achieve and the aims and the objectives of the group, the organisation. And on it stated, within 5 to 10 years we will be performing in [these] venues... I wanted to get all the infrastructure correct to begin with so we had the same constitution as [an ensemble] in terms of how we're set up as an organisation; so that was done from the very start.
(Jack)

Jack's comments describe the ensemble as an organisation, an entity needing structure and strategy. His focus in this early instance is not on repertoire, it is not on the skills of the people. While his goals and objectives for the ensemble appear quite impassive, his comments do suggest he was driven towards establishing

organisational and business goals in order to create a competitive, sustainable ensemble.

Members of ensembles that perform internationally and in exclusive venues, such as recital halls, concert halls and opera houses, discussed their group(s) having set clear objectives both from an artistic and an organisational approach. In their experience, these ensembles also took time for reflection and future strategic planning, ensuring that the ensemble maintains its identity during personnel, audience, cultural, political, and economic changes. Ensembles that are not performing in 'exclusive' venues were seen as more flexible in their objectives, although the ensemble still had a clear concept. The participants revealed that these ensembles tended to identify more with programming and the music they were performing (often to smaller audiences), rather than pursuing greater performance venues and what could be considered prestige.

Providing further insight into the importance of having a clear artistic reason and objective, there were two cases of ensembles that over time had disbanded. These cases demonstrate the importance of having a clear group identity, and an understanding of what the ensemble is producing in terms of musical material, and its purpose. The participants Dennis and Kylie provided commentary that showed their sensitivity to this:

A group who had been around for a long time, for 20 years I suppose by the time that they had come to a point

where they were struggling a bit to define their artistic raison d'être... Basically were a bunch of musicians who love getting together to play contemporary music ... it's not a vibrant artistic vision that deserves public funding. And it just indicated that they loved it, but they lost steam ... the performer commitment was dwindling, my, I probably failed in articulating a clear narrative for the group based on their past but also looking – and that was the point they were at, they were so stuck in the past, everyone knew what the [ensemble] had been, but no one knew what it was going to be. And you can only stretch that line so thin, until it breaks. (Dennis)

Artistically and musically to find a strong identity, that was actually difficult to sort of step beyond what they were doing so far... Yeah, a good vision. Because the difficulty I think with this group was that it wasn't particularly bound to any genre or type of music. (Kylie)

Dennis and Kylie discussed the dissolution of two separate groups, albeit owing to the same reason. The ensembles were no longer able to define a clear identity; therefore, they were not able to continue to find a specific niche or goal. A lack of identity meant that the performers in Dennis's account were no longer committed to the group, lacking in inspiration, motivation and pride. The need for change was not heeded; the ensemble developed a lack of relevant identity or creative

significance within its current cultural environment. This illustrates the value of ensembles periodically rethinking and adapting their vision according to the changing environment. This example also indicates that the sense of purpose for an ensemble may change over time and future goals then need to be articulated. The ensemble Kylie discussed also did not adapt and change, being unable to *'step beyond what they were doing so far'*. Members of Kylie's ensemble found it hard to define and identify within a specific niche or genre as they performed a variety of styles yet they were limited in their audience reach. Once an ensemble begins, there must be a reason for it to continue. This is in part the identity of the ensemble: a collective, shared vision and understanding of why the ensemble exists and how it will progress into the future. In order to build a successful ensemble, these shared visions and understanding are not only what the players believe the ensemble is, but also need to be clearly communicated to an audience.

Setting goals and objectives as an ensemble stimulates motivation both as a group and individually. This was evident in Ethan's comment earlier, where he explained that although setting goals collectively is important, one person needs to 'lead' in order to see that the goals are met. Chloe's experience was similar; she had observed that regardless of the type of ensemble, unless someone is completely behind it pursuing the vision, it can fold:

...it doesn't matter if you have a very unusual combination, or a very usual thing. You can do the most boring thing, as long as there is one person who's

absolutely pushing it... it will be a success... if you have an unusual ensemble and no one wants to go for it 100%, then you have nothing in your hands. So that's also what I see around me. Whenever there is someone having a 100% passion for something, to give everything including money, time, blood, sweat, and tears for it, it will be a success, even if the product is not so exciting. (Chloe)

This comment is revealing, for it shows that the determination of pursuing the goals of the ensemble has to come from at least one person. Someone needs the passion to motivate the members of the group towards success. It also reveals that no matter what type of ensemble (traditional or non-traditional) it is the drive that creates success. From Chloe's experience, when members of the ensemble do not share the same idea or goal, it can be detrimental to the group. This is particularly telling in her comment below, which describes her experience with one particular ensemble:

That was the specific problem with that ensemble, that there were maybe too many interests that were not always on one line. (Chloe)

The lack of shared goals or visions, or having too many different ideas is prominent in unconventional ensembles. This can result in the ensemble not keeping focused and can cause conflict and possible failure. According to Chloe,

talking about the group's aims and goals are '*the discussions that are also necessary to have*' but discussing future plans is not something everyone recognises as important. Although differences of opinion or goals can be a source of conflict, by openly discussing them amongst the group Chloe could see some benefit to having different opinions and aims if managed well in another of her ensembles. She found it could challenge the other ensemble members to think in other ways:

It's good that we have different opinions, because we always find a nice way in between, or sometimes you do things which you wouldn't have done otherwise. (Chloe)

The key assumption here is that the shared goals and futures of the ensemble are integral to the workings of the group, and once these are understood, a group identity can be formed, developing and changing throughout the lifetime of the ensemble.

6.3 Developing a group identity

The participants often began their response to the opening statement of the interview by explaining how their ensemble(s) were conceived. As reported by the participants, common reasons for initially forming an ensemble were

- a shared interest with colleagues in a particular type of repertoire and wanting to continue to explore this further;

- a piece was written specifically for a group of instruments, or players for a particular event such as a performance exam or festival; or
- the ensemble was formed through friendships, working with colleagues from the same university or other professional networks.

These are quite legitimate reasons for starting an ensemble. But it was revealed that at the formative stage, little thought was given to how people outside the ensemble would perceive the group or what the aim of the ensemble would be. Over time, these initial reasons can prove insufficient as a vision or a source of inspiration towards longevity. Participants' responses indicated that in order to form a group identity that reflects the shared values of the group members, a more thoughtful approach concerning reasons for the ensemble to continue must be applied. Dennis and Robert specified in their interviews three key questions they asked of their ensemble in order to achieve this deeper sense of identity and meaning. Dennis stated that he proposed the following: *'Why is the group? Why are you here? What's your 'thing'?'* These questions relate to the reason for starting the group and why it should continue, the aim of the group and what it wants to achieve, and what it can bring to the scene that is unique. These questions take a more philosophical approach to the essence of the group; more thought and discussion has gone into future planning and vision.

Robert claimed that developing a group identity takes time and cannot necessarily be instantaneous. He explained that when finding a niche and identity *'you have to be smart playing the market... five years is good, it will give identity to the ensemble'*. Identity here is not only referring to how the performers see the group and how they define it, but also how it is seen by an audience, how it is

recognised, and what sets it apart from other ensembles. Robert's experience reveals that it takes time to establish a group in the market and become accepted in the performance sphere by peers and audience. Similar to Dennis, Robert's questions of the group are: '*What are you? What are you doing? What is your core?*'. Here, Robert is unpacking what the ensemble is about internally, what it aims to do, and the essence of the ensemble. These questions are designed to be open ended, they are not necessarily referring to specific players, repertoire or style but to the deeper meaning and purpose of the ensemble and how this is shared by the performers.

It appears that continually asking core questions, such as the examples given by Robert and Dennis, helps a group form its identity and determines why the group exists, what they are going to give, and what sets them apart from any other ensemble. Usually, it was not until after the initial forming stage that ensembles began searching for, or finding, a particular niche, and then they were able to focus on developing a shared sense of identity that helped to distinguish the ensemble(s) from others. Examples provided by the participants indicate that failure to do this results in a decrease in performer motivation, member commitment and audience numbers; evinced by Dennis's comment earlier regarding '*performer commitment dwindling*'.

A chamber music ensemble is a social group; it is a group of people who share similar characteristics and interests and form a collective sense of unity. For groups, unity is often shared goals, aims or visions. In relation to this 'sense of

unity', a word analysis and frequency count of this concept within the interview data revealed the participants expressed a strong affinity with colleagues in an ensemble and with an ensemble's image or identity. Words and phrases that were used by the participants to demonstrate unity were 'spirit', 'energy', 'passionate', 'personal to us', 'devoted to the music', 'commitment', 'loyalty', 'a relationship', 'share the same brain', 'sacrifice', 'priorities' and 'musical affinity'. The use of these words and phrases highlight the close connections the musicians form with each other in an ensemble. As previously mentioned, visions and aims are then established on different levels, and these can then be described as a source of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Within the ensemble, the performers aim for a particular sound, with perfection in performance and professionalism. External goals include performing in certain venues, with particular artists and certain repertoire. In addition to these group motivators, participants reported that ensembles develop an identity through the members sharing a creative vision, a shared mindset concerning technique and sound, a shared interest in a particular music, or a shared motivation to perform, present or program repertoire in a certain way. This demonstrated that internal and external motivators are related and influence each other.

Through their professional experiences, the participants came to believe that when visions are aligned with each member, a successful group is formed. Dennis explained that a cohesive group, even if there is an artistic director, is when '*success is shared widely*' and members feel that by providing input and being part of the process, they are part of the success. Alan also recounted his ensemble's work ethic as a '*shared, unifying force*', resulting when musicians

prioritise their work during a project, and Harry stated that successfully aligned goals are also accomplished when ‘*everyone’s got the same operating kind of modus operandi, the same vision, the same way of thinking*’.

The aspects that formed the group identity of these unconventional ensembles were not reported as being solely related to the genre of the ensemble – for example, whether it be a new music, contemporary, interdisciplinary or early music ensemble. Rather, it included more complex reasons for existence, stretching beyond genre, such as

- Advocacy: the ensemble acting as an advocate of an instrument, or developing repertoire for a unique combination of instruments;
- Challenging the market: questioning the preconceptions of chamber music audiences;
- Ensemble sound: sound, affect and aesthetics of the ensemble and developing an ensemble’s particular sound over time;
- Ensemble skill: the ensemble is praised for the exceptional talent of its players, aims for presenting quality, and has a strong focus on professionalism;
- Repertoire: repertoire choice and programming; the ensemble is known for performing new works or reproducing rarely played works; or
- Performance of repertoire: the way in which the repertoire is performed, and how the musical parts are written. This also establishes individual and collective musical and instrumental roles shaping the identity of the ensemble.

The reasons stated above provide insight into the thought processes of ensemble members, concentrating on the essence of the ensemble, its *raison d’être*, and

what it is that motivates the players to continue performing with the group and reaching its full potential as an ensemble.

6.3.1 Advocacy

Some participants purposely began an ensemble to promote the reputation of an instrument to a wider audience or develop new repertoire for a particular combination of instruments.

Brett and Connor explained that the purpose of starting their respective ensembles was to promote their instrument in a contemporary setting. They revealed the challenges associated with trying to develop a new ensemble in terms of finding and developing repertoire and establishing an audience. Their aim was to create a more common and well-known identity for their type of ensemble by encouraging composers to write new music, or alternatively, to arrange existing music written for other ensembles themselves. The idea behind this was to extinguish the common stereotypes most associate with a ubiquitous instrument, one that is found in the hands of many amateurs, as Brett explained,

It's such a popularised instrument, it all sort of gets merged into one kind of thing so people just make false assumptions on things. It's a positive and a negative, the popularity of [the instrument]. (Brett)

Connor considered the lack of contemporary music players of his instrument as a reason for underdeveloped ensemble repertoire. He explained that there is little interest amongst other players of his instrument in performing contemporary music; therefore, composers are not encouraged to create new works. Connor's ensemble is now seen as a pioneer for developing repertoire in this contemporary setting, differentiating it from similar, traditional classical ensembles.

In addition to finding a niche within the contemporary music market, these participants emphasised the importance of their work and their ensemble's effort in developing repertoire. The performance of this new music is important to establishing the identity of the ensemble, an identity associated with innovation and uniqueness.

6.3.2 Challenging the market

Unconventional or non-traditional classical chamber music ensembles are often not classified by any particular genre of music. They may perform music from a particular period, or across periods, but they do not always identify with a preconceived idea an audience might have about their group. For example, it is more common to know the make-up of a woodwind quintet and that it often performs repertoire from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, than it would be to know the latest new music ensemble. For some unconventional ensembles, it is a challenge to define what it is they 'do'. The participants reported that as members of unconventional ensembles, they often search for innovative ways in which to discover a niche and differentiate their ensemble from others through repertoire,

instrumentation and ensemble sound. Trying to establish a recognisable style, it was observed, was also a major challenge of these groups experienced by the three participants below:

... [It is] a very unique thing, which can be challenging when you're trying, you know when you have people who don't know what you do. (John)

... we are a bit of an underground ensemble, we can't expect to compete with string quartets or piano trios because our setting is a little bit more difficult, perhaps not so easy to listen to. (Stella)

... I think most classical chamber ensembles they always want to have like one image about themselves... I didn't want that... it can always change. It's extremely open and flexible, which is sometimes also the, the catch, you know. Sometimes, people don't know what they should ask us for... selling that sometimes is a problem. (Zoe)

All three participants acknowledged that their ensemble does not necessarily conform to standard chamber music ensemble perceptions by audiences or other stakeholders (festival organisers, venue managers). They accept the fact that they are 'unusual' and the varied repertoire and style can challenge an audience or

festival or concert series curator. This also poses challenges to the ensemble, as Stella pointed out, her ensemble cannot compete with string quartets or piano trios in terms of audience and opportunities, owing to their unusual setting and performance of unknown repertoire. The uniqueness and flexibility of John and Zoe's groups also leave people questioning what their group is about, what they play, and where they would fit within a program or concert series/season. Although a challenge, the freedom of not having to adhere to a specific style, genre or period means that they are able to incorporate different types of music and explore a variety of performance practices from early music, folk, jazz and new music contexts. This eclecticism is also seen as an asset to the group at times, but requiring inventive marketing and careful planning of projects.

Unlike more traditional ensembles, the participants find that in unconventional ensembles other challenges lie in developing an audience in terms of what the audience expects from the ensemble (what they are about to experience) and infrequent performance opportunities.

6.3.3 Ensemble skill

Only one participant stated that their ensemble rehearses on a regular basis. All other participants in the study do not meet regularly with their ensemble to rehearse and perform. The participants noted that infrequent performances have not only an effect on audience engagement, but also the requirements of the performers in regard to preparedness and performer skill. Alan's ensemble does not meet regularly; they form the ensemble for occasional projects. As an

ensemble that comes together occasionally, the shared expectation of the ensemble is that each player draws on a high level of professionalism, expertise, and skill, ensuring they are personally prepared in terms of practising their part and preparing for the rehearsal and performance. For Alan, professionalism and expertise are part of the identity of the ensemble, used to enhance its reputation.

It's part of the pressure of having an infrequent operation as far as performance goes. Where, you know, we're not playing on a regular basis like a string quartet is. So each instrumentalist has to be very steeped in what they're doing, very experienced. (Alan)

Alan also recognises that audiences identify the ensemble as a highly skilled group of performers, performing complex repertoire at an expert level. As the group strives for excellence in performance, this is ensured by the artistic director's choice of players based on technical proficiency, establishing the group as '*something of quality*'. Alan also described the motivation members have for the ensemble, claiming

It was a very strong energy from the group to continue and that people would do what it takes and that we were gonna [sic] become the most amazing ensemble possible. (Alan)

Jack also included the word ‘quality’ when he described the vision of his ensemble and how the public identifies it:

... we perform chamber music and we perform chamber music at the highest quality that [country] can provide, and that's what we're doing. (Jack)

Eight participants used the word ‘quality’ as a key descriptor when conveying the identity of their ensemble. They talked about quality sound, quality performance and quality repertoire as crucial factors that inspire the performers to maintain the integrity of the group and pursue its vision.

With a meaning that is very similar to ‘quality’, Stella used the word ‘perfection’. One of Stella’s ensembles performs arrangements of repertoire from other instruments. To Stella, this means that the performance in this new setting has to be ‘*perfect*’ to convince an audience to accept and appreciate it, having probably not heard this arrangement before. This is a way the group can develop a niche, producing a new presentation or interpretation of a work, and have it accepted by the audience and other artists. Stella also considered that her ensemble ‘*requires an extraordinary amount of work... from the point of view of playing*’ and the time and work the players invest in means that ‘*the fact that they owe much musically, makes the group very interesting and it means that we all share a certain motivation to do things in a certain way*’. The aim for perfection and the expectations placed on the players provides intrinsic personal motivational

rewards. Players are more likely to maintain a high level of hard work and effort if they are conscious that they are contributing to successful performances and developing a public reputation as an ensemble with a high level of supremacy within the professional field.

6.3.4 Ensemble sound

Many of the participants discussed group ‘sound’ or ‘aesthetic’ as a form of identity. Based on their references to sound, I have defined the term ‘sound’ as a particular sonic quality based on the technical abilities of the players, the mix of instruments that make up a group, and the tonal colour formed by the blending of these two elements. Fifteen participants described their ensemble having a particular sound that formed part of its identity and emphasised that achieving a ‘group sound’ is not instantaneous but something developed over time. They claimed that a group sound or aesthetic can separate one group from another within a particular genre and become audibly recognisable to an audience. Those participants who reflected on group sound as part of the identity of the ensemble discovered that it was more prominent when they were working with the same group of musicians over a period of time. Developing this sound and attributing it to a specific group of players establishes a close interpretative connection to the group musically. It also heightens the awareness and collaboration players experience when working together for a long period of time. Ethan’s account of forming an identifiable group sound emphasised the time it takes to accomplish this. The following comment reveals that achieving this group sound was one of the motivating goals of Ethan’s group and shaped its identity sonically:

So it takes a few years or a few decades before you develop your own sound... I feel that we have a recognisable sound now. But it took a few years. (Ethan)

For new music groups, they can see their ensemble as a pioneer, contributing new aesthetics and interpretations, as well as developing repertoire for unheard instrumental ensembles through the commissioning of new works. The contribution to interpretation and aesthetics of modern performance from Alan's group is a motivation shared by all ensemble members – the group is identified as one of innovation and experimentation. This group identity motivates and drives the ensemble; the collective input and shared philosophy helps sustain the group, musically and socially. Connor's experience was the same; the members have a shared interest in new works and developing a new sound, which shapes the group identity:

Our contributions to interpretation of particular aesthetics, or creation of certain techniques or approaches, and that's amazing, that's when you see the work you do just shoot directly into the flow of ideas that everyone shares in and that's been incredibly empowering I think for the ethos of the group. (Alan)

So you really can create new works, a new sound, then everybody is used to it, so it's probably just an interest for everybody. (Connor)

Connor's ensemble is unusual in that it is a traditional ensemble that performs contemporary music, thus creating a unique, unconventional group. The ensemble has developed a distinctive, modern sound through the use of commissioned works to broaden the potential of this group and include it in the contemporary music scene. This ensemble has now been recognised as a modern group, pushing boundaries of traditional performance and developing new sonic qualities. One of Bridgette's ensembles also aims to develop a new sound using contemporary or extended performance techniques. The group fashions a new, distinctive type of ensemble recognisable for its atypical group sound:

We're often trying to find a way of creating a sound that is unconventional and sometimes unconventionally notated.
(Bridgette)

The participants provided different interpretations of what constitutes a 'group sound' depending on the mixture of instruments. For homogenous ensembles, or ensembles that are made of the same instrument family, there was discussion of 'blending', 'balance' and 'mixing' in terms of sound production. This ultimately led to a specific sound that was refined by the ensemble. Taking ownership of this sound becomes part of the identity of the group. To accelerate the process of

developing an ensemble sound, one participant shared an experience of being in an ensemble where members were chosen because of their similar educational background. This ensured that there was unity in the ensemble in terms of musical knowledge and interpretation, a player's instrumental sound, and work ethic.

You have followed the same course and the same path so you end up having a lot of common views of the music and still, so this gives you a little bit of the common ground.
(Stella)

We need people who understand the kind of sound we like ... we can see people with the right mentality because you see people working hard and coming up with proposals and doing extra rehearsals and you think OK, that's the kind of person we need, they are doing it because they simply love the result. And on the other hand, we can see who is learning this kind of sound that we look for and who is learning the intonation and the things that kind of make our work much faster and that lead to a good result.
(Stella)

By doing this, the ensemble can clearly identify with the shared knowledge amongst ensemble members and the sound or aesthetic the ensemble is striving for.

For ensembles that had mixed instrumentation, the participants spoke of the importance of the performers maintaining individuality, working on an ensemble sound, but maintaining the sound of the individuals that are within it:

Even though we play together and we really work on specific ensemble sound and all these kinds of things, I wanted for the audience still to see that we're three individuals. (Zoe)

What I like about our group is that everyone does have an individual sound. It's not just all a homogenous sort of mixed sound, and you can hear that, for me, when we hear it, it sounds very personal. Which is what I wanted to achieve. (Mia)

Zoe and Mia clearly acknowledged that protecting the individual sounds of the players is important to the group. The ensemble is known and identified by the individual players and what they can contribute to the group in terms of sound, style, musical interpretation and personality.

Interestingly, Kylie was the only participant to discuss a conflict in terms of individual identity and group identity in respect to sound, describing it as

hard as a musician because you're individually seen. That's so much about your identity, your sound, your style, your opinion, what you want the thing to sound like and suddenly you have to divide that within a group and you have 5 people [laughs] who might all have different opinions. (Kylie)

Kylie discussed this in the context of teamwork and highlighted one of the issues musicians face after training as an individual performer and then learning how to work within a group. Although this is the only example of this, it is worth pointing out as one struggle ensembles face when developing a 'group sound' and agreeing on how this will be presented to an audience making a recognisable, unique ensemble.

6.4 Repertoire and programming

The ensembles discussed in the interviews are unique in their instrumental make-up, or work within a pool of players (therefore player membership is varied). For these ensembles repertoire often does not exist, or it is not available in repertoire libraries. If appropriate, ensembles commission composers to write works specifically for the group; otherwise, they arrange, transcribe or write music themselves. Repertoire and programming were discussed frequently as important tools in the identity of an ensemble. These often shaped the goals and visions of

an ensemble both for the individual players' personal achievements and collectively for the ensemble.

Classical chamber music ensembles can choose to identify with a particular type, style or genre of music familiar to an audience. While discussing repertoire, the participants as members of non-traditional ensembles disclosed a strong affinity with the repertoire they performed. It appeared that the desire to perform new (or contemporary) works gave greater purpose to the ensembles, successfully meeting their aim to be an ensemble that informed audiences of new or rarely heard works and developing a reputation for musical and aesthetic innovation. Alice's comments emphasised the importance of the purpose of her ensemble, which is showcasing unknown works that audiences enjoy hearing rather than making a financial profit. This '*labour of love*' demonstrates an infusion of group and professional identity. Alice identified with performing contemporary music and her ensemble allowed her the opportunity to do so:

[we] perform repertoire that we think is important for people to hear that wouldn't hear it otherwise ... just basically to bring works to audiences, they might know the composer, but they've never heard the work. So it was, it was all about exposure to stuff that nobody else is doing... this makes us no money, it's always been a labour of love.

(Alice)

The expression *'labour of love'* also confirms a sense of pride and inspiration that Alice gets from the group, a motivation to continue doing what is seen as artistic importance in presenting unknown repertoire and new works of living composers.

This was also the case for those who performed with early music ensembles such as Julia and Chloe. They aim to source repertoire that is rarely or never heard by audiences, aligning these with works by more well-known composers such as Bach, Telemann or Vivaldi. Chloe asked, *'how do we want to come across?'* – a question similar to that of Dennis and Robert discussed earlier. The challenge for Chloe is that her ensemble specialises in music of a particular period – the baroque – similar to many other ensembles. To distinguish between other period or early music ensembles, Chloe's group searches for unknown repertoire and focuses on the group's image to set it apart from other ensembles of the same nature.

So we really want to try and get repertoire that hasn't been heard but show people that it's worthwhile, and just because you don't know the name doesn't mean you won't enjoy it. (Julia)

A string quartet has a brand and you can grow more modern or conservative or whatever. But as a baroque ensemble, where you need to be very aware [is] how do we want to come across? For instance, we have been very

*much finding odd repertoire, unknown repertoire, but
good repertoire. (Chloe)*

This is used as a way to set the ensemble apart from others and distinguishes them as a new, innovative, informative ensemble regardless of the type or period of repertoire. Performing unknown repertoire, although a good response to finding a niche, does present challenges. These challenges include ‘selling’ a program to a venue or festival, building an audience, and building revenue. It was believed that if people are unfamiliar with the names of composers or the style of work, they are less likely to take a chance in hearing the ensemble.

Zoe has found that the eclectic nature of one of her ensembles and the fact that they perform new music alongside early music means venues and promoters often find it difficult to define the ensemble and provide suitable opportunities for performance. She claims that *‘the unique selling point, let’s say, is versatility and that’s very difficult to sell’*. This is the aim of Zoe’s group: to not be bound to one particular style or genre, allowing the most flexibility and exploration of different sounds, characteristics and approaches to performance. This is in fact the identity of the ensemble: the ability to provide a variety of different performances that are forever changing. Zoe saw this as both a positive and negative challenge:

*Sometimes, people don’t know what they should ask us
for... it’s completely changing. So, selling that sometimes
is a problem. (Zoe)*

John is also part of an eclectic group, not specifically representing a particular style or genre. He has found ways to solve issues of inconsistency of repertoire, using thematic programming and contextualising the chosen music amongst societal issues or other aspects of society.

When we perform new music if you use that as an example, of course there's going to be a variety of responses that audiences have to that, but generally I think because we contextualise it. It's never really a big issue because it's never music for its own sake, that risk is not so much there. (John)

John's group takes care to make sure the programs are appealing, something that the audience can relate to and understand. This creates a unique aspect of programming that the audience can attribute to the ensemble, developing a sense of familiarity and assurance when the group presents new works.

When an established anthology of repertoire does not exist, varied programming is used to intrigue audiences. Francis explained that his group's identity is created through presenting varied programs based on carefully thought out program ideas and concert experiences for the audience; encouraging audiences to subscribe to their annual concert series.

We're not a string quartet so we can't play Mozart one concert and then do Haydn the next and expect people to keep coming back. So we're trying to grow our audience base by providing something a bit different and always keep them interested. (Francis)

He explained that audiences return to experience a differently themed program each time. Francis's explanation also acknowledges a challenge faced by his ensemble compared to that of a string quartet when it comes to programming. The ensemble has to create enticing and interesting programs to build and encourage a new audience; they cannot rely on well-known repertoire from the canon to attract an audience. The group is therefore motivated to discover and implement unique performances, identifying with one-of-a-kind concerts mixing different musical genres and employing guest artists as a further audience enticement.

Brett also experienced a challenge in trying to build an audience with his non-traditional ensemble. An ensemble he is a part of does not have a standing history, so there is little repertoire available; therefore, they transcribe or arrange it themselves. This also means that there is not a pre-existing audience that the ensemble can engage.

I mean take brass players it's a bit easier because there are quite a few different sort of genres already set up, like the brass quintet thing, the brass band thing, the military

thing, so there's a whole sort of array of people that you can sort of tap into a little bit and draw to your performances. And it's obviously it's the same for the strings, probably more so, and there's an establishment obviously there. It's, I think a lot of the time it just stems from repertoire, because string quartets obviously there's stacks of repertoire, same for brass, probably not as much obviously... I mean percussion as well, quartets, there's tons of repertoire for that combination now. It's sort of got its own scene and they've got their own sort of various little, um well various genres that they can draw upon like the military thing, like the whole contemporary crowd.

(Brett)

As these frustrations were common among the participants, to overcome some of these the participants explained how their ensembles ensured each of the aspects unique to the ensemble aligned with a clear set of goals and aims. Presenting concerts and performing repertoire with friends is not a clear goal or objective that will set an ensemble apart from others. Nor will it provide a valuable contribution to the musical environment. Through building audiences, Brett and Francis believe they are creating a new genre and contributing to the repertoire available to their instrument and their type of ensemble. Through arranging and transcribing their own music, they are building a library of works for future performers. Francis's group also commissions composers to write new works, bringing brand new repertoire into the public realm. These endeavours are also personal

motivations for the performers, while providing a genuine purpose for the group to continue.

6.4.1 The impact of repertoire on the performance functionality of an ensemble

The repertoire performed by an ensemble has been seen to play an important role in the identity of unconventional or non-traditional chamber music groups. The choice of repertoire, and the devotion to the music, also highlighted particular ways in which the functionality of an ensemble is affected by these choices.

Repertoire choice stems from a collective affinity for certain aesthetics and performance values. It was seen throughout the interviews that regardless of whether there is an ‘artistic director’ within the group, the ensemble members work collaboratively sharing their skill and knowledge to interpret the musical score. Within an unconventional ensemble, there are fewer predictable musical or instrumental roles; they are eclectic in instrumentation, or parts might be interchangeable. This implies that the interpretation of the score dictates the hierarchy in any particular part of the piece. Certainly, this played a large role in the identity of Stella’s ensemble.

*This has become in a way a part of our ensemble identity
[...] like we are a group but we don’t have one leader, it’s
all shared as it is in the music we play, the polyphonic
music where you don’t have one part in the music which is*

more soloistic [sic] but everybody has the same themes, everybody shares the same material and everyone is equally important. So partly this has a very strong influence in the identity of the group. (Stella)

The independent lines and polyphonic nature of the repertoire performed by Stella's ensemble helps direct the leadership within the ensemble. This ensemble prides itself on their careful attention to each independent instrumental line and how it is placed in relation to the other voices. The fact that they do not have a conductor, or one person in control of the musical leadership, is what motivates the ensemble and is recognised by peers within the field. This way of representing the music is an equality that the ensemble honours, forming the core of its collective identity.

New music ensembles use repertoire to explore the sonic relationships between certain instruments. Three participants, Xavier, Bridgette and Alice talked about the interaction between vocal performance and instruments. They discussed the interplay between the performers and how the musical lines govern the specific roles of the players and vocalists. This intricate musical exchange and perpetual change in musical role displays a unique communication on stage, adding to the character of the ensemble.

Similar to Stella's account, Alice emphasised working '*in ensemble*', as the musical score dictates the importance of each line at any point. She claimed there

is no dominance in terms of voices versus instruments, using the ensemble as a *'mouthpiece for the music'*. There is no individual personality as such; it is the group's identity that is presented to the audience. Participants' responses indicated that equality amongst performers was prevalent in unconventional ensembles. This could be attributed to the lack of hierarchical roles musically, producing a close reflection of the music itself and allowing the performers to evenly distribute musical leadership and present a group identity distinct from that of the individual performers.

There are pieces where we are an instrument, or there is another instrument that is meant to be more dominant than we are so that's part of the performance too...we work in ensemble... we are devoted to the music, our job is to be, you know, a mouthpiece for the music, our job isn't to be a personality on stage that everyone watches. (Alice)

The synergy of voice and instruments in terms of timbre and performance is of interest to Xavier and Bridgette's ensembles. They use their ensembles to inform modern performance practice and explore equal sound worlds and instrumental role interactions.

What really interested us, and has always interested us is the interaction between the voices and the instruments.
(Xavier)

The following quote from Bridgette was also raised in Chapter 5 in regard to players adapting and reacting to different timbres in music. It is repeated here to emphasise the function repertoire plays in the equality of musical roles in reference to sound combinations.

I realise there's a tonne of stuff [musical compositions] out there, but it very rarely gets put on. And it's been written by composers who I like to think of as like-minded because they are, I guess, they're writing for combinations of sounds that are, sort of one off and rare and, to me it seems that it must be the case that that combination is, it's timbrally [sic] driven. They want to kind of play with the way a voice sounds put with this very specific timbre rather than on a bed of colour. (Bridgette)

These participants experience equality in terms of roles between the instrumentalists and vocalists. They work together in ensemble and this evenness of roles and parts adds to the identity of the group, as particular people or instruments are not identified as representative of the whole group. Bridgette described compositions that are timbre-driven, which is what she strives for in her own performance, creating a complexity of sound. This is something she not only personally enjoys, but is also able to explore with her ensemble. The flexibility of sound and exploration of different instrument combinations is different to the

discussion of ‘group sound’ given earlier in the chapter. Bridgette’s ensemble uses different combinations of instruments and voices to investigate synergy of sound and performers. Here, Bridgette as a professional performer, and as a chamber ensemble musician, has found ways in which both personal and ensemble identity can strengthen each other.

Composer/performer ensembles, contemporary classical ensembles, and early music ensembles often comprise musicians who play different instruments and might have different training backgrounds. Although the philosophy or ethos of the group is shared, the individual identities and experiences of each member form to create a unique aesthetic for the group. In particular, for musicians who perform both early and contemporary repertoire, Conrad explained

We’ve had some fantastic early music players ... who just straddle everything. And I think that’s really healthy, it brings all the different musical dimensions into the equation. You know people who just play new music; I don’t think it would be as rich or vital or, such an experience or aesthetic basis. So there’s a really strong core in the band ... I think early music and new music in many ways or pre-baroque music and contemporary music dovetail well, together.

Conrad used the words ‘rich’ and ‘vital’ when referring to the mixture of talent and experience of the members of the ensemble, with each player adding *‘different musical dimensions into the equation’*. The ensemble therefore relies on the knowledge and backgrounds of its players, this eclectic mixture of performers, to define itself and perform new music. New music provides freedom to explore these different performers’ backgrounds and allows them to come together to strengthen the musical aesthetic and performance by sharing different approaches and interpretations.

Within the early music scene, however, musicians are often avid researchers in the field. This leads to an historically-informed performance based on the collective knowledge of the individuals. It is this collective professional knowledge that builds the reputation of the ensemble and allows the ensemble to identify as specialists in the field of Historically Informed Performance Practice.

Especially in baroque music people are very, very well researched and they might have a particular focus on a particular composer or specific period of that, a specific period of music. (Kirsty)

Those that adhere to conventions of early music performance practice also consider the context in which it was performed and what is suitable for the ensemble. Xavier specifically acknowledged that one of his chamber music ensembles performs in small, intimate venues. His ensemble is identified as a

small, early music chamber group focused on current research into historically informed performance practice; this is the identity of his ensemble.

*I want it to be a chamber ensemble for small rooms... I
want to do small rooms like that music would've been
performed in originally.*

By doing this, the ensemble is regarded as staying true to historical performance practice, keeping 'chamber music' for 'the chamber'. The ensemble provides an intimate musical experience, rather than aiming for professional recital halls or larger venues where the repertoire would not have originally been performed.

Repertoire choice and thoughtful programming helps define these non-traditional ensembles. Audiences and other patrons then begin to understand what the ensemble is about and develop expectations and connections between purpose and repertoire, and becoming more adventurous in their musical tastes. The ensembles are not interested in repeating repertoire commonly found in concert halls, but are forever searching for rare works and creative ways in which to present these unheard works.

Finding and sourcing repertoire takes time; this also has an effect on the functionality of an ensemble. Throughout his interview, Brett focused on the extra time and effort that is needed from members of his ensemble to find and arrange repertoire. It was clear that this process had both positive and challenging aspects.

... it's so much work to arrange everything. It's so much more satisfying, because the music you choose will be really high quality, and you can do justice to your programming and chamber music series that are around. I mean if you look at programming of some chamber music series you look at the substance of some of the repertoire and you go 'wow, can't really compete with that', so you're always going to be seen as this kind of little cousin trying to sort of edge your way in.

Brett said that the ensemble began because it is '*a really new innovation, that not many people really know about it, in the scene, in the music scene. It's still very new as a 'genre' I suppose you call it, a chamber music genre*'. Therefore, competing with more traditional ensembles and arranging their own repertoire produces some challenges in productivity. The challenge presented to this ensemble is the time it takes to arrange repertoire; Brett continued, '*it's probably why we don't have a higher profile*'. However, the development of repertoire and the uniqueness of the ensemble are motivating factors for the performers, and they enjoy the sense of pride gained by further developing the instrumental ensemble as a 'chamber music genre'.

Repertoire and programming were the most commonly referenced in relation to group identity. The participants often described their group in terms of what

repertoire they played. When identity was further discussed and uncovered, the essence of each group became apparent. The mixture of backgrounds and the approach to performance were important aspects developed from the repertoire shaping the group's identity further.

6.5 Conclusion

The participants gave examples of ensembles forming through different processes and described the way in which initial goals, objectives and group vision were created. Over time, the participants in the study became aware of the importance of developing an identity, to not only set their ensembles apart from others, or to find a niche, but also to develop this shared identity and purpose as means for motivating group members. In order to do this, the participants spoke of creating a mutual creative vision and philosophy through asking questions related to the ideology of the group, designing a list of outcomes, and specifying the purpose of the ensemble. Participants found that although a constant vision and aesthetic concept needed to be clear throughout the lifetime of the ensemble, the vision also had to evolve and adapt to changing environmental factors and external influences (discussed in more detail in Chapter 8).

New music, composer/performer, and early music ensembles all rely on their musical, artistic and aesthetic reputation as they claim to be less approachable by a broad audience compared to other ensemble genres, such as a string quartet, woodwind quintet, or piano trio. The way in which unconventional ensembles have found to establish identity is through repertoire and programming. These

ensembles rely on innovative programming to attract audiences, generate motivation amongst the members, and achieve self-satisfaction through finding rarely played works or creating new repertoire.

Most ensembles discussed by participants were consciously formed with diversity in the musician's backgrounds in mind. It is then expected that each member is able to provide a different musical perspective in the development of an identifiable group sound. Working within these mixed ensembles allows the musicians to learn from each other and assimilate specialist knowledge from various training and experiences. Even with these disparate backgrounds, over time an ensemble develops its own 'sound' that becomes recognisable to its members and to their audiences. This aspect of group identity demonstrates how personal identities, especially when associating musical technique and sound, can form a collective group identity. It also became clear for some that it was challenging to balance both individual identity as a musician and performer with the identity of the collective ensemble group.

Chapters 5 and 6 established individual and group identity – two aspects that are important to music ensemble formation. Establishing the needs and pursuits of chamber ensemble musicians and depicting how unconventional and non-traditional ensembles form a shared identity through the assimilation of these individuals provides the background to the remainder of the analysis of ensembles as creative arts organisations.

Chapter 7. Group Organisational Behaviour and Collaboration

7.1 Introduction

Group dynamics is one of the contextual influences on an organisation discussed by Cooksey (2003) in his study on complex organisational textures. This includes the expectations and behaviours of peers and colleagues within the organisation, and interpersonal communication - how organisational members communicate between each other. The collective experiences of the participants in chamber music ensembles demonstrated that a chamber music ensemble is also affected by these influences (group and individual expectations, behaviours, group dynamics, and communication). The data presented in Chapter 5 established that the participants found music to be an individual and varied experience, and their individual training and personal practice led to the development of their own professional priorities as well as reasons for choosing certain musical career paths. Chapter 6 explored how a group identity is formed from the individual identities, the significance of establishing shared goals and values, and how important the formation of a group identity is in publicising the ensemble's music and generating a niche. The analysis of data presented in Chapter 7 outlines the ways in which these individual experiences, backgrounds, priorities and knowledge are placed together and influence the way in which an ensemble operates.

7.2 The influences on performance

The information provided by the participants established an interrelationship between the following three factors: interpersonal communication, musician

training and background, and group dynamics. Each of these factors was described by the participants as having an impact on the outcome of a performance. They also noted that in their experience the quality of performance evokes particular reactions from the audience. The accounts of the participants that recalled a positive performance experience resulted when a combination of the three group factors were working well together leading up to a performance. The participants reported that when they feel the group is fully prepared in terms of rehearsal, organisational tasks, and group cohesion ('group flow'), the group dynamics are positive, resulting in a more satisfying performance experience, and they were able to more confidently perform to an audience. When the musicians themselves deemed the performance experience positive, the participants also noticed that the audience reactions typically correlated in a positive manner. These internal influences are illustrated in Figure 7.1 and demonstrate their relationship between each influence, and on the performance. As the audience can be seen as an external factor, it will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

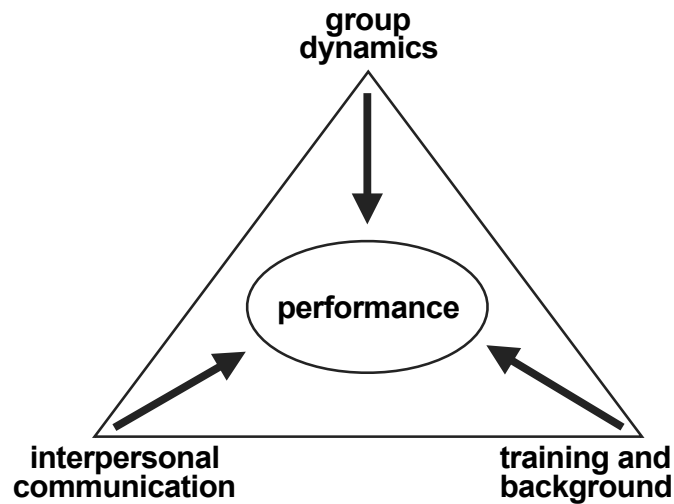


Figure 7.1 Relationship between the influences of interpersonal communication, performers' training and background, group dynamics and performance.

The background and training of each musician determined their developed strengths, weaknesses, specialist skills and knowledge. The participants discussed the prevalence of different backgrounds in their unconventional ensembles, where particular instrumental skill and knowledge is more diverse (mixture of vocalists, woodwind instrumentalists, stringed instrumentalists, orchestral backgrounds, soloist backgrounds, and so on.). Strengths were developed through individuals' musical background as well as experience in areas beyond the realm of musical expertise, including marketing and promotion; grant writing; web design; accounting; fundraising; and networking. The willingness to share and impart these skills was shown to also impact the functionality of the group in terms of group dynamics, collaboration and productivity. The participants typically expressed the view that the balance of individual proficiency in musical and non-musical operations (and how well this was communicated within rehearsal and

performance periods) determined a particular group dynamic that accordingly had an effect on the public performance itself. Their experience suggests that how well these proficiencies work together combined with conscious decisions about how the group is to be presented on stage, generates particular reactions from the audience – hopefully positive ones.

7.3 Group dynamics

After an analysis of the participants' responses, it was clear that as a social group, a chamber music ensemble employs similar processes of cooperation to any other group from an organisational perspective, with the difference that they are also highly interdependent on a musical and creative level. The experiences of the participants demonstrated that keeping positive group dynamics promoted a healthy working environment (rehearsal) and resulted in a better musical outcome (performance). This chain reaction suggests a cyclic model, as participants also commented that when the music is communicated better to the audience through performance, a positive audience response back to the performers is received and stimulates motivation – which again creates a positive group dynamic as seen in Figure 7.2.

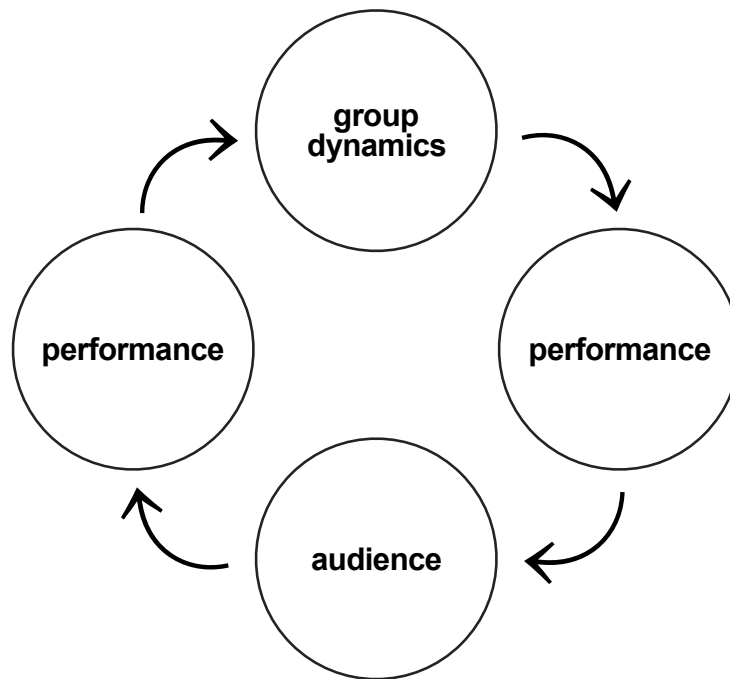


Figure 7.2 Cyclic relationships between group dynamics, performance and audience

Ensemble work, like any form of teamwork, means that all members must work together to create a unified whole. For this to happen, each group member needs to surrender to an extent their individual virtuosity, self, and ego (in this case, often self-admiration), in order to provide a balance within the ensemble. This is a matter of understanding the role the musician and their instrument plays within the texture of the piece. Contrary to the desire to be heard and express opinions within the group, in order to balance group dynamics many of the participants agreed that a large ego does not agree with small ensemble performance, and that one must put it aside in order to work smoothly with others.

*I think one of the key attributes that somebody in [the ensemble] **has** to have is a very big ability to put your ego*

in a very, very different place to the priority on the work.

And then that's where the magic happens. (Alan)

*I think that works quite well for us generally because we
put egos aside. (Alice)*

Throughout the interviews, the word 'ego' was mentioned 21 times, often with negative connotations. Discussion of 'ego' assumed self-admiration, putting oneself above others. The participants referred to ego in a sense that an excessive ego was unacceptable; words that were associated with ego were 'strong', 'a lot', 'big', 'ego maniacs' and 'extraordinary', suggesting a sense of arrogance or self-importance. Generally, it was agreed that members of an ensemble work together better when this 'ego' was not so strongly present. Alan and Alice suggested that putting egos away, or aside, means that focus is on the work and not the person.

The experiences of the participants in their various chamber music ensembles demonstrated that positive group dynamics, performance experience and audience reaction are all achieved when there is a sense of group cohesion or flow within the group's performance. When this group cohesion was not experienced, the performance lacked vitality and was not enjoyed by the performers.

When describing their experiences of group cohesion and communication of musical material between members of the ensemble and the audience, the participants were incidentally discussing concepts of 'group flow'. Table 7.1 lists

seven dimensions of flow related to Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) flow theory that the participants described when discussing peak performance within the group. These included challenge-skill balance, action-awareness merging, clear goals, unambiguous feedback, concentration on the task at hand, sense of control, and autotelic experience. Flow theory by Csikszentmihalyi suggests nine dimensions of flow including the transformation of time, where time is experienced in a way that is different to normal, and loss of self-consciousness. Those who discussed peak performance as a significant outcome did not express these other two dimensions explicitly in the interviews.

Csikszentmihalyi's theoretical construct explains these dimensions in relation to individual experience of flow. The participants in my study suggested that the 'vibe' or group flow was accomplished when group dynamics matched concepts of competency, working together without having to think, clear goal setting, feedback, focus, control, and shared autotelic experiences. It is these altered dimensions of flow towards collaboration that are seen as the optimal performance in which an ensemble can work together during the rehearsal and performance process. When these are achieved and there is a sense of group flow, instant feedback from the audience and co-performers is building a sense of positive group dynamics.

Table 7.1 Factors of chamber music ensembles contributing to group flow

Dimension of Flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990)	Factors within chamber music ensembles	Participants' experience (selected illustrative extracts)
Challenge-skill balance (feeling competent enough to meet the high demands of the situation)	Ensemble members know and trust the professional level of their co-performers. They strive to be elite ensembles and specifically work with specialists in their musical field.	'Hopefully we have that level of skill to do that sort of thing naturally' (Francis) 'We were a group of kids who just wanted to do things, and do them really well' (Alan)
Action-awareness merging (doing things spontaneously and automatically without having to think)	Good preparation leads to a more relaxed performance environment where performers are able to take risks. Performers who have worked together for an extended period of time require little discussion or decision-making as performance becomes more innate.	'We often tried to not pin things down, and to keep things spontaneous and move on if we're aiming for a concert, and not over rehearse it' (Graham). '... and that's what people [audience] like. I mean, we all do sometimes spontaneous stuff and sometimes, like also silly things.' (Zoe) 'now from within the ensemble a new musical idea which can be different every time, or slightly different, is coming from within the ensemble.' (Stella)
Clear goals (having a strong sense of what one wants to do)	There is a mutual understanding of group goals and a clear understanding of the goals and roles of players leading up to, and during performance.	'I felt we came together a lot during the process, and in the end a different working method's OK, that's fine. If you've got the same kind of end goal, the same kind of idea, you're working for the same thing' (Isabella) 'Everyone needs to have a certain drive towards the goals of the group, to achieving the same things' (Mia) 'Because we've worked together and we have an understanding of why we're doing it and what we're doing and all those things are very much entrenched, I think that adds to the performance.' (Alice)
Unambiguous feedback (knowing how well one is doing during the performance itself)	During the performance non-verbal and verbal feedback from audience can encourage or discourage players.	'definitely, definitely feedback from the audience, that helps how the performance is going' (Julia). 'And also what's coming back from the audience you know, that emotional aspect of a bit of knowing that the audience is telling you in different ways this is cool, this is nice, I'm having so much fun. Not in words but just by participating, by clapping by being enthusiastic in the moment, and by listening of course.' (Stella)

Dimension of Flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990)	Factors within chamber music ensembles	Participants' experience (selected illustrative extracts)
Concentration on the task at hand (being completely focused on the task at hand)	The ensemble becomes 'one' whereby all players are concentrated on the music, oblivious to external surroundings.	'When I'm on stage with these people I know that most likely nothing will go wrong and if it goes wrong it will be immediately fixed in the best possible way so I can really focus on who I am on stage and I can take risks knowing that I am going to be understood and this I feel is the privilege of working with, with very good people for a very long time. It proves also that we know each other very well.' (Stella)
Sense of control (having a feeling of total control over what one is doing)	Less worry over making mistakes or errors	'You've gotta nail the work, you've gotta have it nailed. And that's what you start from. I can trust everyone to do that, without doubt, so it's not a problem.' (Alan) 'We want to make sure that there is no risk, or as less risk as possible, or having any trouble in the cooperation, but it all just happens and it's fantastic.' (Stella)
Autotelic experience (feeling the experience to be extremely rewarding).	Unconventional ensembles generally had reasons larger than economic to continue and develop their work.	'when I play concert for a full hall of people listening that are really enjoying that, even if I don't get paid, I still have a good feeling.' (Olivia)

The extracts in Table 7.1 are responses and contributing factors to questions concerning the participants' optimal chamber music performance, and they demonstrate how aspects of independent flow, when placed within a group, can create group flow (or group cohesion).

Group flow was not necessarily reliant on all members of the ensemble achieving individual states of flow. Graham provided one example where one member was not happy with a performance despite the group feeling the performance went well. In his opinion this created issues and an imbalance within the group that needed to be addressed.

That's one thing we've actually come up against um a little bit and that's feeling the vibe while you're playing. And initially to me that was more important than it is now, and certainly to Susanne², she's often been quite obsessed with that and has come away from after a concert, in a couple of concerts actually and you hear it back and she's doing amazing stuff, and she's felt terrible about it, and 'cause she hasn't felt in the flow. (Graham)

Stella has also experienced negativity from a member of the ensemble, noting that it is important to realise that for some, a concert may not be successful, but for others it is; it is how this is balanced and recognised within the group that is important.

But it's also interesting that the same concert can be experienced in very different ways by members of the ensemble. That I have also seen very often 'oh well that was good' and someone comes –[grumble - laugh]. It can have to do with many things, personal, how you play yourself, your mood. It's interesting and I think it's good as a musician to remember that your own experience of a concert is not the only experience and that they are all true. (Stella)

² A pseudonym has been applied.

Of particular importance was that all participants described performance with their ensemble(s) as an extremely rewarding experience – an autotelic experience. This autotelic belief demonstrates collective, intrinsic motivations that as musicians they most often share but rarely discuss. Considering the sporadic performance opportunities and unique nature of these unconventional ensembles, the musicians find deeper needs and wants in order to continue and experience personal and group benefit and enjoyment. Many of these reasons for choosing chamber music performance of this kind were discussed in Chapter 5. However, through deeper analysis at a group level, the effects of these experiences and motivators are seen to be contributors to group dynamics. They included

- the creative process and legacy of their work,
- the presentation and performance of their work to an audience,
- performing and making music with other people,
- a vehicle for artistic goals, or
- a passion for the work.

When there are shared motivators within an ensemble, the participants described a much more positive group dynamic and better performance outcomes. The composition of each ensemble discussed in the interviews varied, and it was explained that if there were membership changes they sometimes required the ensemble to rethink and reassess the individual and group motivations due to different personalities and priorities.

The personalities that contribute to a particular social group determine the dynamics of that group. Nineteen of the thirty participants reported primarily being in a group that has a fixed, stable membership where other players are invited to play occasionally, often as ‘guest artists’. The remaining eleven participants within the study sample were mostly involved in ensembles that have a more flexible, casual association of performers. The participants explained their personal preference, and why their ensembles had taken particular approaches. For some, developing long-standing relationships with particular people and growing a sophisticated understanding of their playing style, interpretative choices and personal attributes signified a deeper sense of connection through performance. Although ‘good music’ can be performed with a selection of players, some stated that playing over a long period of time with the same people could lead to a more ‘special’ performance experience. As Stella said:

I really enjoy these long-term co-operations [...] you can make good music of course with ad hoc groups or in projects, but I think these long-term co-operations, they lead to something very special.

That’s what leads to more quality, longer you work together, the better you can play together and you can achieve a good result, absolutely.

The professional relationships that are built from working within the same membership provided a sense of trust and honour for Stella. She added,

*I feel this is the privilege of working with very good people
for a very long time. It proves we know each other very
well.*

A deeper sense of connection in performance, and allowing time for developing a collective approach to interpretation were the defining aspects of long-term collaborations:

*I don't like too much these one-night stands... in a way
you achieve a bit of a one-night stand result. (Robert)*

*Having the band thing for me was more important rather
than having a collective... (John)*

For the participants who are in ensembles with a stable membership, they believe the relationships that develop not only enhance the performance quality, but also help consolidate shared goals and group motivation. This, as will be discussed later in the chapter, can both improve and hinder interpersonal communication between group members as professional and personal relationships are formed.

For others, having the flexibility to work with different specialists, developing networks with a large number of performers, gaining insight from new

acquaintances and logistical simplicity outweighed the need to develop closer relationships. The more flexible ensembles were described as having a ‘pool’ of players where artistic directors would have particular players in mind to invite for different programs. A pool of players consists of a list of specialist performers of various instruments and musical styles that could be called on for different projects. If these players were not available, the next player would be asked, and so on. A fixed ensemble would have to ensure all players were available at the same time and reserve particular times in their calendar in order to schedule rehearsal and performance. A more flexible ensemble is able to choose suitable performance dates and employ musicians available at that particular time. When this was the case, the participants spoke of ‘employing’ musicians or ‘hiring musicians’, speaking in more business terms, or through contractual agreements rather than the affective language used by members belonging to structured, fixed ensembles. This again suggests that ensembles with fixed members are aiming for more personal connections with the players as well as the music, rather than relying on the professional skills and abilities of irregular players to generate high quality music.

Jack has experienced both being in a fixed ensemble and an ensemble where players are chosen for particular projects. The fixed group of players endured potentially contested issues relating to ownership, control and reliability. The aims and goals of the ensemble were not shared amongst members and there were variations in the amount of priority given to the group by individual members. As Jack commented, *‘They always just wanted to be a group of friends playing’*. Aiming for a democratic way in which to work, Jack recounted *‘I’d go to the*

deadline, ‘they haven’t got back to me’, so I’d have to go ahead with a decision and then they’d complain about those decisions after they’re made’. He believed this resulted in the working of the group being *‘untenable’*. Negative group dynamics formed when Jack’s vision and motivation for the group was not matched by the others. Jack noticed that when working with a flexible ensemble, there are fewer emotions tied to the ensemble by the players, and the focus is only on the task at hand. They are then able to rehearse *‘in more efficient time’*, as roles and expectations are clear within a flexible ensemble.

Xavier is also in a flexible ensemble that brings specialist performers together for certain projects. Xavier, as one of the artistic directors, carefully chooses musicians who *‘think the same as we do’* and are professionals in particular styles. Like Jack, Xavier noticed that rehearsals are more organised owing to the musicians being more professional and knowing their role and expectations in rehearsal and performance:

It frustrates the hell out of me when you have note bashing in rehearsals. It tends not to happen as much with [ensemble] because we’re again hiring specific people for that and they know that’s what we expect. (Xavier)

As all bar one of the ensembles discussed meet infrequently, some participants, including Xavier, became frustrated when rehearsal times were used as a chance

to socialise. He did identify and agree that that this is one aspect he could see as a benefit to having a fixed ensemble make-up:

There's a lot of catching up and things, whereas if there's a core ensemble which, obviously that's not the idea of the group, but if there was a core ensemble you already have got past that barrier and it's just work. (Xavier)

Xavier's '*just work*' comment is particularly interesting. The descriptions from participants who are casual members of multiple groups suggested that many performance opportunities in project-based ensembles are considered more like 'work' because they are not core members of a group. The complicated nature of these ensembles concerning their make-up, and the different forms of collaboration, produce different values and motivations within ensembles. The interpersonal relationships that are formed through professional and personal connections certainly affect the working method of a group, whether it is flexible and built around core players or fixed with particular members. The way in which the collective depends on these relationships and how they manage them will be discussed further in the next section.

7.4 Professional and personal relationships

It was reported in Chapter 6 that one of the ways in which chamber music ensembles initially form is through friendships occurring during professional training at a tertiary institution or through other professional networks. Each of

the ensembles had been active for at least five years; the longest surviving group is still operating after over forty years. Seven participants particularly described how at times it could be difficult to balance personal and professional relationships with members of an ensemble when initially formed this way. They expressed different approaches to applying encouragement or judgement to colleagues in terms of words used, their emphasis and tone, and the effect personal emotions can have on professional relationships. The underlying concern was making ensemble members prioritise work rather than socialising or introducing issues from their private lives. Alan, who has been a member of an ensemble for over 10 years, claimed that *‘in terms of interpersonal relationships you have to be able to prioritise, and prioritise the work first’*. Connor made a similar comment about professionalism in rehearsals when asked what qualities are important in a chamber musician:

[That] *They’re not making stress during rehearsals, they’re just relaxed, you can laugh at stuff or you know, [...] but it’s still that the work is concentrated, that’s important. It’s easy having fun but in the end you have to bring it to the point.* (Connor)

The majority of the participants expressed the view that ensembles that developed constructive working relationships with close friends tended to be those in which the performers were able to separate personal concerns and feelings towards

others. Or, they were able to keep issues in their personal lives separate from the task at hand, rehearsing or performing in the ensemble. As Alan explained,

I think one of the key attributes that somebody in [the ensemble] has to have is a very big ability to put your ego in a very, very different place to the priority on the work. And then that's where the magic happens. Whatever's annoying you, whatever's annoying you about somebody else, however important you think your own story or drama in your own life is, you have enough perspective on that to put it in a box and put it somewhere else. And for that period of time you put as much as possible of yourself into the work that we're doing. So it becomes a shared, unifying force, that focus. (Alan)

Providing critique about musical performance within rehearsals was felt to be difficult and complicated. Providing comment and feedback, or drawing attention to a member who was not prepared or playing badly, put strain on the ensemble and the friendship. Chloe proposed the question, *'What do you do if you are really dissatisfied with a friend not playing so well?'* To answer this, she reflected on the work she had done for the ensemble and the reputation she has been trying to uphold and whether or not a player met her expectations. Despite other colleagues in her ensemble wanting to be less rigorous in making decisions about the quality

of players, Chloe stated *'if I think of all the unfairness and fairness, it's also unfair to our ensemble, to all our work, if we have someone destroying it'*.

Creating an ensemble with friends and maintaining that friendship over many years can still pose challenges when addressing members' playing ability. Francis in particular voiced this challenge and provided examples of how even ensembles that do not socialise with each other can still make music together, emphasising the point that priority on the work can take precedence over personal relationships.

Playing-wise if someone's not pulling their weight it gets voiced. Maybe not as strongly as it should, I suppose that's one of the problems we have with a quartet of four close friends, three very old friends. It's very hard, some of the best chamber groups in the world don't get on, don't speak socially. But you know, that can be very good because you lay it down how it is, they might make beautiful music, but they may not get on. So that does complicate things in our situation where if someone is playing poorly, you can let them know, but it has to be a bit more subtle I think at times. (Francis).

The approach to making the rehearsal period more about the work or task and putting aside any emotional or social elements suggests a more impersonal

manner of making music. However, the longevity of these ensembles implies that a stricter working method can increase productivity and keep personal relationships intact.

Our rehearsal is a working space and there should be space for disagreement and even being a little bit irritated, if this is necessary. But then when the rehearsal is over, we briefly talk about it and there should be no hard feelings. So there should be this difference between the professional sort of area where you sometimes meet a little bit confrontation, or discussion, or even passionate discussion if you want, and then the actually personal relationship should be, should remain of course, in touch. It's always very difficult to keep discussion in a very calm manner, 'well, but I do not agree with you' [said in a calm voice - laughs], it's not very realistic I think because we are too involved and too passionate about our own ideas to do it like that. (Stella)

Mixing personal and professional relationships can become a difficult situation in terms of prioritising work, work ethic and decision-making. One way Bridgette, Jack and Xavier avoid any conflict is to consider the relationship as a working relationship and to see social relationships as happening outside the rehearsal:

I always declare in the initial pitch, 'this is the financial situation of the thing, don't do it because we're mates, you have to be really into these pieces... if the general profile of the program is not artistically interesting to you, just say no and we'll go for a drink instead'. (Bridgette)

It's not a group of friends, it's an arts organisation. It's not a, you know, 'yay, it's great that we have fun time in rehearsal and we have great concerts', that's a side effect of actually doing what we're doing. (Jack)

Then I also want it to feel professional, I've seen groups where it's all about getting together with your friends and it's all very jolly, and that's lovely. We're hiring people we like, obviously, and we want to socialise with them afterwards, but we don't want to do it during rehearsal. (Xavier)

Xavier admitted that keeping work and socialising separate in a rehearsal is complicated, and as the artistic director of the group, it is his responsibility to keep the rehearsal running effectively:

And again, that's been something very tricky to do, in rehearsal to keep everyone on track and not having a good

chat because we all love each other's company. But it's getting easier and easier, we've sort of worked out how to do that and sort of how hardnosed you need to be.

(Xavier)

One of Stella's ensembles has had to meet and discuss ways of handling conflict and emotions within the rehearsal process. She claimed all the members of the ensemble have very strong personalities '*reacting very fast on what happens in rehearsals*' resulting in '*strong disagreements*'. These disagreements have encouraged the group to sit down together and discuss rehearsal methods.

... that has actually led to a lot of talking about how we rehearse and what is a professional way of dealing with disagreements and how to avoid getting too carried away by emotions when there is a conflict, because this is one of the most challenging aspects of the quintet for example, is that we are all good friends in addition to being colleagues. (Stella)

Alan's working process in rehearsals is that he expects that musicians will listen, share, support and be kind to their colleagues '*because it's the only way you get through things in the longer term, you know, if people don't do that then you don't have very many good chances for survival*'.

When discussing rehearsals leading towards a performance, positive group dynamics were achieved when focus was on making the rehearsal process efficient and supportive towards members of the ensemble. Not only were the communicative processes and approach important in creating a positive environment, providing organised rehearsals and creating a supportive setting was seen as improving performance. Performance was made better by feeling more relaxed on stage and having more trust in the other players resulting in fewer emotional challenges towards any member, fewer altercations over time, money, or contractual issues, and a sense of value and clear goals. By providing situations in which these issues are addressed, there is a greater sense of group cohesion leading to a more professional, positive performance experience. For Alice, this is the difference between *'playing notes and performing music'*. If a rehearsal schedule is organised and performers know what is required of them, the group works more efficiently and this leads to a more confident performance. From her previous experience with other ensembles, Alice as artistic director makes sure there is plenty of rehearsal time and that rehearsals are calm for her ensemble:

We've been in a lot of performances that have been under rehearsed, so needed really one or two more rehearsals but everyone's on stage feeling like 'oh my god, what's going on'. So, one of the other parts of the thing is, you have to make the performers feel comfortable, you have to give them enough time that they feel comfortable on stage, that they feel that they're not just playing notes, that they're performing music ... you can't give your best when

you're going 'oh my god, oh my god, I don't know this, is it going to work, is it going to fall apart?

As discussed in Chapter 5, all participants are freelance musicians. This means that rehearsal time was often not regular because they all balanced multiple roles outside the life of the group. This indicated that a sense of rehearsal comfort aided achievement of a more successful performance in terms of the performers knowing their musical score and role and instilling trust in the co-performers on stage. Rehearsal technique was discussed by all the participants in terms of rehearsal environment, venue, the level of preparedness expected by performers, and leadership. Participants agreed that positive rehearsals produced motivation amongst the ensemble members, strengthening the dynamic of the group. When rehearsals were run efficiently, were organised, and the performers were treated with respect, the final performance brought a lesser amount of stress on the performers and the level of risk was diminished.

Everything worked fantastically on stage and this was because the whole process leading to the concert was absolutely as it should be. People were very well prepared, knowing the stuff very well musically and also the movements of the extra things we do. (Stella)

Artistic directors of ensembles that were flexible and did not use regular performers or rehearse routinely also ensured that the performers they were hiring

were comfortable leading up to the performance and during the performance itself. Organised and carefully coordinated rehearsals meant that performers felt better prepared and could focus on their role within the group. This was felt to be part of the responsibility of an artistic director. Alice, an artistic director herself reflected on this role and commented,

And I think making the performers, you know, good rehearsal experience, not, I mean I've been in rehearsals where you just feel crap all the time because people give you just really negative, or really anxious ... you have to make the performers feel comfortable, you have to give them enough times that they feel comfortable on stage, that they feel that they're not just playing notes, that they're performing music. (Alice)

Ensuring a positive working environment clearly allows more opportunity to work on more musical aspects of the performance. The balance of professional and personal relationships can cause conflict in the rehearsal. Those that have been able to work beyond this have set separate work and social boundaries. The way in which this is communicated within the ensemble will be discussed next.

7.5 Interpersonal communication

Communication in an ensemble is delivered in many ways. Musically it is communicated within the ensemble, but it is also communicated to an audience.

There is also communication of organisational aspects within the ensemble (task division) and to people external to the inner workings of the ensemble. Therefore, the participants discussed communication in terms of two aspects:

- using verbal and non-verbal communication within the ensemble during rehearsal and performance, communication to the audience, and feedback amongst the group, and
- communication and decision-making between members on matters of organisation.

The participants explained that communication within rehearsal and performance was most often democratic, with all ensemble members providing opinions and thoughts towards the interpretation and performance of a piece of music. Forms of communication during this stage included non-verbal cues with the body, face or instrument while playing, musical demonstrations of passages indicating phrasing or technique, and verbal directions and suggestions. The effectiveness of any of these forms of communication was widely discussed; the participants aired mixed opinions as to how these have been applied in various ensembles.

7.5.1 The communication of musical direction

Dennis believed that the isolation of hours of practise during a musician's training deprives them of the ability to articulate ideas with other people through words. He also saw that this uncovers a problem when working with others in terms of '*reading*' people and reacting to suggestions or criticism in an appropriate way. He explained that it is

... very important in learning how to articulate ideas which is not an easy move for a musician or artist to do because we are used to articulating ideas in practise or in the music, or in dance, or in painting, whatever. Whereas with people you've got to do it with words all the time and you've got to choose your words carefully, use the right words with the right people and different words at different times.

It's reading people, it's communicating, and again it's spending all that time in a room on their own. (Dennis)

Xavier talked of communicating without an over reliance of spoken dialogue. He explained that most of the communication within his group is through presenting musical ideas through trialling them on the members' respective instruments:

Both of us like to say less and do more. So if we want something played, we'll play it and then let the group hear that and, or even in the middle of playing through a piece we'll phrase it the way we want to phrase it and again, if we've picked the right musicians for the project, they'll automatically do what it is we want to do. (Xavier)

To demonstrate Dennis's earlier opinion, Xavier explained that he is more comfortable describing his ideas through playing and when words are used Xavier admitted that *'you do have to work on articulating what you mean'*.

All participants had performed with an ensemble comprising of mixed instrumental families (including voice). Interestingly, mixing the different instrumental families meant that there was a noticeable different 'language' used to describe musical approaches. Bridgette explained that within her ensemble they tend to talk using instrumental terms such as bow speed, even to singers, as it is a *'gesturally [sic] specific descriptive'*. Three participants commented on the mixture of voice and instruments. Musically, there were comments regarding the communication of musical ideas between vocalists and instrumentalists. It was evident in the data that vocalists that choose chamber music are more sympathetic towards instrumentalists and vice versa, creating less of a distinction between the abilities, techniques and idiosyncrasies of the two. Learning from each other, instrumentalists and singers learn new approaches to musical lines, approach and execution.

[She] sings like a player and I play like a singer and the two things, we've informed each other a lot in our performance practice just by standing next to each other and I learn vocal technique to put through the instrument ... and she understands, well she speaks muso, she speaks instrumentalist. (Xavier)

Over the years people have worked out we have, that even though we are singers, we are musicians, which has been quite a good education process, because not all singers are musicians ... we have surprised many people over the years by the fact that we can sing in tune and can count. Which is terrible, and look I mean good singers can do this. But not all of them can, and some of them are trained to make one sound, and one colour and that's all that matters, and it doesn't matter if you do all the rest of it. Obviously, that doesn't work in chamber music, the whole fun of working in chamber music is you get to make sounds that go with an oboe, or with a guitar, or percussion. You actually get to respond to the colours around you and that's what we really like. (Alice)

Musically, through interpretation and performance, this connection between instrument and voice requires understanding and flexibility, the willingness to experiment and learn new ways of approaching the score.

All participants made mention of the fact that within small chamber music ensembles, members will typically expect everyone to participate in sharing ideas and knowledge. This developed into the overarching definition of 'chamber music'; that each player had an equal say musically and understood and

contributed their musical role at a particular time in relation to the composer's score. Stella's comments, for example, reflected this expectation:

Everyone brings input into the rehearsals and ideas, and we try out what different people like and then we decide together what works best. It is so that maybe for certain compositions, like if someone brings a composition with an idea that this person may be a bit more in charge and say more things just because they have thought about it before, but that doesn't take away any of the input from the others. The others can always say something and there's not 'one leader' per piece or anything like that, it's all really collective work. (Stella)

The democracy of a chamber music ensemble, especially those that do not have a musical hierarchy in the sense that no one player's part was perceived to be more important than the other, was the ultimate expectation of each of the participants. It was when this democratic balance was upset, or one member did not contribute musical ideas, that communication broke down. This did not seem to resonate the same way when discussing the organisational side of ensembles.

The participants reflected on lessons they had learned during rehearsals, indicating certain characteristics of themselves that they needed to acknowledge and adapt. Three participants realised their approach to communication and

rehearsal might not be suitable at times, and they spoke of how this has an impact on their group. Isabella spoke of how she needs to think about how her reactions to the behaviours, expectations or skills of other ensemble members might impact upon the group. Having worked in a number of ensembles for many projects, she has realised that working with different people requires rethinking her approach at times:

But how I react to people, I've also realised that, I can be quite headstrong in how I think things should be done and I realised that I was quickly judging people 'oh you can't improvise, what's wrong with you?' and then, I realised I had to, everyone comes from a different background and yeah, I'm constantly kind of checking myself and, trying to understand how people work. So yeah, that that plays a big, a big role. (Isabella)

Xavier also mentioned that he takes the time to reflect on how he communicates with the musicians within his ensemble. Xavier, unlike Isabella, is the artistic director of his ensemble.

So if I find myself in a situation where, I need to take charge to make something work musically, then I'll do that. Sometimes more delicately than other times, I can be abrupt, when I'm frustrated and that comes off prickly

sometimes in rehearsal. So, that's something I have to be really careful with, walking the line between shutting up and not saying anything when I need to and saying too much. (Xavier)

Consistently monitoring personal behaviours and reactions towards others and learning to understand the different working methods and backgrounds of the musicians indicate the flexibility needed when working within this intimate environment, another characteristic and attribute of chamber musicians.

7.5.2 The communication of organisation

Matters of organisation took a different approach to communication. This business side of chamber music was not seen as favourably as the creative side, and became the point of conflict and often determined the productivity of the ensemble in terms of performance output. Although some participants enjoy being in control of these matters, it did not seem the tasks themselves were enjoyable. There was more a feeling of requirement – that if tasks were not done, the ensemble would not operate. Therefore, they had to be done.

For ensembles with no appointed artistic director, the responsibility for administrative tasks were generally divided, they were less collaborative in terms of working on the same task together. Collaborative communication revolved more around planning for concerts and debriefing after a performance. Preparing and discussing program ideas was still seen as a creative aspect and therefore a

collaborative task. Communication between the members for this aspect was mostly described as even; everyone had input into the program decision:

The way that we start is that everyone has an equal voice in the creative process of planning the artistic season.
(Jessica)

When you play chamber music everything is shared, you have someone to bounce off ideas from about forming the program. (Olivia)

There is hardly ever a project where one person has the complete artistic leadership ... it's more that maybe one person had a certain idea and creates the frame for it and then, inside that frame, you assign tasks. (Zoe)

I think everyone certainly feels like they contribute in a very direct way to every program. For this program, there is so much repertoire that we collectively found. (John)

This creative discussion around programming can cause tension, given that not everyone's ideas can be used within one program. To resolve this, compromises were made:

Because some people can get disgruntled that 'ah OK, I didn't particularly like the repertoire we played in that concert' ... But if you had a fair say and maybe one concert was more along their ideas, then maybe one concert's not to your personal liking, but I think if over the course of the year some are, I think that kind of evens it out. (Francis)

The business aspect of chamber music ensembles was more foreign to the participants than performance. Three participants in particular described it as needing to know '*another language*'. The language used to communicate musical choices and musical interpretation within the ensemble is different to the language used to communicate to potential supporters, promoters, funding bodies, or even organisational matters within the ensemble. The skills and language required for organisational matters is clearly unfamiliar to the participants. It is something that they have either developed over time through their experience in the music industry or sought further training on:

When you're a fledgling group the person programming and making artistic decisions, leading artistic decisions, that person suddenly also has to find funding and find rich people. And the person who as the skills to make amazing musical decisions and inspire their colleagues, it's not a

*given that they're going to have the skills to find money ...
for my own part, I feel confident with the language that is
required for grant applications. (Bridgette)*

*I think particularly in the mentoring period, it's enabled
me to develop a language that you need, which is a
different language to performing. (Jessica)*

*Actually, they [mentoring program] taught us how to
structure the group and how to communicate, and really
just practical things. (Kylie)*

The distribution of tasks amongst members of a self-managed group was reported as being determined by the strengths and weaknesses of the members in the non-musical skills required. As mentioned earlier, these tasks are not usually favourable and the distaste for administrative work can cause an imbalance within the ensemble. Kirsty and Brett's sentiments reflect many of the participants:

*It [administration] normally falls on one person's
shoulders, it really does, because not everyone is
organised, and not everyone can be bothered doing it. It's
a thankless task and it requires so much more time and
energy and effort, than, and everyone knows. Sometimes
it's acknowledged but um it's just, it's a quagmire. Even*

writing a grant takes days and days, you know. And really, no one has days, but it's worth it when it happens. But it's often one person or one and a half people, or forcing someone else to help you, or asking and asking and re-asking and re-asking. But you know if, I suppose that, sometimes when someone is more involved with the admin side of it will mean that affords them greater liberties in terms of what happens artistically. Because everyone has to acknowledge to certain degree that the group wouldn't operate to the extent it is if such and such a person wouldn't put that time and effort, so they're kind of cut slack in another way. (Kirsty)

[He] was a very corporate styled attitude towards it, like why wouldn't you treat it like a business, like a full on business, why not? We're trying to establish ourselves out there. That's all well and good but we don't have all the support and all the know how and all of that kind of stuff that you need to operate a business like that ... All of these to do list things that we come out with at the end of the meeting get done in our own time unpaid... it created a lot of stress, it creates a lot of extra odds and ends for you to follow up in your life. (Brett)

Contention arose when work was done and people did not feel appreciated for their effort, were not remunerated in time or payment, or the distribution of tasks was not equal – someone was not contributing the same amount of effort. When discussing the administrative aspect of their ensembles, they acknowledged that this is where the communication between the members needed to be more open, more consistent:

If somebody invests less time or if someone promises to do something and it doesn't happen, then this affects the trust and the atmosphere in the group ... Of course, in real life it maybe that for all kinds of circumstances someone is not able to spend as many hours as the others, then communication is the key to get a good compromise; 'OK you can do less but maybe you take this and this task, and if it's too much then please let us know and then we will compensate'. (Stella)

When there is an imbalance, someone feels that they are doing all the work. This can result in the equal ownership of the group being challenged as decision-making is no longer equal.

I have felt that I'm the one that's put in the most work as far as putting together the websites and all that sort of thing for [the ensemble]. And that's partly been because

waiting for other people to do it, it would never have happened. But, the downside of that is that it gets done and people see it as, I think that a lot of people, several members of [the ensemble] over the years have felt that it's my group, not their group. (Evan)

What destroys the atmosphere is if people either feel they do a lot of work and it's ignored, or not acknowledged by the others, or if someone promises this and this and this and then they don't do it or they don't react on the work others then there's always huge risk to have a conflict coming up. (Stella)

The participants struggled with balancing artistic and non-artistic tasks. This was partly due to not knowing what to do. The musicians had to set aside their creativity and focus on organisational aspects they were not familiar with. Most conflict arose during discussions of organisational tasks, requiring acknowledgement for work done, and prioritising different responsibilities.

7.5.3 A modern definition for chamber music

The definition of chamber music may be changing in the 21st century. Artistically, the definition of one person to a part, having an independent line, remains the same, but there is a greater number of self-managed ensembles where there is equal contribution in terms of administration and organisation amongst members.

This represents quite a change to the role of musicians in chamber music groups and should be considered for new endeavours. The more democratic structure was reported to have a positive effect on the ensemble's dynamics; therefore, it is an important factor when starting a new ensemble. The administration and organisation of an ensemble requires development and employment of different strengths in knowledge and skills to that of musical creativity. New ensembles where members are beginning their professional performance careers will begin to understand the skills and responsibilities required.

From my feeling if you work where musically everyone is equally important it's also important that everybody is involved as much as possible in the organisation of concerts and all the promotion and anything that comes with it. (Stella)

The first advice they gave us really to totally divide like task forces so everyone has their own responsibility field, which is really necessary to make everyone feel responsible for the group. (Kylie)

Self-managed ensembles now require not only an equal share in the musical decisions, but also an equal responsibility in the tasks required to run a successful group. Often, ensembles with appointed artistic directors were flexible in membership and this meant that greater responsibility for administration and

organisation rested with the artistic director(s) – particularly in relation to choosing performers for specific projects. The role of the artistic director and the various responsibilities within the different ensembles will be discussed in Chapter 8 in relation to the structure and external influences of chamber music ensembles.

7.6 Musician background and training

The rationale for making a distinction between ‘non-traditional’ and ‘traditional’ ensembles is that the latter often have set precedents. One example is repertoire: the repertoire is well known and the performer’s training is based around this repertoire (in this case, the Western musical canon); this is evinced by the frequency in which a ‘string quartet’ or a ‘piano trio’ or a ‘vocal ensemble’ was used as a comparison by the participants in the interviews to the ensembles they were involved in. The participants in this study showed that members of unconventional or non-traditional ensembles tend to include players from different cultural, educational, and musical backgrounds, often playing different instruments and specialising in more distant styles and genres. Around three-quarters of the participants discussed the commonalities and differences in the musical background and training of the members of their ensemble(s). It was clear that there were three important factors prevalent in their experience that influence an ensemble in both positive and negative ways:

- The different instruments the members played (idiosyncrasies of the instrument and language used to explain techniques and interpretation).
- Previous education and training of the members (different levels of education, type and culture of different schools, and style of playing).

- Previous or current experience with other ensembles (traditions of other ensembles, methods of working, expectations, and ensemble techniques used).

Out of the total 58 different ensembles discussed by the participants, 15 were homogenous ensembles whereby they were made up of the same instrumental family. Nine participants were primarily in homogenous ensembles; however, they also spoke of personal experience playing with mixed ensembles. For the participants who had experience in homogenous ensembles, the instruments that make up the ensemble did not play a large role in providing differences in approach to performance in regard to phrasing, articulation or instrumental idiosyncrasies. Instead, these participants noticed a stronger reliance on sharing new knowledge based on different backgrounds in education and training, musical preference, or previous/current experience from participation in other ensembles. The participants discussed drawing from different musical styles to create a unique ‘sound’ for the ensemble and using various skill sets developed from genres outside Western classical music, such as folk, jazz, free improvisation, renaissance, experimental and sound art to create and develop new repertoire and performance practice.

Quite often if someone has a specialist skill in a particular type of music they might come to the forefront ... so people aren't afraid if they have a skill set in something, or a better knowledge of something to voice up about it.

(Francis)

It turned out that everybody also has different interests and very different expertise, and feels in the group. And that allows for a lot of ideas to come together. (Stella)

Evan performs with both a homogenous ensemble and a mixed ensemble. The homogenous ensemble consists of instruments from the same family of various sizes. When asked if playing in a mixed ensemble was a different experience to playing in a homogenous ensemble, he replied '*Oh, yeah, it's very different; you've got to use a bunch of different skills*'.

The skills Evan refers to are mostly related to blending and dynamics, making sure the balance between his instrument and the others is right, something not necessarily a problem in an ensemble made up of the same instrument. He claimed that one of the biggest shocks is that when playing with different instrumentalists, they have a preconceived idea as to what the instrument should sound like based on popular conceptions.

The thing that I find the most difficult actually is people have an expectation of what a [instrument] sounds like and it's not necessarily how I sound [laughs]. (Evan)

Beyond the stereotyping of instruments, Evan reported that for him personally, playing in a mixed ensemble meant that there was a different working method. He relied less on trying to compare his personal sound or approach with his colleagues and was able to focus on himself and his instrument and how he mixes his unique sound within the ensemble's sound. In some ways, he finds being amongst different instruments is more personal; he is able to be himself.

I think there is a different working method ... you're not comparing yourself with your colleagues in the same kind of way that you are when you're comparing, or trying to match your [instrument] sound ... Whereas when you're playing with other instruments, you are, you're just the [instrument], you can have whatever sound you like, in a way. But I hadn't thought about it that much, really. You can only be yourself is the other side of it. (Evan)

Chloe also works with both homogenous and mixed ensembles. She also finds it is a different experience working with the different group types. Through this, she is able to gain different perspectives to the music and learn about other instruments:

It's always healthy to get the perspective of other instruments... So, I really enjoy, also with contemporary music, to learn about other instruments, because everyone has a different approach to things.

One of the most prevalent matters in regard to instrumentation is balance. It was evident that when working outside their instrumental family, blending of sound and balance were two major concerns. These issues provided challenges for the musicians, leading to more discovery and discussion about the role of the instrument within the musical score. As Francis explained,

It also changes the way you play, like playing with another wind player, you're blending with the other reed player whereas with a vocalist I'm not going to be, I imagine blending with the vocalist, maybe I am? It's surprising actually, when we worked with [name] the jazz vocalist how often, you know the lines would blend and intertwine. It's interesting how it can also alter your playing and change your skillset too, and develop your skillset.

Working with different instruments (including voice) therefore provides additional challenges to these mixed ensembles. Not only does the physicality of the instrument provide different insight to how the musical material is approached, the various (or similar) musical backgrounds and training of the players themselves adds to the experience.

Graham also works with both homogenous and mixed ensembles. The homogenous ensemble is a contemporary group that draws from the members'

different interests and experiences. Graham explained that although they play instruments from the same family, the musicians have experience in jazz, free improvisation, classical (early music and contemporary), gypsy jazz and Klezmer, world music, techno and alternative rock.

We enjoy embracing each player's particular skills and musical interests that they bring to the table, that's been a real joy and success of the group that you know, you've got [name] with a strong jazz background and look we've all got a strong traditional classical background ... we sort of bring those sound worlds in... it's been a very natural fit actually those styles of playing as we've played more together, and that's chanced as well. (Graham)

Graham explains that through a variety of genres, the players learn to adapt and play their own instruments in different styles; for example, giving a more folky sound to his classical playing. This mesh of sounds is what makes his ensemble unique.

Stella was the only participant who emphasised the compatibility of having members from a similar background. Stella was quoted in Chapter 6 also, as she felt players from the same background match each other's playing style and sound. One of the ensembles Stella plays with is made up of graduates from the same institution:

The background that we do share is that we have all studied professionally at the same conservatoire which in the end, at that stage of your development if you come to do a Bachelors for four years at the conservatorium ... and also after four years of course you have also developed a sort of, or you have followed the same course and the same path so you end up having a lot of common views of the music, so this gives you a little bit of the common ground, while of course it is still a very eclectic group and people can come up with very different ideas because of the previous musical education and their previous background.

What Stella has experienced is that when members are from the same institution there is a common ground in terms of knowledge and experience in which the ensemble can base itself. Their previous backgrounds and musical training before attending this institution, and their own personal interests provide enough difference to inform the group of new ideas or various musical interpretations, rehearsal techniques and performance.

One of Francis's ensembles also began as an ensemble of graduates from the same music school. The ensemble has been together for over ten years with only one member change, inviting someone who was not a graduate from the same school.

Francis reflected on the situation of the ensemble before and after the change in membership and described it as the ‘reboot’ the ensemble needed. The new member had more experience as a soloist and ensemble musician and realised the ensemble needed to move in a different direction. The professional experience the new member was able to bring to the group helped the ensemble move forward.

It was like OK, bang, we really need to up the professionalism of this, like up the image, make sure everything is done, you know... And his drive towards making it serious really gave the rest of us a kick up the arse, and really helped the notion of pushing it forward in a more professional way and not just as something we did because we like doing it but something like, what are the goals? How are we going about achieving this? (Francis)

As reported in Chapter 5, nineteen participants discussed their involvement in more than one ensemble and ten participants had other performance work (in addition to chamber music) as part of their portfolio. These participants reported a variation of group dynamics occurring in different ensembles and they also discussed changes in working methods and expectations placed on them between groups. They also spoke of how colleagues that regularly work with other groups bring that ethos or work ethic into another group when it is not necessarily wanted, causing conflict.

Xavier provided an example of this, where one member he works with also performs with a larger ensemble:

He is so used to the way they [another ensemble] breathe and phrase that he would bring that into here. Which actually has caused conflict because he gets very uptight very quickly, and that can make for a stressful rehearsal if he is not getting that the reason why we're all together is because we're just trying to do the same thing two different ways.

The sample of participants were all professional musicians, therefore there are expectations of professionalism and expertise from all players. However, the distinctive backgrounds and training methods of different players adds variety in how a group operates. The skills and knowledge, both musical and non-musical, gained from these different experiences help shape the dynamics of a chamber music ensemble, both in enhancing the collective knowledge of the group or occasionally causing friction until an understanding or compromise has been reached.

7.7 Conclusion

The personal accounts of the participants presented in this chapter give some insights into the interrelationship of interpersonal communication, training and background, and group dynamics on the performance, motivation and productivity

of ensembles. The individual needs and wants of ensemble members act as motivators to enhance positive group dynamics, which is reported to have an effect on the performance in front of an audience and the audience reaction to that performance. These correlations demonstrate that there are particular factors that can be strengthened and improved to ensure more positive group behaviour and performance experience.

Although Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) theory of flow is related to individual performance, the participants presented evidence of flow-like experiences on both a personal and a group level. The experiences of the participants represented events and influences leading up to the performance that were positive and organised, and they discussed having strategies in place to enable cohesive group work on both a musical and an administrative level.

The interpersonal relationships of the ensemble members are formed and developed through professional and personal connections, requiring groups to consider approaches to rehearsal and providing critique on technical and interpretive ability and choices. The creative preparation for a performance was reported as collaborative, and ideally every member would have input towards the preparation of a musical work or preparing a program. The organisational aspects of running an ensemble, particularly in self-managed ensembles, was seen more appropriately as a division of tasks. This division was decided based upon who had particular skills and strengths in any particular administrative or organisational area, regardless of proper training or education. This division of

tasks meant there was a reliance on each member to contribute towards the organisational activities of the ensemble despite these tasks not having the same personal rewards as a fine performance. The different approaches to these two sides of chamber music ensembles, and the expectation that each member will contribute to the decisions and duties of the group on both the creative and organisational levels, illustrates the highly collaborative nature of these organisations and the importance of developing skills in a variety of areas. The diverse backgrounds and training highlight the unique nature of these non-traditional ensembles and how these collaborations draw and the strengths, knowledge and skills of each member in order to create a new, or distinct, ensemble.

Chapter 8. Organisational Structure and External Influences

8.1 Introduction

This final chapter of data analysis examines more closely the organisational effects of classical chamber music ensembles. It is evident through critical interpretations of comments made throughout the interviews with these professional musicians that a chamber music ensemble can be described as a complex system; one that experiences both internal and external influences. Previously, aspects of identity, group dynamics, goals, motivation and interpersonal communication have been discussed. These elements represent internal influences upon an ensemble, influences that can be somewhat controlled through combinations of personnel and the choices made by the individuals or the group as a whole. External influences are those that come from outside the ensemble but also have an impact on the operations of the group. These influences are unpredictable, uncertain and not necessarily controllable. External factors described by the participants include availability of funding (government or private support), changes in government policy (concerning education and finance), developing and maintaining an audience, developments in technology, and the changing cultural environment over time (movement and relocation of players, and influence of the combination of all external factors). This chapter will discuss these external influences as well as the range of organisational structures that members of these ensembles have adopted. This discussion includes a closer

look at the role of the artistic director and how, in their experience, they approach guiding the structure and culture of their ensemble.

The participants expressed views that aligned with a number of factors included in Cooksey's (2003) model that identifies the contextual influences on organisational activities. These factors appear to also impact on the activities of classical chamber music ensembles. The data displayed a variety of organisational structures, from formal incorporated companies to 'cottage industry' (small-scale, home-based and part-time operation) arrangements. Each of these presented associated advantages and disadvantages, which fundamentally aligned with the objectives and purpose of the ensemble.

Not only are certain structures (formal or informal) evident within a musical ensemble, certain influencing factors have a significant impact on the functionality of an ensemble. Internally, these factors include the history and future trajectory of the ensemble, availability of resources and facilities, and leadership and management within the group. External environmental factors include government decisions, market trends, information technology, and stakeholders such as audiences, venue managers, festival organisers and the media. The information provided by the participants demonstrated that as members of unconventional or non-traditional ensembles, they find that these influences have a major effect on the progress and productivity of the ensemble. Nineteen of the participants compared their ensemble to a string quartet in terms of repertoire, building audience, leadership, the market, and festival/venue

booking agents. They also discussed a range of challenges they believed new music and early music ensembles face when trying to promote their ensemble and develop an audience.

Organisation in this context refers to the influences that the structure and design of the group has on its productivity. It takes into account whether an ensemble has an artistic director(s), executive board or management team, or whether all members of the ensemble are considered equal. This chapter will also look at leadership and the attributes an artistic director possesses. It was noted in Chapter 7 that this ‘business’ side of running an ensemble is not the preferred activity of most musicians: performing and creating art is by far the favoured pursuit. Non-traditional or unconventional ensembles mostly run at a ‘cottage industry’ level, meaning everything is completed in-house; the ensemble members have to do most of the managerial and administrative work themselves. This chapter will later discuss aspects of this and how the members of these ensembles can feel disadvantaged compared to more mainstream ensembles.

8.2 The classical chamber music ensemble as an arts organisation

Essentially, an organisation is a group of people bound by a common interest, work or goal. It is not a word used here to depict a musical group solely as a business focusing on the bottom line (profit or loss). As with any group of people, certain roles and hierarchies are put into place. The structure of an ensemble as an ‘arts organisation’ plays a role in the organisational culture of the group.

Organisational culture is a system of assumptions, beliefs and values that are shared by a group of people. Although these shared assumptions, beliefs and values were discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6, the culture of an ensemble in terms of organisational structure and its influence will be discussed further here. Whether an ensemble has an artistic director, is overseen by an executive or management team, or is more democratically organised, the structure that a group chooses to build creates certain opportunities and limitations. How those who are artistic directors (or artistic leaders) direct and support the ensemble also has a profound effect on the operation of the ensemble, how it is presented to its audience, and how it plans and develops future projects.

Table 8.1 presents the different organisational structures and hierarchies of the 58 different ensembles discussed by the participants.

Table 8.1 Organisational structures of the chamber music ensembles

Executive or Management Team ↓ Artistic Director(s) ↓ Pool of players for projects Number of ensembles: 2	Executive or Management Team ↓ Artistic Director(s) ↓ Fixed/core group of players Number of ensembles: 10
Artistic Director(s) ↓ Pool of players for projects Number of Ensembles: 9	Artistic Director(s) ↓ Fixed/core group of players Number of ensembles: 9
No named artistic director(s) ↓ Fixed/core group of players Number of Ensembles: 26	Managerial Team ↓ No named artistic director(s) ↓ Fixed/core group of players Number of Ensembles: 2

Twenty-six of the ensembles discussed in this study are self-managed, with decision-making handled amongst the members of the group. These ensembles are small, mostly duets, trios and quartets; however, there are two quintets. Of the remaining ensembles, twelve are managed by either an executive board or a management team. These ensembles are more formally structured in terms of being a registered organisation or incorporation; however, artistic decisions are still led by the artistic director(s). These ensembles are larger in size (seven to eleven performers as a core group) but can be flexible in terms of breaking into smaller groups or inviting guest artists. They have been established for a number of years (the majority being over ten years). Two more ensembles also have this formal organisational structure; however, the culture of the ensemble is that there is no artistic director. Programming, projects and collaborative decisions are made democratically between the ensemble members. This structure is unusual in that most ensembles of this size tend to have at least one 'leader'.

Eighteen ensembles are directed or lead by at least one artistic director in terms of organisational function, and they do not have a management team overseeing their activities. Nine of these eighteen ensembles are a fixed group and are made up of five to six players. The other nine ensembles are flexible in terms of using a pool of players; however, most have a small core group that is expanded for different projects. The roles and responsibilities of the artistic directors in all eighteen ensembles vary depending on whether the group has a fixed membership or if they rely on a pool of players for various projects.

The different structures and hierarchies that are put in place demonstrate a relationship to the number of musicians in the ensembles. The experiences related by members of larger ensembles suggested a more formal structure is needed, acknowledging a quicker, more manageable way of making decisions. The smaller ensembles adopt a more egalitarian approach, facilitating equal input in decision-making. As these ensembles are only made of two to five players, and generally co-founded by all, it suggests that there would be too much of an imbalance of power if there were a specific hierarchy.

For groups without an appointed artistic director, control is something that some the musicians feel should be equal within the group. With control comes a sense of ownership, and in return, a sense of belonging. The collaborative nature of small ensembles means there is often a shared sense of ownership as all members invest a lot of time, and often money. With ownership, however, comes responsibility for both the successes and the failures of the group. Some participants thought that, ideally, a small ensemble should not need an ‘artistic director’ and that every member should feel control and influence over the group. Some of the participants who have taken this egalitarian approach explained that it is not always the case that everyone has an equal input, and the result is an unequal balance within the group. This resulted in members feeling that they have lost their ability to express their judgment or opinion, which is an aspect chamber musicians desire. An example is given from Evan’s experience working in an ensemble that does not have an artistic director:

I think that when it does start out to be a collective as in my case, everybody puts, everybody does, you know, it ends up being that one person does most of the work and that causes problems. It causes the problem that they feel ripped off that nobody else is doing the work, it also feels like the others feel like they lose control of the group, at the same time and they feel like they don't have a say anymore. (Evan)

The dichotomy of this situation is that one member assumes more tasks and responsibilities than the others, resulting in the division of work being unbalanced between the members. Alongside this, the other members develop a feeling of losing control and having fewer opportunities to make decisions for the group.

In terms of the impact on the artistic decisions ensembles with more formal structures have, eight of the participants spoke of being part of an ensemble that was managed by an artistic board or executive board. These tended to be groups that had formed companies for the purposes of taxation or funding. The responsibility of artistic control here can vary between what the board expects and what the performers want. These two objectives can often be conflicting.

Because of this conflict some musicians made conscious decisions to not have a managerial board. One of the major factors for not having a board was fear of losing the artistic control:

I remember when the [ensemble] first talked about getting a board ... and various other people, actually several other people we've had conversations over the years over what it would be like and whether it would be worthwhile and we've had such negative feedback from people, because of the loss of artistic control. (Alice)

This is obviously a discussion to be had, and it takes into consideration many aspects. Alice believed the risk to artistic control means it is not worth changing the structure of the ensemble, preferring to not solely rely on income and expenditure reporting and profits to remain active. To her, as is the case with many of these ensembles, the goal is to perform the repertoire that she chooses and present it in a way the ensemble is best known. Unconventional ensembles are often concerned with trying to be shaped into 'mainstream' or more conventional ways. Losing this personal vision and goal for the group to a board or someone else threatens her professional identity as a chamber musician; her artistic decisions for the group reflect her as a musician: her tastes, priorities and musical self.

John's ensemble made the decision early on that there would be a core group of players and they would not use the 'pool' design to call on individual members for projects. John considered that if the same group of people work together all the time, they become more invested in the group and feel a sense of responsibility

for the success and failures of the ensemble. If he were to run his ensemble as a pool of players, John assumed there would be a lesser sense of unity:

But I think that's the difference between like, a session musician and actually a member of a band, and I think that's why we made a conscious decision really early on, because there are a lot of, particularly in new music, there are a lot of groups, that you know, that who maybe have a different group each time, and basically still have camaraderie of course because they play together, but they're all not invested in the same thing. And for us that was really important and of course it's never perfect but for me it's always been really important to make sure everyone's really invested in it because otherwise yeah, of course those things happen...

'Those things' refers to an imbalance in responsibilities due to members not performing regularly in the ensemble. It is important to John and his ensemble that everyone has this sense of responsibility, influencing the musical activity of the group.

Conversely, Jack is the artistic director of an ensemble that does pull from a pool of different players. The structure of his ensemble has changed over time 'we had a fixed group of players. So, over time you'll see it doesn't work'. After

developing an ensemble with colleagues, eventually the decision was made to hire players casually. This left the ownership and decision-making about programming, repertoire, venue and players ultimately up to the artistic director. The ensemble is now described by Jack as a *'flexible organisation'* and able to have *'as many players as you want'*. As far as ownership, he explained:

They all understand that I'm the artistic director they all understand that this is [ensemble] and we perform chamber music and we perform chamber music at the highest quality that [we] can provide and that's what we're doing

And, it just changed things dramatically because I could then just get on and do my job, I can develop [the ensemble] ...

Clearly, Jack is the one responsible for the ensemble. As artistic director, he is able to continue working towards his goals and vision for the ensemble and not have to include ideas and suggestions from other musicians. This makes the objectives of the ensemble clear for any artist he engages for a project or performance. When asked about the rehearsal process he replied,

It's like with rehearsals, it's chamber music, everyone's equal. There's never one person saying this is how it, like

as artistic director yeah I have an opinion but I don't take that approach of well I don't, but, at the end of the day there's lots of things that need to be decided ... And at the end of the day I'm responsible for the musical decisions I make for the group because they represent [The Ensemble] and what we're about.

Jack believes chamber music is about equal music making and influence. 'Everyone's equal' – all parts are important in a chamber music setting, therefore so is everyone's opinion.

Regardless of the size or structure of the ensemble, it is clear from the previous chapters, and further exemplified here, that each of the participants discussed the importance and necessity of the organisational activities involved in running the ensemble as well as maintaining the values, assumptions and beliefs each member shares. It is these attributes that suggest a chamber music ensemble acts as an arts organisation; however, the 'outcome' or 'product' and value of a chamber music ensemble becomes the process as well as the final performance to an audience.

8.2.1 The role and responsibilities of the artistic director

Of the thirty participants, fifteen specifically identified themselves as artistic directors, musical directors or artistic leaders of at least one ensemble. They described their roles as usually consisting of a mixture of choosing repertoire; sourcing collaborators; organising marketing, promotion and advertising; finding

and liaising with venues and festivals; sourcing other performance/project opportunities, and liaising with an executive or organisational board (which two of the artistic director participants discussed). Figure 8.1 shows the responses the fifteen artistic directors believed to be their primary responsibilities.

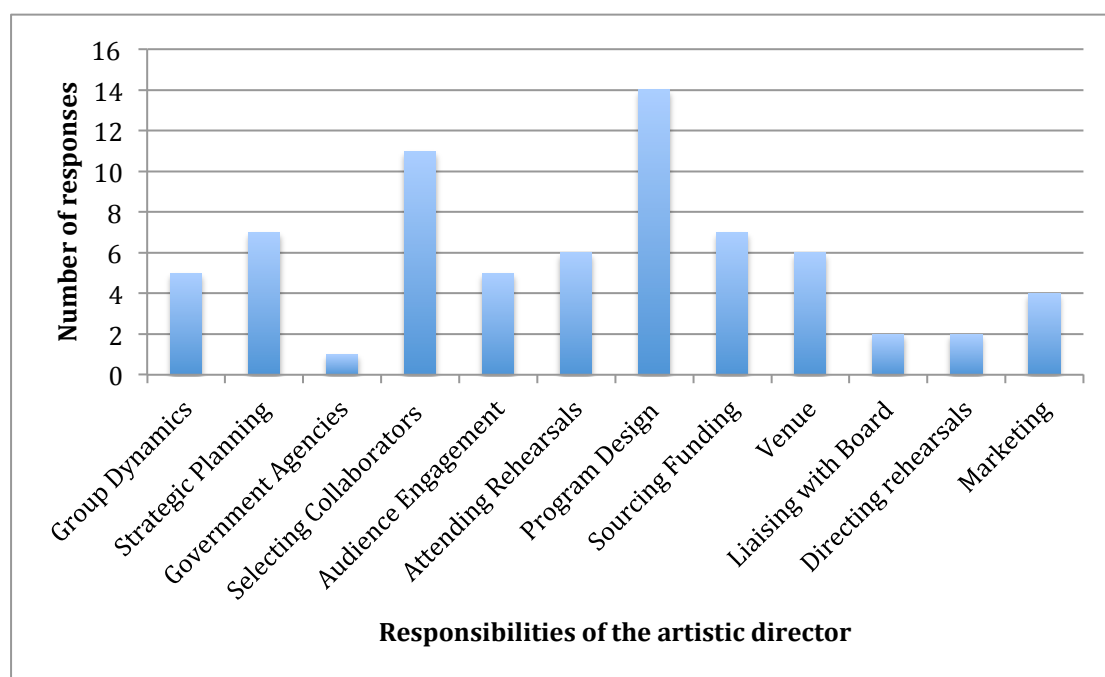


Figure 8.1. The roles of an artistic director as discussed in the interviews

Program design and selecting collaborating musicians (players, conductors or composers) were the most common roles of the artistic directors, accounting for much of the artistic planning. Program design includes selecting repertoire, proposing programs to venues and festivals, and discussing works/concepts with composers. For Alice, one of the fifteen artistic directors, program design also means working on program artwork and layout, another creative/artistic aspect of the organisation of the group.

The differences between ensembles that are either fixed or flexible with a pool of players to choose from required particular responsibilities for the artistic director(s). For ensembles that are fixed, such as Robert's, as artistic director he is responsible for approaching composers and other collaborators. For those that are flexible, such as Julia's, she is responsible for choosing players.

Strategic planning of future goals and sourcing funding were also regarded as major tasks. Many participants (not only those who are artistic directors) emphasised the importance of forward planning, including planning rehearsals, programs and the future direction of the group. CD recordings, performing at major venues and festivals, and touring were the most frequently discussed future projects by the participants, demonstrating a need to keep 'forward thinking' and growth in regard to number of performances, venues choice and cultural status. Many participants explain that the preparation of a concert series begins at least twelve months in advance. Many of the tasks associated with preparation included strategic planning, searching for performance and collaborative opportunities, and building networks with other organisations, venues, directors and artists.

Only two artistic directors claimed to run or direct the rehearsals, ensuring that it is their artistic vision and interpretation that is being portrayed. The other artistic directors established that musical interpretation and rehearsing should be closer to their idea of a 'chamber ensemble' where the musicians equally work together sharing creative ideas. It is important to them that equality is maintained in this process. In non-traditional ensembles, there is a heightened sense of collaboration,

for there is no instrumental hierarchy or set role as there are for most other large and more formally structured ensembles. Six artistic directors commented that they make sure they attend all rehearsals as an observer, if not rehearsing themselves, to ensure smooth running and to be able to solve any technical or personal problems that might arise during the preparation process for a performance.

The remaining fifteen participants spoke of their roles in their ensembles as a result of task division, dividing up similar tasks to those of artistic directors amongst members of the group. When this is the case, tasks are divided according to the strengths of each member. One issue that appeared with this approach is an imbalance caused by some ensemble members not taking the same amount of responsibility in the decision-making or administrative duties as others. These issues arose for a number of reasons; namely, misalignment of personal and group goals, priorities, and the availability of time as discussed by participants in Chapter 7. These administrative tasks were also seen as *'boring'* and posing limitations on the time spent on the more creative aspects of ensemble playing. The participants who worked with ensembles taking this division of tasks approach described their group as *'egalitarian'* or *'democratic'*, allowing everyone to have a say in the organisation and sharing administrative tasks.

8.2.2 Management versus leadership

The roles and responsibilities as described by the participants who are artistic directors demonstrated more of a leadership role rather than a management role.

These included functions such as:

- liaising with audience members;
- attending rehearsals and ensuring a friendly rehearsal environment;
- focusing on the needs of individual members of the ensemble;
- aligning the ensemble culture with goals and aims of the group; and
- acting as a facilitator within the group.

These functions meant that the artistic directors felt a responsibility to foster the culture of the ensemble, aligning with factors of leadership. The importance of good leadership is highlighted in Alan's comment about group dynamics. He said,

*In terms of the overall dynamic of the ensemble anything
that affects the working spirit and energy of the ensemble,
the buck stops with me. (Alan)*

Many of the participants who described their role as artistic director are original members of their ensemble. They founded (or co-founded) the ensemble and therefore have a strong connection with the success of the group. The experiences described by the participants displayed a personal connection to the ensemble and the people that perform in it. The professional and personal relationships established and the incredibly close and social aspect of working within a

chamber music ensemble display a need to install a leadership role rather than acting as a ‘boss’ or remaining emotionally detached from the group. Comments such as *‘this makes us no money, this has always been a labour of love’* (Alice), *‘if you’re passionate to do it, then you get something out of it’* (Brett), *‘the scale of it was not originally conceived for economic reasons’* (Bridgette) and *‘the reason you do it is you feel the artistic need’* (Ethan), further emphasise that the vision of each ensemble is more than the bottom line or purely focusing on ‘selling’ the ensemble. The leadership of the artistic director ensures that the ensemble is artistically satisfying for the members and audience, which provides more than economic reasons to develop and continue. An artistic director (possibly more appropriately labelled ‘artistic leader’, which was the term used by participants from the United Kingdom and Europe) is one that includes the ideas, opinions and interpretations of others within the ensemble, as well as ensuring the smooth running of the organisation administratively. Comments such as these by Harry and Ethan give insight into how a chamber musician under an artistic director can still feel a strong sense of input and respect:

The music director will very often ask if there’s any kind of suggestions, or if anyone has a suggestion you always say it. (Harry)

I wanted to integrate the players much more, to really be a team. (Ethan)

An artistic director (leader) is focused on the relationships between the members of the group, as well as creating and fostering a culture of working within the group. One participant in particular gave three examples of different leadership styles between three ensembles they had been a part of (ensembles A, B, and C). Interestingly, the participant reflected back and interpreted the different leadership styles in terms of what matters most to that particular leader personally, for the group and the audience.

*I think in [ensemble A's] case [director A] is always very outward looking, very open, very inclusive. I think in [director B's] case he's very inward looking, he's focused on his needs. And that generates some success on the next layer, which is the audience layer, because they respond to that - they're drawn to that. With [ensemble A] no one would know who [director A] is but they know the group and they're drawn to the excellence of performance. I think [director B's] missing a step by missing that engagement with his colleagues and that's the way it is and that's the way it was formed early on. [Director C] is a challenge to work with, his ideas are incredibly strong. It's often, he's mercurial, in that sense he's brilliant, and he's whacky, and he'll waste time... but strangely he involves everybody, in a **strange** way. It's different but sort of a mix between what [director B] does and what*

[director A] *does. Involved, but you're kind of excluded, but then you're involved again so it's kind of more fluid.*

[Director C's] *connection is focused on the music, and then it's about everyone sort of comes in and then it goes to the audience having gone through that process. With [director A] it's all about his performers and the composers, and the audience is there as part of that, but it's not part of the process of building the creating of new stuff. With [director B], it's about **him**, it's about him and his audience and it's about the delivery of him, through his group to the audience. (Dennis)*

The three types of directorship styles described above provide just a few examples of how differently the music, performers and audience may be considered. This account also gives insight into how rehearsals are conducted, how the opinions of the players are included or excluded, and how the group is presented on stage through the music and the director. Artistic leadership is distinct from management. The artistic directors mentioned by Dennis above have management teams to carry out organisational responsibilities outside artistic decisions.

Five of the participants discussed having, or at one time having had, an external manager to assist with administration and planning. This proved to be difficult for some groups, as the intimate nature and understanding of the ensemble meant that

it was difficult to express the intention of the group and the personal vision the members collectively share. Alice's and Harry's comments are pertinent to this point.

We discovered that at one point because we brought in an administrator for a while, which we thought was a really good idea, but we spent so long trying to explain to the third person the stuff that we already knew, that it was actually, it was a good idea, and it should have worked, but it got really frustrating. Because yeah, there was just a lot of stuff that we realised was just unsaid, but needed to be said. (Alice)

We first started by hiring just one person to help operations. And it soon became apparent that we weren't able to as a group, and I say using 'we', the group wasn't successful in training this person or giving this person ... transferring the knowledge that the person needed in order to do his job properly. So, he lasted a year. (Harry)

An ensemble Gavin spoke about also experienced difficulty having a manager who was external to the group. In this case, the manager was also an agent for other ensembles, and as he explained, *'we wanted someone who works just for us, not for many people, and who identifies with the group'*. Having someone within

the group demonstrates an understanding and respect for what the group does, and they become more focused on guiding the group towards success. He also believed that having someone from within the group manage the ensemble ensures that full focus is given to that ensemble and not shared with others.

Table 8.1 identified 26 ensembles that do not have an artistic director or leader and do not have assistance from a manager outside the group. The ensemble members themselves have to divide tasks, often based on their strengths and abilities to do certain duties. These musicians learn to develop skills outside their formal musical training that can be applied to a number of contexts. The different roles the musicians have in both the ensemble (as a musician) and as a manager emphasise different skill sets. The participants' discussion revealed that these roles demonstrate a number of transferable skills musicians possess. These include:

- Communication
- Leadership
- Organisation
- Critical thinking
- Creative problem solving
- Teamwork
- Presentation

The participants explained that throughout their performance career they learn to communicate, lead, think critically, solve problems, work as a team and present a final outcome related to both musical ability and 'business skills', suggesting a range of musical and entrepreneurial abilities. With this organisational structure,

there is no need for formal leadership; the ensemble is small enough to be able to achieve a high degree of coordination.

All the examples of ensembles discussed by the participants do not have regular conductors, so there is not always someone fixed in directing the musical flow of the rehearsal. This role becomes more fluid depending on the needs of the ensemble and repertoire. If there is an artistic director (leader), they ensure smooth running of the ensemble in terms of communication, and as discussed above, organisational operations.

These experiences illustrate the complexity of chamber music ensembles and the close, mutual understanding members have within the ensemble. This supports the extremes of organisational structures that are applied to the ensembles discussed by the participants. Either a team of people who specialise in these areas provides administration and management support to an artistic director, who imparts the group vision, or it is shared within the ensemble to ensure the direction and decisions are made according to the goals of the ensemble members together.

8.3 External influences

A chamber music ensemble does not exist in a vacuum. A complex organisation such as a chamber ensemble must take into consideration the external forces and environment that influence the productivity and creativity of an ensemble. The data presented the following environmental influences for an unconventional or non-traditional chamber music ensemble:

- government funding and support
- the audience
- technology
- new music developments and current research in performance practice
- private or corporate sponsorship

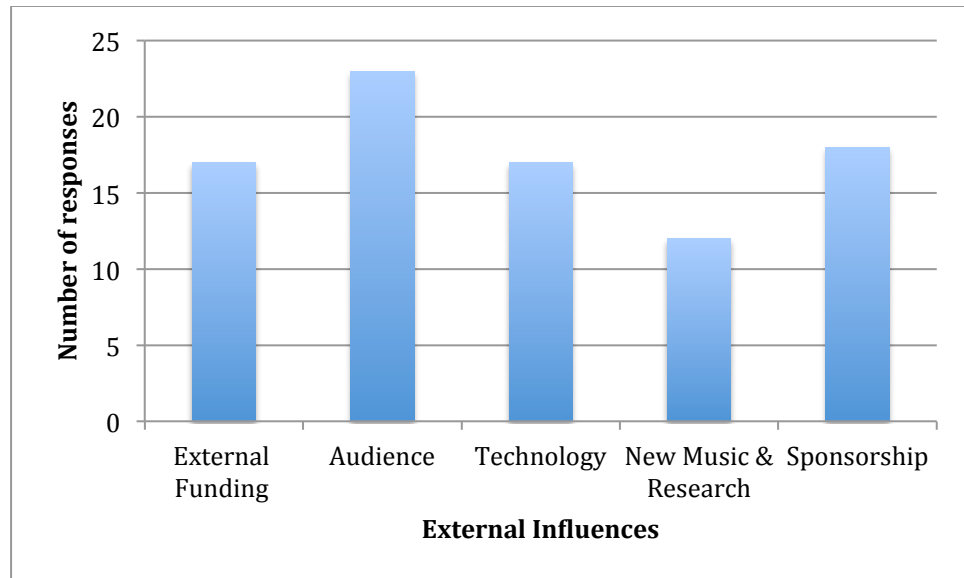


Figure 8.2 External influences that affect non-traditional chamber music ensembles

Figure 8.2 demonstrates the number of participants who discussed particular external influences. It is noted that there are a few limitations that unconventional ensembles encounter within these external influences. Finding, building and keeping an audience was the most discussed external influence on any ensemble. If there is no audience, there is no ensemble. Dennis experienced this with an ensemble he was a member of in the past. In his experience, he felt that the ensemble was struggling too much with a dwindling audience, and therefore it had to cease operation. The participants discussed a number of different ways in which they develop an audience and how they receive different types of feedback

from each performance. Ultimately they expressed that the respect and performance towards an audience is the final goal any ensemble aims towards.

External funding and sponsorship were also discussed as largely contributing factors to the operation or success of an ensemble. Although every participant spoke of finances, there were mixed opinions as to when, how, where and who these funds come from, the limitations they might place, or the opportunities they can offer. The development and advantages of new technology, including social media, was reported to influence the organisational processes and decision-making efforts of the groups, as well as allowing more collaboration for framing ideas, concepts, and written communication. The impact of new music (finding, commissioning and allowing time to develop new works), and research into programs, concepts, and performance practices were only discussed by a few participants. However, it was noted that changes in the musical taste of audiences, the time research takes, and understanding the skills necessary for genres such as early music, also have an impact on specific ensembles. The following sections will look at each of these external influences in more detail.

8.3.1 Funding

This section encompasses on all external funding, whether it be governmental, institutional, corporate, or private sponsorship and donations. Being primarily from unconventional ensembles, the participants of this study discussed a number of ways they felt their ensembles have advantages and disadvantages over ‘traditional’ ensembles such as the string quartet. Many of the ensembles are new

music or contemporary ensembles commissioning composers to write new works, or they are performing rarely heard works written in the 20th and 21st centuries. Other ensembles discussed are early music ensembles, aiming to develop a niche performing works by lesser-known composers or exploring repertoire from relatively unknown sources. Some of the ensembles have been able to secure funding from government agencies; others have relied on private or corporate sponsorship programs. There were mixed opinions regarding the availability of financial support and the limitations it can put on the ensemble's vision. The topic of funding was discussed in almost every interview, displaying conscious thought and interest across all participants. Some participants spoke of finding another stream of funding away from government support, finding another '*financially stabilising factor*' such as another institution, whether it is private, a university, or another ensemble, '*one that is linked to an audience base*' (Kirsty):

So aligning yourself with another institution, like another group, that can add another dimension or, that might be something that would lend itself to longevity. (Kirsty)

The main issues for members of ensembles that have had or are currently applying for funding that arose during the course of the interviews was the time it takes to complete grant applications and, if successful, to acquit them. The cost involved in preparing grant applications; the restrictions grants place on the output of the ensemble in terms of artistic expectations; funding limitations; and the unpredictability of perpetual funding were also significant topics. A chamber

music ensemble, as an organisation, requires personal practise, group rehearsals and performances, with administrative work taking time away from these artistic activities. The ensemble of which Jack is a member has been able to hire administrative support to help with applications to funding bodies, although after a number of rejections over the past ten years, they have decided that the money is better spent in other areas. The unpredictability of funding means that the ensemble is unable to accurately plan for the future. This inconsistency and the availability of project-based support enhance the infrequent operation of many ensembles, and it means they are having to turn more to collaborations with other organisations and ‘one off’ projects:

The problem is, for an organisation our size, we need to be able to budget each year and know what we have, a year or two years out. And if we don't know that we're going to get that \$15,000 next year, we don't know if we get that \$20,000 or we don't know if we're going to get – we can't plan. And we need to plan ahead, 3 to 4 years in advance, and it's not going to happen through applying for grants because we don't have the guarantee that we'll get it (Jack).

John's comments also supported Jack's concern:

I think it's pretty challenging really for any chamber groups to have recurrent funding. Or at least the trend is moving away from that, and more towards project based, not recurrent funding. (John)

Support from private funders or sponsors has proven to be more efficient for some ensembles; however, it can place restrictions on what these private supporters expect from the ensemble in terms of repertoire performed and the choice of players employed. In particular, Julia explained that after establishing the ensemble for many years, it is now self-sustainable. She does not need to rely on private sponsors like she has in the past. In fact, she has turned away from private and government support recently due to investors providing suggestions that do not align with her vision for the group:

I knew someone who was a potential sponsor say to me that I should be the musician. I shouldn't be doing any of the management of the group... But for me it was so integral to the identity. I've thought that it's not just about you getting up and performing, it's the direction you want to go in and I just said no I can't do that, and we actually didn't get that sponsor, I think the group would've fallen apart. (Julia)

Evan has had similar experiences with government support:

When the pressure comes on to actually acquit the grant and use the money I felt like we ended up making decisions which we didn't really, weren't really happy with later. (Evan)

For others, having limitations placed on the group when provided with external support can help shape the ensemble's projects. John felt that if government funding bodies provide support, then the criteria placed on that support should be carefully considered as a social responsibility:

It's the exact opposite of what other people would say, but if the funding criterion actually makes you think in a different way, I actually think that's a good thing, personally. Most others would probably really disagree with that... Generally they have arts policies because their objectives are seen as better for society ... but I actually think that's a really important thing. And sometimes for me that's by no means that would dictate how, what artistic projects we would do at all but I think it does focus you in a sense that you are part of a broader society and if the state is going to support you then there's a two-way

kind of contract there and thinking about that is a really, a really useful thing. (John)

For ensembles that rely more on external funding, it can shape the future of the ensemble. This can determine the longevity of the ensemble or reshape the structure of the ensemble in terms of size. All participants, no matter their country of residence, have witnessed reductions in government funding that has had an effect on the working of some of the ensembles. Ethan, for example, has had to reduce the size of the group as it has become too expensive for venue/concert organisers and there is less funding to support any financial losses:

There were a few reasons for reducing [the ensemble] ... reducing the size, because I felt that we would end up having a very strong team artistically but we would have a better chance to make chamber music, and also because we can now work most of the time, we can work without funding applications. (Ethan)

Evan has found there are now less performance opportunities available:

It's only in the last couple of years that that gig has more or less evaporated due to the funding constraints... (Evan)

For some participants, there was a sense of frustration when discussing audience development and establishing funding for non-traditional ensembles. Francis had a particular objection with a perceived 'ease' towards acquiring private funding for more conventional ensembles. He claimed that unlike traditional ensembles, his ensemble has to work hard to prove that they are an ensemble worth supporting and even harder to eventually get to a stage where it becomes a full-time occupation.

*That's probably one of the things I have a gripe with, it takes a lot of work and we've been working really hard in trying to make this work and I see some of the more traditional instrumentations sometimes just getting **all** this money. And this particular one... it's a full-time group ... You have to be willing to go out there and suck up and, do the kind of brownnosing to get this kind of opportunity. So, I do peeve when I see unremarkable groups pop up and then achieve success. (Francis)*

Julia shared a similar opinion in terms of reacting to denied funding applications:

Someone else said 'yes, but you've been an ensemble for long enough, why don't you become an orchestra?' And I mean, a string quartet is not going to say 'hey, we've done this for a while, let's improve ourselves by becoming,

bigger?’ It’s just insane, so we’ve stopped applying for funding. (Julia)

The insecurity and uncertainty of funding for small ensembles and the changing arts sector presents challenges for chamber music ensembles generally. Ensembles therefore acquire different means of support, whether it be attaching to an institution, private sponsorship, one-off project grants or collaborating with other artists to boost ticket sales. The lack of perpetual funding adds pressure to the ensembles, often denying them the opportunities to run concert series and challenge themselves artistically through unique programming. Financial support also inhibits the employment of administrative staff, again increasing pressure on the members of the ensemble to ‘work for free’ outside their area of performance. Costs involved with performance are not only the rehearsal and preparation time of the ensemble members, but also the administrative tasks that are required. Stella summed this up:

When you are standing on stage [it’s] the result of a huge process which involves of course all the artistic work, and the repertoire research, and the rehearsals, and even the clothes you are wearing, and the fact that you contacted this organiser, that you made a brochure to sell the concert to the organiser, and you spent hours and hours emailing and making phone calls, and making a website, and making... there’s all those things that are there, if you

didn't do all these things you may not be there. So that means that when you're getting paid for a gig, it's much more than the gig you're getting paid for, of course, you're getting paid for everything else that you did for it.

(Stella)

Ethan also explained how running an ensemble is expensive and that it can be difficult to find funding to allow performance opportunities. He noted that the recent changes in financial support from government and arts sectors have had an effect on small ensembles. Despite all this, the artistic need to perform music and collaborate with others remains the dominant reason for pursuing these endeavours.

I know people who prefer to play as a soloist, just do recitals etc. of course it's the same thing, you are completely independent, no one holds you back, you don't get conflicts that you definitely get in any kind of collaboration. You're much cheaper, you don't need funding because if someone says well we've got 250 and you think well I have a day off anyway let's go for it, you know? If the offer is 2500 that's better but, if you've got an ensemble you have to go for financial support, everything about it is unpractical but the reason you do it is you feel the artistic need. But it's of course less than

efficient. Running an ensemble is less than efficient. And it used to be OK [here] for a few decades because there was considerable financial support, from all sides. Now it has become a bit of a struggle for everyone, for everyone really in the [...] arts scene. But still obviously many people feel the artistic need to do it. (Ethan)

Shared commitment and the desire to perform music still prevails over the financial struggles that concern ensembles; for performers in unconventional or non-traditional ensembles, it can be seen that these desires are strengthened even more considering *'you don't ever look at new music as a financial thing'* (Alice).

8.3.2 Technology and marketing

It was reported that technology has affected chamber music ensembles in a variety of ways. Mainly, the participants found that developments in technology mean that organisationally it is easier to manage an ensemble, no matter where the members are living or how frequently they are able to meet in person. For ensembles that have been performing for over twenty years, the availability of more frequent and affordable air travel has allowed a greater network of performers and composers for collaboration and a more globalised approach to developing repertoire and performance opportunities. It has allowed musicians to remain active within ensembles based in one country, while living abroad in another. Musicians become more flexible and transient; many of the participants

have taken advantage of the opportunities for study and performance abroad and have found ensembles comprising a number of different nationalities.

The development of the Internet and communication applications such as email, Skype, Dropbox, Google Drive, Facebook, Twitter and online calendars allow for easier administration and organisation. These applications create the ability to communicate more easily, and provide up-to-date and instant planning. The use of file sharing (cloud storage) applications allows the ensemble to be more ‘*diplomatic*’ in its approach to organisation, allowing each member a chance at designing, writing and editing promotional work:

It was like put it in the Dropbox and people added stuff and ‘how about this version?’ ‘How about that version?’ you know. And that’s the way things mostly go, because with anything it takes someone to kind of coordinate it and then to get the Dropbox going and then everyone kind of puts in their 10 cents worth and ‘oh yep, no, that sounds good’. (Kirsty)

It’s diplomatic... we use Google Drive. Everything goes in for the [group] whether it be finances, concert ideas...
(Francis)

The prevalence of smartphones provides musicians with quick access to email and social media, allowing them to be able to respond quickly to invitations, requests and inquiries, even while travelling. The participants made such claims as,

I think the managing has become a lot easier though this one, the smart phone... Because you can work anywhere. Your office is basically in the train or in the plane, or wherever. (Derrin)

We have lots of Skype conferences. If we feel we are sending too many emails, it's getting too complicated, let's just Skype... So I never feel I'm far away from people. (Chloe)

Social media has provided other avenues for promotion, marketing, advertising and, as mentioned above, funding. Social media applications such as Facebook allow the dissemination of group updates, events, recordings and videos, and the development of larger networks locally and internationally. Some participants felt that with the ability to self-promote through a professional looking website and social media, there is less of a need for a management agency.

An Internet search of each of the 58 ensembles discussed by the participants revealed the ways in which the groups use social media to market the ensemble

and share video and audio recordings of musical performances. Figure 8.3 shows the range of media platforms used by the ensembles.

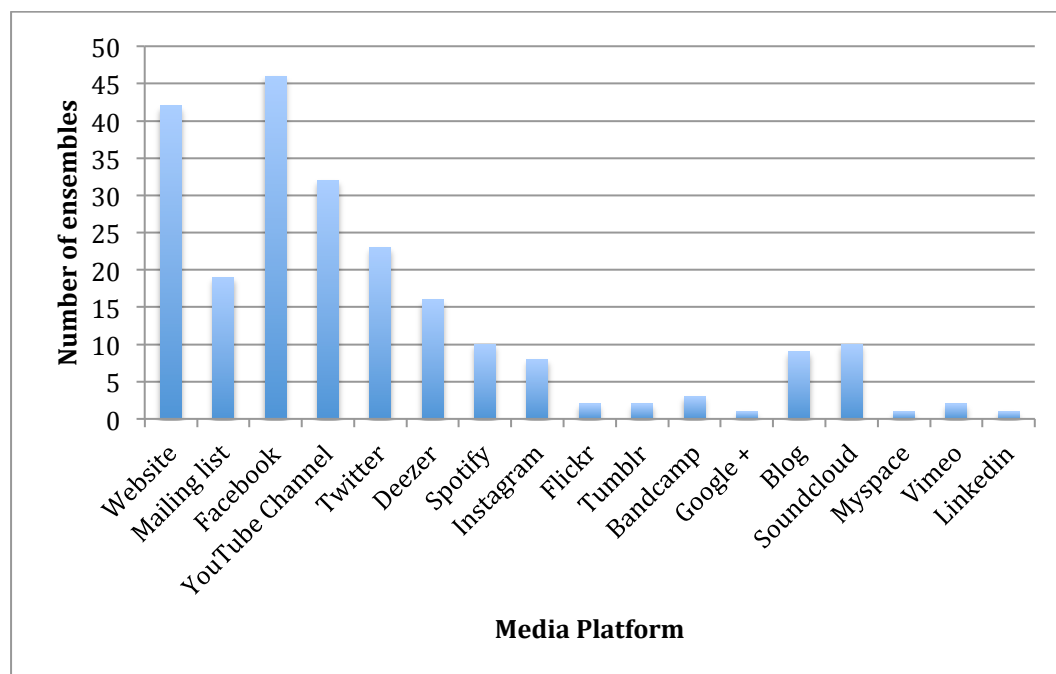


Figure 8.3 Internet tools used by ensembles

Figure 8.3 shows that the majority of ensembles have either a website, Facebook page, or both. These sites are used to provide regular information about the ensemble, including biographies, to advertise upcoming performances and to provide links to other social media sites. The video sharing company YouTube was the most popular choice for broadcasting performance clips, interviews and ‘teasers’ of upcoming performances. Digital music services Spotify and Deezer were common platforms to showcase recorded albums. Social networking sites Instagram, Flickr and Twitter were widely used to share photos, short messages and updates to followers. E-newsletters were used by nineteen ensembles to mail

out frequent updates and news from the group, while nine ensembles had blogs attached to their main website providing current news, updates and reviews.

The prevalence of the use of social media amongst the ensembles, and the fact that 33 ensembles were using four or more platforms, illustrates the importance of Internet presence nowadays, as verified by the following participants' experiences:

I think probably the social media platforms has given, or empowered individual artists to have a great, it's had a great impact on the independent music scene (Jessica)

And the internet, the fact that people can find you, festivals anywhere can just find you without having a, without being in a management company (Derrin)

And, how did they find us? They found our website, they got us through our website ... So, it shows you, how important it is to have the technology in this day and age (Francis)

Often, the participants spoke of their ensembles as needing to provide a 'complete package' (Electronic Press Kit) to event and venue managers. This not only

includes the internal ideas, aims and objectives of the group, the repertoire they perform and the people in it, but today, due to the independence of self-promotion, also includes a website, Facebook page, Twitter account and well-designed brochures all matching in theme and design – effectively developing a ‘brand’. In Brett’s experience, self-promotion was an expectation of one venue that was supporting one of their performances.

They ask you as part of the contract to come up with a flyer, drive it yourself, publicise it on Facebook, publicise it on your website, do all that kind of targeting yourself, because they know that you’re better equipped to get people than they are, you know your scene. (Brett)

The 21st century has been termed the age of ‘digital natives’ or ‘digital immigrants’, essentially, the age of the Internet user. With the technology available, and the focus on inexpensive self-promotion, artists are finding tools such as social media invaluable in the dissemination of their work and in developing a more international profile. The examples provided above also demonstrate a more tightly assimilated working environment, no matter where the musicians are based.

8.3.3 New music and research

Only eleven participants discussed the influence that finding, commissioning and developing new music and research had on their ensemble(s). However, the time taken to research new programs, decide on concepts and keep up-to-date with contemporary performance practices do have an impact on the productivity of an ensemble. Unconventional ensembles focus on developing new music or applying new performance research to projects. For ensembles that prepare new music, often they work with a composer whom they have commissioned. This, as was reported by the participants, often has an effect on time, quality of work and finances. The participants explained the necessity to search for new performance opportunities, experimenting with different performance types (improvisation, electroacoustic, interdisciplinary) and collaborating with other artists. As they are not always presenting a performance of well-known repertoire, they look for ways of expanding and challenging the ensemble and its audience.

Contemporary music ensembles spend a great deal of time researching repertoire, doing background research for program notes or finding works that are rarely heard. They use this information to promote concerts and decide on program concepts. Zoe, for example, has researched concepts of silence, perception, sound, and the mixing of genres. The ensembles she performs with experiment and develop new ways of performance and sound-experience. Kylie also discussed researching architecture and incorporating this within performance:

I'm having ideas of creating a series of music that is kind of playing with architecture and certain rooms. So the acoustic and the room itself, sort of being a third member. And then, kind of exploring the room and performing it also. Because there are some researchers in architecture obviously, but acoustics, and then atmosphere, and then, I could possibly ... well that's what I'm trying to hook up with those researchers and being the performer that actually performs all this.

Early music ensembles often require performers to be well versed in current historical performance practices and research, which is often described as 'research-driven' performance. As far as programming, it also requires '*making editions, musicological research and finding repertoire*' (Chloe). Kirsty performs in both early music and contemporary ensembles and she finds that '*in baroque music people are very, very well researched and they might have a particular focus on a composer of specific period*'. Kylie, another participant who performs with both contemporary and early music ensembles explained:

There is much more research involved in interpreting early music. Whereas in contemporary music there is research, but it's just happening now so you don't have to read books but just figure it out within the scene. (Kylie)

Other participants who are early music specialists also spoke of the necessity of having accurate knowledge in historical performance practice and being able to apply this in terms of physical performance. It was important to the ensemble that all performers were able to demonstrate this knowledge.

8.3.4 Audience influence

In Chapter 7 the audience was included as part of the cyclic relationship between group dynamics and performance (see Figure 7.2). The discussion by the participants surrounding this relationship uncovered a direct connection between audience response and group performance. The audience, however, is an external factor; it is somewhat uncontrollable by the performers. Participants explained that with good preparation and organisation they are more likely to have a successful performance, but it is not until the audience provides verbal and non-verbal feedback to the performers that the musicians realise how successful their performance was. The participants explained that the audience reaction is the truest measure of whether what they are doing is acceptable. Non-verbal feedback during and after performances was experienced in many ways, either by the way they clap, sounds made at the end of a piece, foot tapping and facial expressions. The following three participants described their experiences of receiving feedback from audiences. They highlighted how important the subtle reactions from the audiences are on the performers and how critical it is to realise the success of a particular performance based on these actions:

Audiences always get it right. They always know. They can pick bullshit a mile off, they can pick laziness a mile off, they can pick excellence ... If you do multiple shows you know from night to night, you know how well you've done by the audience [clapping], or whatever it might be that's wrong. (Dennis)

[Some] audiences tend not to be quite so enthusiastic, I mean they don't appear so enthusiastic, they're a bit more subdued... Whereas [some] audiences, you can hear after the end of a piece you hear 'oooh', you can see them, they're sitting and smiling. (Julia)

Very often you see people tapping their feet or sort of dancing on their seats. I think even if one person is doing this already you have a sense of purpose when you're on stage. (Stella)

Feedback is also received in the form of conversation after a performance, and it is used by some to gather insight into preferences of repertoire in order to develop future programs. As a useful way to receive immediate feedback, it was a way for Julia to gauge what the audience enjoyed most in terms of repertoire:

To start with I got a huge amount of feedback from the audience, I would ask people I trusted in the audience and say 'what did you think?' It was interesting that people would often say 'yeah, I like that piece and not that piece'. So, I started to just over the years work out why they didn't like a particular piece, and if I thought that repertoire should still be included, work out a way that I could include it in a more interesting way, in a more engaging way. (Julia)

Interestingly, only three participants mentioned published reviews as external feedback from formal reviewers. The focus seemed to be more on audience members as a source for informal feedback. The participants, in their experience, commented on what elements of performance an audience enjoys. Because chamber music is of a smaller scale to an orchestra, it was noted by some participants that the audience enjoyed and paid attention to the fluid musical leadership and communication between the ensemble members rather than watching the ensemble follow a conductor. It was reported that the visual aspect and the communication within an ensemble is clearly organised and planned in order to heighten this visual sensation and support the musical message being communicated to the audience:

There is a sense of always communicating on stage. And audiences love it ... being chamber music everybody

matters. Every single line is important and is doing something that is distinctive. So yeah, I think it's very interesting for the audience. (Alice)

Putting *herself* in the role of an audience member, Bridgette provided this comment:

As an audience member myself ... I love watching all the kind of telepathy for the want of a better term going on between individuals on stage.

Developing and maintaining an audience was seen as difficult generally, supported by statements such as '*you have to work bloody hard to get an audience*' (Jack). In particular, as members of unconventional ensembles, the participants had experienced difficulty finding a niche, a market, and exposing audiences to unknown repertoire, sounds and instrumental combinations. They claimed that audiences often do not know what to expect from the ensemble and were unfamiliar with the repertoire being performed. Many participants felt that more conventional ensembles were more likely to rely on familiarity with audiences and therefore ran less of a risk; for example, Chloe said, '*a string quartet has a brand*', meaning it is a familiar ensemble to most people. As quoted earlier in terms of repertoire, Francis also shared this opinion:

We're not a string quartet, so we can't play Mozart one concert and then do Haydn the next and expect people to keep coming back. So we're trying to grow our audience base by providing something a bit different and always keep them interested. (Francis)

Comments such as these suggest these ensembles have to think beyond repertoire and rely on other means to entice and maintain audiences.

Seven of the participants explained that they monitor their audience, keeping a record of the demographic they are attracting to performances. The level of musical knowledge and appreciation, what social status they might have, what they expect from a musical performance (entertainment, educational, relaxation), and whether they are regular concert goers all provide information for preparing for a performance. These factors inform artistic decisions, as well as decisions about branding and packaging the ensemble, venue and refreshments. Ensembles that perform more regularly or have a concert series or season, the frequent analysis of the audience allows the ensemble to understand it more and support further growth:

For us it's now, how do we package chamber music and brand it as a high-end product? Which effectively the type of audience we get, that's what it is... they're all high net worth sort of individuals. (Jack)

Where's this audience base going to come from? And that's what we've been trying to analyse actually with our ticket sales for our concerts. A lot of them are students, which is good, which is great. But at the same time, we want more than that. You want the random punter who has no weekly contact with you. (Francis)

In Kylie's experience as a freelance performer, the ensembles she is a member of perform infrequently. She focuses her attention on finding an audience to play to, rather than hoping an audience comes to her:

A goal could be to attract those people, those audiences to your music because they might be interested if they hear it, but they usually don't have access... I find a possible audience and then see what kind of concert format I could create to bring this music to them. (Kylie)

Another approach to audience development is through collaboration. Inviting a guest artist or working with another ensemble was seen to attract more audience members, with the hope that some may return to future events.

The participants produced a number of reasons for performing in front of an audience. Ticket sales or profit was not referred to, rather, it was the artistic approach and intent towards communicating a musical message to the audience. In particular, the participants felt that as performers, their main objective is to expose or inform the audience of new works, composers and musical ideas and successfully communicate the musical message to them. The satisfaction of meeting these two goals equates to a successful performance in the minds of the participants. Through listening to and respecting their audience, the ensembles are able to develop their brand and niche, build audience size and promote the group to a larger market.

8.4 External assistance

Developing a successful ensemble clearly requires some careful planning on both an artistic and organisational level. Musically these highly trained professionals have spent many years perfecting their technique and artistry, yet they have spent little time learning business organisation skills. Concerning business competencies, some members discussed sourcing external assistance, mentorship and advice from arts managers or other professionals to prepare their ensemble(s) for public performance. Two participants discussed a mentoring program they received for their ensembles. This program assisted with applying for funding, developing a brand, programming the first concert, and working on communication strategies. They believed that this program encouraged the ensemble to take a professional approach and increase the efficiency of the group in the earliest stages of development.

In that program, we received individual mentoring over a period of 18 months and we built the identity and the brand of the ensemble... we learnt a lot through that. So right from the outset we were quite organised with the business side of it. So we registered a business name, set up a separate bank account, we articulated, defined the sort of image that we wanted to present, or the personality that we wanted. (Jessica)

We're getting professional coaching from the outside. And that helps, and I learn a lot also from that. Actually they taught us how to structure the group and how to program and find the first concert. So basically, the setup from creating the group and going into professional concert life. And it's great. (Kylie)

One participant described 'shadowing' and mentoring by a successful, professional freelance musician, and two participants who had not had professional mentoring stressed the importance of asking questions of everyone.

The most useful advice in setting up a group is, ask everyone you know for advice. Because people are just so, they're flattered if you ask them for advice. (Jack)

Alice has had someone from a mentoring program shadow her ensemble's rehearsals for a while. From that experience of being the mentor, she can see the benefits of programs like this not only for the business activities, but also for group dynamics and interpersonal relationships within rehearsals.

It's the actual being in there and seeing how people deal with a situation, how they resolve a conflict, how they solve a problem. What problems they avoid because they thought things through earlier. You know, how many things you have to think through, because you have to do the 'what ifs'. (Alice)

The professional advice sought or provided by these participants displays a sense that these invaluable skills need to be learnt in order to run a successful ensemble. The need for increased knowledge of the external influencing factors, as well as the internal dynamics of music making, demonstrate that there is more to chamber music ensembles today than 'playing music together'.

8.5 Conclusion

If a chamber music ensemble is now to be thought of as not only a group of musicians providing high quality musical performance, but also as an arts organisation, a complex entity where music making is both pleasurable, challenging and successfully performed to an audience, then aspects of organisational behaviour, the organisational structure and external influences must also be taken into consideration. It is these influences that help (or hinder) dissemination of the work of the ensemble to the public.

By looking at the structures, cultures and external influences explained in this chapter, we can see more clearly the impact each has on small ensembles and how the participants have experienced these. We hear from their experiences ways in which to minimise, normalise and maximise the opportunities or threats associated with these influences. Each experience is different, although there are some commonalities amongst the responses. Firstly, an artistic director is generally thought of as one who takes most of the responsibility for future planning, choosing collaborators and doing programming; however, their role as a 'leader' means that they support the artistic ideas and skills of their colleagues. They inspire, motivate and act as facilitator within the group (outside organisational activities). Those that are not artistic directors appreciate the respect they are given by leaders who focus on making music and the members of the ensemble, rather than on themselves or whether the ensemble makes a financial profit or loss.

The external influences of funding, technology, new music and research and audience also impact ensembles, making them complex organisations. The prevalence and development of technology, particularly social media, has made a difference in the self-promotion, dissemination of work and archiving of a group's work, as well as providing easier access to future plans, works in progress and communications. All participants discussed the issue of funding but it was clear that the need and impact it has on individual groups varied. In the opinion of many participants, the limitations it places on a group sometimes outweighs the opportunities funding can provide for small ensembles, especially when it is unpredictable and uncertain as to whether it is recurrent, project-based, or available at all.

Finally, the audience has a significant effect on an ensemble. The ensembles in this study demonstrate that care is taken towards identifying, developing and maintaining an audience base. Feedback is received through verbal and non-verbal communication both within a performance and afterwards, allowing the ensembles to judge whether the audience enjoyed their playing. Popularity is measured in hits, tweets, views and likes, and ensembles pay close attention to the demographics of their audience ensuring they produce high quality, interesting and enticing performances.

Chapter 9. Summaries, Conclusions and Further Research

9.1 Introduction

This investigation of individual members of non-traditional or unconventional chamber music ensembles had three primary aims. These were to:

- examine the motivations, qualities and characteristics of musicians who identify as chamber musicians and observe which attributes support the development of an ensemble;
- explore the interpersonal relationships between ensemble members and identify aspects of group identity; and
- investigate the organisational processes of chamber music ensembles as an arts organisation.

From these three aims, clear steps have been taken to understand the complementary aspects that make current chamber music ensembles sustainable – from the individual player through to the practicalities of running an ensemble – learning about the challenges and advantages non-traditional and unconventional ensembles face in today’s cultural environment. The areas of investigation are clearly outlined in Figure 9.1:

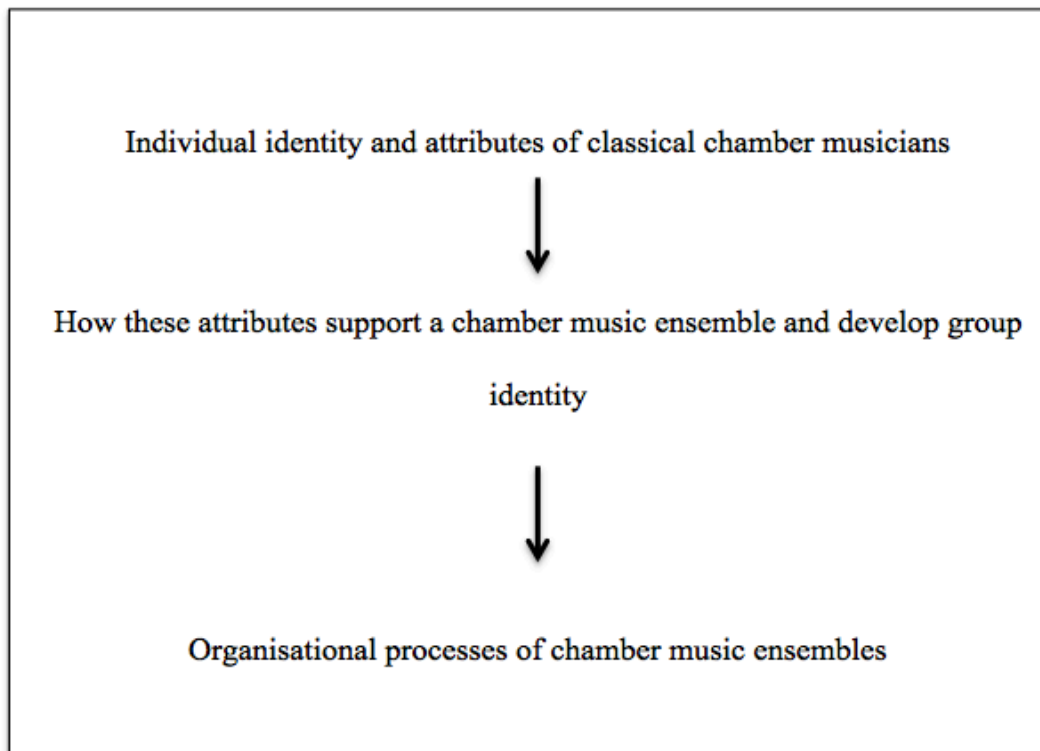


Figure 9.1 Areas of investigation

To achieve these three aims, the research revealed the experiences of thirty individual musicians performing and working in non-traditional or unconventional classical chamber music ensembles. Similarities and differences in opinions amongst the participants were defined towards what had proved to be beneficial in regard to group dynamics and organisational behaviour within the various ensembles the participants contributed to. The research aimed to uncover the musicians' responses to three main questions: how is a sustainable ensemble created today and how do the qualities and characteristics of musicians support the development of an ensemble and its identity? How do the interpersonal relationships between ensemble members affect the working of the group? And, what organisational aspects must be taken into consideration?

The first part of this chapter focused on the discussion of the results and their contribution to new knowledge. The second part of this chapter identifies the implications of the research on current practitioners, future education, and the impact on organisational research. It also recognises the limitations of the study and future research opportunities.

9.2 Contribution to knowledge

This research expands on current research by using a contemporary approach to idiographic analysis and exploration not often done in the field of ensemble performance. This research adds significantly to what is currently understood about chamber music ensembles through the investigation of unconventional or non-traditional ensembles specifically. These types of ensembles reflect the flexible and eclectic nature of the social and professional groups formed in classical chamber music performance. After reviewing related literature, presented in Chapter 2, it was perceived that classical chamber music ensembles also serve as excellent examples for interpersonal communication, collaboration and group dynamics within small businesses and collaborative, professional teams. With this in mind, I considered the research findings to be relevant beyond the field of the performing arts.

My research contributes to the literature by providing detailed personal accounts of the attributes and motivations of musicians who identify primarily as chamber musicians. The findings of the research point to the need for professional chamber musicians to develop new skills to match a rapidly changing cultural environment

in order to increase their chances of long term sustainable careers. This conclusion supports similar claims about professional and life skills of musicians made in some of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 (Bartleet et al., 2012; Bennett, 2009; Petocz et al., 2014; Smilde, 2012). However, by focusing exclusively on unconventional or non-traditional ensemble members, this research adds a unique perspective to group practices and processes. Positioning these ensembles in a strategic planning framework provides rich illustrations of the ways in which some musical ensembles act as small-scale, self-managing arts organisations. The research also identifies the significant influences on a wide range of musical ensemble groups and relates these to management and leadership practices in areas outside music.

9.2.1 Understanding the present-day chamber musician and the significance of forming group identity

Chamber musicians possess unique skills and traits that form part of their perceived professional identity. Further to their definition presented in Chapter 5, MacDonald et al. (2005, p. 14) claim that identities in music are ‘based on generic distinctions between broad categories of musical activity, as well as on specific distinctions which cut across these categories, in particular *instruments* and *genres*’ (emphasis in the original). The participants identified as chamber musicians, classifying themselves as a particular *type* of musician. Chamber music is one of these categories of musical practices, and it can therefore be used as a type of domain-specific self-image to determine what these musicians believe motivated them to pursue a career as a chamber musician.

The literature review identified that studies were particularly focused on a number of specific areas of identity work, including the development of professional musical identity throughout childhood and adolescence (Deliège & Sloboda, 1996; MacDonald et al., 2005) the identity of orchestral players (Kemp, 1996), jazz musicians (MacDonald & Wilson, 2005), and the solo performer (Davidson, 2005), but little research could be uncovered about identity of the domain-specific *chamber musician*. The research in this thesis contributes to the empirical knowledge of musician identity by considering the thoughts and beliefs of those who identify as chamber musicians, meaning musicians who are neither active in a professional orchestral career nor undertaking a soloist's life. Musicians within this subgroup of performers have a preference for playing chamber music and either participate in a number of different ensembles over longer periods of time or choose a freelance career consisting of short-term employment in small ensemble projects.

Chapter 5 presented an analysis of the participants' responses towards professional identity as a musician. The overarching identity of the participants was that of 'a performer', recognising their primary area of training focused on an individual performance perspective (all except one graduated with a music performance degree). They then narrowed the domain to 'chamber musician' as they related their identity to their primary performance output (small ensemble performance). This resulted in two main contributing factors impacting upon the formation of their professional identity. Firstly, the emotional aspects that professionally and artistically evoke a connection within the circumstances in which a chamber music ensemble operates, and secondly, the possession of

particular skills and lifestyles that support the part-time and freelance nature of working as a chamber musician.

The phenomenological and idiographic approach to this research allowed me to gain deep insight into the lives of chamber musicians. Exploring the experiences, thoughts and opinions of a sizable cohort of professionals who have worked with many ensembles in different contexts presented an opportunity to discover the motivations and inspirations of modern chamber musicians. The participants in the study invited me into their 'life-world', explaining a wide range of aspects, such as identity, skill, character and collaborative processes, which are involved in the life of a chamber musician. Although each reflection was personal, and their experiences were interpreted individually, there were some commonalities amongst participants' beliefs as to this 'domain-specific musical self'. The importance of this research was uncovering the attributes of chamber musicians, those who have chosen to take this career path, and how this accentuated their identity as a chamber musician first and foremost.

The findings of my research indicate that a chamber musician is a musician that enjoys balancing their own musical interpretation of their own part of a musical score with that of the ensemble's collective idea, sound and interpretation. They are able to share the success of a performance and the ensemble because they contribute equally to the perception of the musical material. A chamber music setting was perceived as a more intimate experience compared to larger groups. Smaller ensembles were seen as more social, allowing for a mixture of

professional and social relations. Developing these close relationships between the players was found to be an important process in musical performance. In a smaller setting, the performers relied on each other's insight, opinions and knowledge to create music. Rarely does only one person extend and impose their singular idea upon the group. The participants spoke of equality, a democratic approach to working with the artistic aspects of the group's work, allowing each member to voice an opinion if they choose to. In order to achieve this approach, participants emphasised the importance of separating the work environment from that of the personal, social environment. This creates a contradiction in one sense; the intimacy and social experiences are perceived by the participants as valuable; however, in order to create a friendly, egalitarian work environment, most people believed that personal concerns needed to be attended to outside the working ensemble. In order to maintain a positive, collegiate atmosphere in rehearsal while 'working', the participants noted that separating the two aspects of their lives was essential.

As chamber musicians of non-traditional or unconventional ensembles, the participants believe they are able to contribute more to this intimate experience through sharing unique musical knowledge and skill, and by doing so they felt that they 'belonged' to a group. The closeness of working in this environment with other professional musicians provides a sense of participatory belonging, importance, reason and meaning. The participants who shared experiences of working with groups with and without assigned leaders noted that there was a stronger sense of belonging in a group without a leader (for example, without a conductor), compared to ensembles that have a set of hierarchies in member's

roles or had a conductor directing them. This 'leader' was seen to create a communication barrier between members of the group and between the group, the music and the audience.

The research findings support the view that having someone take a clear leadership or director role musically takes the focus off the intimacy of collaboration amongst performers. It also lowers the use of skills expected of chamber musicians in terms of 'listening ability' (Sicca, 2000) and 'mutual tuning in relationship' (Schutz, 1964). It was found that musicians rely less on each other as they focus on the musical direction given by a conductor. Traditionally, in a larger group, a conductor imparts their musical interpretation on the ensemble, using the ensemble as an instrument to communicate the composer's message to an audience. The participants that had experienced working with a conductor, even in a small setting, noticed that they were not listening as actively to the other performers as they would without a conductor. There was less eye contact amongst the players of the group, and their focus was more on their own line of music, rather than how it related to the other instruments. Not only do they lose control of the personal meaning of the music, but when the performers rely on a conductor, it appears that there is less trust instilled between players because trust is more established between conductor and player. Trust between players, as the results show, is one of the most important elements of successful chamber music.

In chamber music, the responsibility of communicating the musical material belongs to each of the players collaboratively. This requires trust amongst the

players: trusting that their colleagues are adequately prepared, have the required technical skill, can apply a professional level of musical knowledge, and can execute this knowledge and skill according to the repertoire they are performing. Dogantan-Dack (2012, p. 43) writes, ‘for any collaborating group of people to work well, there needs to be a sense of trust and support between them, as well as a sense of belonging in the group’. In this same vein, all participants provided evidence that in unconventional or non-traditional chamber ensembles, where there are musicians who have a variety of professional experiences and cultural backgrounds, trust and belonging are important factors. When they are not well established, it is likely to lead to conflict between members of the ensemble. It is the elements of trust and belonging that were emphasised by the participants as enhancing an emotional connection between the performers. This also provides an explanation as to why these musicians are motivated by this line of musical work compared to larger ensembles where there is less emphasis on trust or belonging at the individual level. Larger ensemble settings were experienced as a more ‘corporate’ way of music making and led to feelings of having a ‘nine-to-five’ mentality, less control over musical decisions, little opportunity for sharing an opinion of the interpretation of musical material, and less social interaction with other players. This resulted in more distance between personal decisions and that of the group and musical performance feeling like a job rather than a creative activity.

By self-identifying as a *chamber musician*, participants were likely to have a high regard for both interdependencies in teamwork and fine collaborative skills. A high level of synchrony is needed to perform in a chamber music ensemble, as

Lim (2013, p. 309) states, ‘beyond interpreting and executing their own parts, musicians must simultaneously anticipate co-performers’ interpretations of their parts, and others’ anticipations of their own execution’. The participants showed they were highly conscious of this, as evidenced by the fact they detailed the skills and traits required of chamber musicians. These included:

- fast interplay,
- interaction,
- responding to sound colours (timbre) within the ensemble, and
- intense active listening.

The literature on chamber music ensemble performance discusses the importance of musicians playing their own parts and anticipating the parts of other performers (Davidson & Good, 2002; Lim, 2013; Sicca, 2000). This is what sets chamber music apart from other forms of group performance. However, what was striking in the research findings was the significance that sound and tonal colour (timbre) held for the participants. It was evident that for non-traditional ensembles listening and adapting to different tone colours was not only an important skill to have, but also a necessity for these groups. For mixed ensembles, members typically voiced concerns about how each different sound could react, blend or distinguish itself from the others and what the score required each instrument to do. In homogenous ensembles, however, there was more concern amongst members with blending, matching all co-performers and developing a particular *group sound*. It is clear that in order to achieve group cohesion, there is a focused requirement not only on the ability for all members of an ensemble to have highly developed aural and cognitive skills in reacting to different interpretations of rhythm, beat, melody and harmony, but also awareness of tone colour or timbre. It

is often that musicians are not wholly aware of the impact tonal variance has on a work. These ensemble musicians were able to highlight the importance this interpretive factor has on music-making, and performance.

As chamber musicians, the focus for most was the importance of being able to provide individual artistic choices and interpretations towards the group's collective goal. As chamber music is scored so each player has his or her own part, the musicians can focus on their own line and make informed decisions as to how it combines with the other voices in the music, which requires the acute skills mentioned earlier. Using these skills collectively, the fundamental aim is communicating the musical work to an audience. Successfully doing this brings a sense of pride, leaving members wanting to invest time and money into what they believe is artistically and professionally worthwhile. The sense of pride is what differentiated 'work' from 'belonging'. The musicians related how they are able to share a lot of their individuality as a performer in a smaller environment, not only verbally in rehearsals when discussing interpretation of the score, but also in performance, especially in mixed ensembles as they are often the only person playing a particular instrument and performing that role within the musical score. Participants also explained the difference between being a 'core' member of a group (recurring member) compared to being a sessional or casual member. This sense of belonging is worth considering, for the structure and culture of an ensemble depend on the mentality of its members. This also had an impact on how their role and contribution were perceived in terms of commitment and pride.

Pride is therefore another aspect that contributes to the emotional investment and connection sought after in chamber music performance; the feeling of validity in a cohesive group is a major factor for what makes one choose this musical activity. Pride was felt by these musicians because of the close collaboration required by a small number of individuals to combine their skills to achieve a common aim. Where previous studies have discussed ensemble member pride in terms of pride in taking part in an ensemble (Lim, 2013), or the ‘professional skills and the level of musical accomplishment’ (P. J. Martin, 2006, p. 101), for less mainstream ensembles the specific reasons as to why people band together to embark on a particular musical pursuit are unique or particular to each ensemble. These ensembles often aim to develop or uncover new performance practices or techniques, and tend to perform recently discovered or new repertoire, or they explore a rare sound world. When successful in achieving this, a greater sense of pride is felt amongst the members. Participants expressed how proud they are when they feel they have created a legacy or left an impression in the current musical landscape through pursuing these innovations. Many of these achievements reflect the personal goals the musicians have, when an ensemble matches these, pride is evoked.

The heightened sense of pride combines two elements. Firstly, the infrequency of performances within these ensembles means they are generally project based. A project-based approach is focused on specific outcomes or goals that the ensemble collectively believes they are able to produce (for example, specific repertoire) and to become *known* for achieving this outcome (for example, a premiere, a CD recording, a new performance collaboration). These things contribute to building

pride at the individual and group level. Secondly, while little financial benefit is gained from this work, a sense of personal pride and personal identity mirrors the pride they have in achieving the group's outcomes. The research shows that leaving an impression on the public, cultural organisations, artistic colleagues, and peers means more to the musicians than financial benefits. This conclusion also supports Hall (2004) and Bridgstock's (2005) characterisation of portfolio careerists (of which these musicians are) in terms of how they value 'personal identification with meaningful work' (2005, p. 41).

Generally, the participants did not overly describe feelings of conflict between individual and group identity that was shown to be prevalent in the research studies conducted by Hoedemaekers and Ybema (2015) and Beech et al. (2016), who specifically investigated indie and popular music bands. One reason for this could be that all participants, except one, were purely performers and not composers for their group. There was no perceived struggle between creating their own work and having the ensemble interpret this work differently. The genre of classical chamber music also suggests that there is less independence and more collaboration between members (see, for example Sicca, 2000). Sicca observes that 'in chamber music there is a collective consciousness which over-lays the individual consciousness and bestows on the group an autonomy and specific values' (2000, p. 155). Unlike the studies of indie and popular music, it seemed from the participants of this study that in classical chamber music there is less of one's individualistic story being told through the group's music and more focus on collectively interpreting the wordless musical notes on the score written by an

outsider of the group (for the majority of ensembles, it is recognised that some ensembles in the study incorporated vocalists).

In terms of hierarchy, the role of the artistic director was addressed, adding to the literature an aspect that has not been comprehensively explored. For some, particularly those that are artistic directors, the identity of the group and their personal identity complemented each other, constructing their individual identity as a consequence of the group. It was also the case that the majority of participants did not take up many solo opportunities; therefore, they are *known* for being part of a particular ensemble and the music that ensemble performs. The results also show that those that are artistic directors potentially have a more dominant role in the decision-making of organisational aspects and the ensemble's future direction, suggesting an authoritative figure in these matters. They are identified separately on promotional material, and their title of 'artistic director' is often mentioned in their personal biographies. This integration of identity exposes a different perspective of individual versus group identity compared to that of popular, folk and singer-songwriter genres and contributes to the literature in regard to enhancing professional identity and presence through group practices.

The development of group identity in particular to the ensembles discussed in this study was investigated, highlighting the importance of a shared ensemble vision. The experiences of the participants uncovered a number of ways in which a group identity was formed, bringing together the different backgrounds and knowledge of the individuals. Participants, especially those in contemporary or new music

ensembles, saw the group as an outlet for their artistic pursuits, a chance to explore repertoire and programs they would not normally have the opportunity to engage in. Groups that formed in this way develop a shared interest in particular repertoire and use it to find a niche in a diverse, contemporary and evolving market. For the ensembles discussed, the participants spoke of specific shared visions, aims and goals, leading to a deeper meaning for the ensemble, not only in terms of what its members shared, but how it was used to find a niche within the chamber music 'market'. Specifically, they spoke of repertoire, audience, sound, professional talent and programming, which they felt formed a group identity and separated them from more conventional groups such as a string quartet. However, in order to maintain these shared goals and values over time, they needed to be reassessed, allowing for changes in external influences and development.

The development of shared vision and aims of the ensemble helped to cultivate strong ties within members of the ensemble who were bonded by this mutual understanding. In addition to this, the ensemble is identified through visual and aural means, effectively developing a brand. This research highlights how both aspects are important. According to Hackley (2015), 'a brand must not only be recognised but must have a distinct identity, through its visual representations and/or its values' (2015, p. 131). For some ensembles, their identity takes on a visual representation in dress or look, an aural sound that is recognisable, or particular repertoire. The extent to which an ensemble 'branded' itself was variable, and studies on authenticity versus commercialism reflected the sentiments of some of the musicians interviewed in this research. However, Hackley identifies that 'branding represents a rational approach to fundamentals

of business such as recognisability, integrity, continuity, creativity and quality. For branding professionals, the communications should be grounded firmly in an offer that has integrity' (2015, p. 133). Again, this demonstrates that although a business approach can be taken to developing a successful ensemble in terms of recognition, recognisability and audience development, the means by which these are done should continue to uphold the musical value and integrity of the ensemble, in terms of what the musicians authentically endeavour.

Ensembles that had been working together for some time had developed particular identities, either through identifying a niche distinct from other ensembles, or acquiring a set of shared values that are used to drive and define the ensemble. These shared values were often developed from artistic identifiers, such as quality (professionalism) and group sound. The results provided some crucial evidence to support the importance of revisiting these goals and visions, taking into consideration the changing environment and strategically planning for the future. By looking through a social constructionist lens, the research highlights how in communities of people (ensembles) involved in complex social relationships, there is a fluidity and reciprocity of meaning making. It affords a glimpse of what Beech aptly describes as, 'meanings people give to their world – how they simultaneously interpret and shape what's going on around them' (Beech et al., 2015, p. 10).

Although artistic pride was paramount for all the participants and they prided themselves on performing music at a professional level to a public audience, this

caused some tension between group members. Most often this occurred when discussing the artistic versus the business side of being a freelance musician or establishing an ensemble. Commercial enterprise and artistic integrity were two different aspects, with many musicians struggling to balance the two. The existence of this conflict has been noted in a previous study of musicians by Hoedemaekers & Ybema (2015), but the musicians in this research felt that the type of ensemble they were part of accentuated this struggle.

The unusual style of ensembles discussed by the participants and the infrequency of performance events, meant members of non-traditional ensembles felt they had to be more conscientious about attracting an audience, collecting sponsorship and other funding, as well as convincing venue managers and curators that they should program their ensemble in concert series and festivals. Networking and entrepreneurial skills combined with a progressive consciousness were therefore considered to be essential for acceptance within the broader musical environment. As many sought ways in which to develop these skills and the mindset needed to promote their ensemble, others preferred to simply perform music while not being mindful of other aspects of managing a chamber ensemble. Research by Coulson (2012) has investigated the struggle between musicians and their understanding of entrepreneurship, claiming that

while the musicians were aware of, and embraced, certain sorts of enterprising behaviour as necessary for establishing and maintaining a place in the music world, the narratives of their working lives were not generally expressed in terms of an entrepreneurial identity. (p. 257)

Some participants understood, having previously engaged with business studies, that they were sharing an identity with that of an entrepreneur. However, there was not always a willingness amongst the participants to share their professional identity with being a musician and an entrepreneur, nor a readiness to accept that they needed to develop these skills. This reveals that a shift in perspectives and an acknowledgement of the skills that are required of musicians embarking on freelance careers in an ever-changing and unpredictable environment could greatly benefit chamber ensemble musicians. Conflict of identity arose in terms of authenticity, artistic and commercial identity, reflecting the findings of Hoedemaekers's and Ybema's (2015) study on industry and identity struggles. Their study is focused on singer-songwriters and the popular music industry; however, it displays similarities in the opposing identities with creating art and economic pursuits in the classical music world. Part of the reason there is this struggle between artist and business (wo)man is firstly, the struggle of authenticity – having the *want* to be a musician, an artist, a creative along with the *need* to be entrepreneurial and organisational. This is also something that Hoedemaekers and Ybema discovered through their research and described how 'musicians' identity work is here shaped by cultural notions of creativity and art, but also by the daily demands that are placed upon them and the diverse sets of tasks that their craft requires' (2015, p. 179). The participants' accounts of the freelance nature of ensemble performance and the need to incorporate a number of projects and different jobs into their career emphasises the validity of this statement.

These experiences also support the recent research undertaken by a number of scholars including, Bennett (2009), Bridgstock (2005), and Bartleet et al. (2012) on portfolio career musicians in regard to the demands upon musicians to incorporate a number of different activities concurrently and apply a range of skills that are sometimes outside of their performance roles. Furthermore, studies by Beaven and Jerrard (2012), Coulson (2012) and Coupland (2015) reveal struggles in identity in freelance musicians when it came to being an entrepreneur versus a musician. It was found that the majority of participants in my research identified with being a musician in the first instance and mostly rejected the notion that they are entrepreneurs or act as a 'business person'. The organisational tasks were typically not enjoyed and seen as something that just had to be done. Part of the resistance to changing roles is that in their musical education the priority and focus was upon refining their performance skills and music literacy. This observation reflects those discussed in previous studies by Hays (2013) and Bartleet et al. (2012) whereby the researchers have noted that tertiary music education very rarely incorporates studies of organisational and business skills and this leads to a lack of preparation for the real world of professional music performance.

In reviewing the numerous elements involved in chamber musician work, the necessity of entrepreneurship and business management skills appear to be integral to the success of chamber musicians. The results in Chapters 7 and 8 demonstrate the importance of non-musical skills involved in developing a successful ensemble and the readiness all ensemble members must have to collectively work together on these tasks. Thus, entrepreneurship should be

assimilated into future music education and training if it is to become accepted as part of the identity of chamber musicians.

Considering the body of music research, little focus has been on the chamber ensemble musician as a person within studies of classical music. It is clear from the participants that one is rarely a chamber musician full-time, and having a salaried position in a group is almost non-existent. Despite these professional insecurities, they all identified as chamber musicians as this was their most prominent means of artistic output. Their struggle with balancing artistic and business success, not unlike other art forms, is evident and needs to be addressed in this context. This demonstrates a need for more preparation in these areas, more realistic interpretations of the career of musicians, and more transparency of the knowledge and skills required. What was also notable through analysing the musical backgrounds of the participants who played orchestral instruments, or were singers, was that they had been supported by teachers who encouraged their students to aim for careers in orchestras or opera companies, possibly with little knowledge of other options.

Those who have identified here as chamber musicians have chosen what some would consider a difficult, unconventional and unpredictable path. However, by focusing on professional chamber musicians specifically, this study determines certain aspects of this career and the qualities, skills and knowledge they need to attain in order to make this a successful trajectory. Developing ways in which

musicians can embark on this career will depend on developing new and better ways in which educational institutions foster these career choices.

9.2.2 Collaboration and group dynamics of unconventional or non-traditional chamber music ensembles

Chamber ensemble performance is an intimate form of collaboration, requiring both musical and social interaction. As previously mentioned, the skills involved highlight the intricate abilities of active listening, responding, pre-empting and reacting needed in order to produce a cohesive performance. The individuals who belong to a chamber music ensemble know how important their part or role is in the ensemble, and they are aware that the slightest error can have serious consequences for the group. In terms of responsibility for mistakes or errors, it is clear that the performers at this level are equally responsible for the professional performance; however, they are also experienced at recovering from mishaps if they occur during a performance. The expectations placed on each other as co-performers at this level, no matter which group, are such that the group dynamics can be upset if each member does not fulfil their professional obligation. In addition to the expectations of performers within the ensemble, interpersonal communication, individual training and cultural, social and musical backgrounds of members also affect the group dynamics.

In Chapter 7, Figures 7.1 and 7.2 showed the musical and social relationships of collaboration within chamber music ensembles and how they were perceived by participants to impact upon ensemble performance. Figure 7.2 in particular

displayed the cyclic relationship between group dynamics, performance and audience response. These figures establish a structure that can guide further research in these areas. Changing each aspect, or ascribing different levels of importance within the aspects, can alter the balance of communication, training, group dynamics and performance, revealing the extent to which these complement each other. Similar to studies of group collaboration (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; K. K. Smith & Berg, 1997), the results of my research highlight the complexity of collaborations as rarely static structures. The relationships formed between communication, training, group dynamics and performance and the changes these bring about within musical ensembles (including major changes to these such as a membership change) demonstrate similarities with other organisations. The major difference with a musical ensemble is that a public performance is instantaneous and not often repeated, meaning these influences must be carefully balanced in order to produce such an intangible and variable outcome.

Figure 7.1 reflected Sawyer's (2003) explanation of the impact of group dynamics on achieving a positive performance, of which group flow is a significant factor in contributing to group dynamics. Sawyer's explanation focuses on improvising jazz ensembles and lists three factors that could challenge group cohesion:

- different rhythmic styles,
- volume preferences and specific preferences for changes in dynamics at certain points during a performance, and
- different ways of interpreting each genre. (p. 49)

These were found to be similar in unconventional classical ensembles, in particular the last factor, described as ‘different ways of interpreting each genre’. As Figure 7.1 illustrated, through this research it was found that the training and background of musicians has an effect on group dynamics and interpersonal communication, and ultimately these factors impact the ensemble’s performance. The combinations of players within an ensemble and their musical and educational background and training had an impact on how the group would work together (group dynamics and interpersonal communication), as differences and similarities in training allowed for different musical interpretations. In non-traditional ensembles, the chance of joining together with musicians from differing cultural backgrounds is high as they have training in different instruments, different musical eras, styles and genres. For many groups, these complemented each other, and some participants welcomed the different approaches to performance various players could contribute. Others, most notably of homogenous groups, preferred performers from a similar background, with a similar level of knowledge of performance practice, style and approach. By doing this, these homogenous groups were left with more effective rehearsal time as little explanation of the music was required. In addition to Sawyer’s (2003) identification of factors that impact upon group dynamics, the factors that were also found to impact group cohesion for classical chamber musicians in this research included:

- the use of different instruments,
- variations in musical knowledge (education and training, musical style), and
- the scope of musical experience (working with different people/ensembles).

Different instruments brought new perspectives of performance practice because the distinct sound qualities and production produced new ways to think about performance, specifically, the communication of musical ideas. String players talked about bow speed, wind players discussed articulation, vocalists focused on word association and percussionists thought about timbre. The combination of these different processes and approaches contribute to further discussion and group dynamics in terms of presenting varied and valued input during rehearsals. The different levels and types of knowledge that can be presented in these groups also offered both complementary and conflicting views within an ensemble, especially when it came to previous experience. For some, different experiences shed new light on approaches to performance and interpretation, whereas for others, different working methods instilled from previous ensembles could cause issues that needed to be considered, sometimes mediated, and at other times compromised. Working with musicians from different backgrounds or those that play different instruments is generally seen as an important exercise in collaboration. Learning to vary communication methods and language, as well as discovering new ways to approach music has been seen as a benefit to most of the participants, and a reason why they choose these more unconventional ensemble types. Learning to consider these elements and achieve balance resulted in a successful performance experience, with the hope of achieving group flow.

The responses from the participants echoed previous research into ensemble collaboration and the experience of a state of 'flow'. Table 7.1 listed a number of examples of moments in time when participants believed they were personally

experiencing what they understood to be group flow, as articulated in Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) theory about the dimensions of flow. By using these dimensions, it was clear that similar factors affect a group's response to feeling flow. Sawyer's (2003) claims of group flow being an emergent group property were confirmed in at least one case within my research. A participant related the experience of feeling 'the vibe', and while one other ensemble member was not feeling individual flow it did not seem to have an effect on the sense of group flow. However, there were experiences where if more than one person was not feeling a sense of flow, and all members were experiencing the same loss, group flow was affected, and inevitably, the performance. In addition, one of the biggest challenges in managing group dynamics for the participants was balancing personal and professional relationships. This was also seen to affect group flow; these ensembles tended to be sporadic, as the group rarely worked full-time together. Aspects of group flow, collaborative discussion of ideas, organisation and developing interpersonal relationships prove to be difficult in this situation.

Although all these groups were infrequently meeting – performances were infrequent and rehearsal time was irregular – it was clear that most participants preferred to work with a group over a long period of time. The reasons given were the opportunities this afforded for learning more about other players and developing close relationships this helped enhance performance and allowed space for more open and honest communication. This emphasises the qualities displayed by those who identify as chamber musicians, demonstrating further significance of belonging, meaning, and pride. This research provides strong evidence that even in occasional performing groups, the development of

relationships over time enhances the group dynamics and contributes to more connected and emotional musical performance. This developing sense of relationship is accentuated by comments from the participants often referring to the group as *'family'*.

Overall, friendships amongst members were maintained well, according to the participants. Conflict tended to occur, in particular with ensembles that had no assigned artistic director or leader, where members were required to do administrative tasks. It was reported that generally tasks were divided amongst members according to their abilities in other areas (website design, writing program notes, liaising with venue operators). The cause for most discord was disagreements as to how much someone was responsible for and whether they were putting enough time and effort into their assigned task. Tasks were generally seen as a 'need' rather than a 'want' compared to actual making and performing music. Like most chamber music ensembles, a group's main aim is to strive for excellence in performance (Blank & Davidson, 2007; Butterworth, 1990; Lim, 2013; Murnighan & Conlon, 1991). This means the technical musical skill of players tends to override the limitations of players according to skills outside music and cannot be compensated by employing another player. This research, therefore, further emphasises the importance in building efficacy in these administrative areas in training musicians. Awareness of the importance of these tasks and making them part of the initial training early in their careers will provide musicians with strengths in skills other than musical technique and build appreciation for these much-needed tasks.

The evidence of my research further highlights that musicians are generally less interested in the ‘business’ or ‘organisation’ of music making. Their talents, motivations, and shared aspirations are more focused on excellence in performance rather than running a successful business organisation. The approach and bias against mixing the two sides of organising music present hurdles that need to be overcome by ensemble members. Through awareness, musicians seek opportunities to learn and become acquainted with these areas while developing creative opportunities, which is evident from a number of the participants’ responses. Part of the solution for this is to integrate the development of these skills into tertiary musicianship training, and possibly earlier.

9.2.3 The classical chamber music ensemble as an arts organisation

The final aim of this research was to investigate the organisational aspects that need to be considered when establishing and maintaining a classical chamber music ensemble. When examining the responses from the participants, it became evident that a chamber music ensemble can be treated much like any other arts organisation, as a complex system influenced by both external forces and internal factors. Greig and Nicolini (2015) compare the extremes of organised music making, from bureaucratised forms of orchestras and more emergent forms of music making, such as street performers, to other organisational structures, for example, offices and factories. Between these extremes is ‘intermediate forms like the flash mob, but also one-off concerts or festivals’ (2015, p. 200). It is the intermediate forms where unconventional chamber ensembles are situated; often groups come together for a single performance or combine different musicians

from a pool of players for a particular arts project. These forms of organising music are certainly worth investigating. In this case, within a framework of organisational activities, the following section will show how these examples from the participants' experiences can inform different management strategies and decisions.

This research supports findings from other studies that have explained how musical ensembles can inform management practices in other organisational fields (Adler, 2006; Beech & Gilmore, 2015; Schiuma, 2012; D. R. Young, 2004;). However, it adds to previous research by placing these concepts into a framework based on Cooksey's (2003) contextual complexity of organisational activities, which was presented in Chapter 3. By considering the influences that the environment, organisation, groups and individuals have upon the running of an organisation, the research clearly presents the organisational aspects involved with chamber music performance. The discussion presented in Chapter 8 provided insight into the experiences of the participants outside the performance context. The structure, role of the artistic director, management, leadership and external influences are aspects most ensembles (especially those that are self-managing) have to acknowledge. However, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the responses provided by the participants demonstrate a conflict between working as an artist and completing administrative tasks. By placing the chamber music ensemble in the framework of an 'organisation', it becomes clear how closely related personal, social, collaborative and organisational aspects are.

The information provided by the participants establishes similarities to Cooksey's notion of strategic activities in complex organisations (Cooksey, 2000, 2003). One of the key arguments in his research is acknowledging the humanness of business organisations, and as he says, 'strategy is not so much about setting the direction that a business will travel; it is about people searching for clarity and unity of purpose and behaviour...' (Cooksey, 2000, p. 3). However, treating a chamber music ensemble as an organisation and employing strategic thinking is often viewed by musicians as taking the artistic sincerity out of delivering a performance of music to an audience. By incorporating the human element into organisational strategies, there is an argument that both the integrity of a musical ensemble and its ability to be business savvy can form a consensus. Further evidence was presented supporting the need to incorporate strategic skills and thought into the training of musicians as the tension and conflict of making music with others to perform to audiences and having to make money creates contention amongst musicians. However, it was demonstrated that developing social and musical relationships can enhance the organisational strategies of the ensemble, and in the end, performance outcomes.

Figure 9.2 summarises the findings from my research in respect to the relationship between identity and these organisational influences. The interconnectedness of individual identity, group identity and the internal and external influences on a classical chamber music ensemble represent the complexity and variability of a group. Each element affects the other, while all elements have an impact on the ensemble as a whole. It also takes into account the 'humanness' of chamber music

ensembles, highlighting the relationship between the performers, and the organisational aspects that need to be taken into consideration.

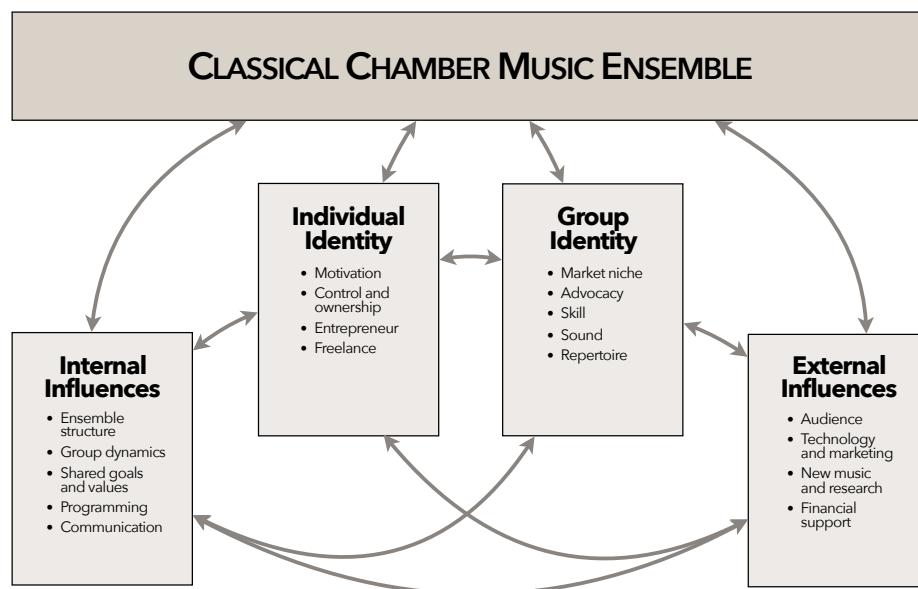


Figure 9.2 Elements of a classical chamber music ensemble

By linking Cooksey’s research and framework with the participants’ responses, clear connections were formed. Sicca (2000) looks at the concept of a chamber music group as ‘an autonomous, dynamic system’. Further to this definition he states,

The performing group can be considered as an auto-organization, an entity possessing its own autonomy with respect to the social actors who go to make it up; it is an auto referential cognitive system with a strong tendency to define its own limits with respect to what is “external” to it. (p. 155)

By presenting a chamber music ensemble as an arts organisation, my research provides a further, coherent connection between the strategic activities of an organisation where 'strategic thinking is a process not an outcome and the true bottom line is people' (Cooksey, 2000, p. 22), and the 'auto-organisation' and 'auto referential cognitive system' described by Sicca. Applying this framework assists with setting future goals, strategic planning, and assuming shared values by learning to take into consideration internal (individuals and group dynamics) and external influences (funding, technology, audience) of chamber music ensembles. These elements are all brought forward through analysing the participants' telling of their past experiences. Conversely, by using a chamber music ensemble as an exemplar, businesses can further consider Cooksey's focus on the 'humanness' of strategic activities by studying organisations (musical groups) where value is not necessarily purely for economic goals.

One of the influences on the processes followed by chamber music ensembles was the organisational structure adopted, which varied for each ensemble. For some, there were clear titles for specific roles. In response to particular titled roles of members of ensembles, an artistic director or artistic leader was present in thirty ensembles discussed during the interviews. The role and responsibilities of the artistic director/leader included not only managerial tasks such as venue booking and marketing, but also functioning as a mediator, an advocate for the ensemble, and being accountable for the ensemble culture and dynamics. The 'artistic director' proved to be a unique attribute to small, conductor-less ensembles, with most ensembles focused on shared leadership. Shared leadership was indeed the

case artistically; however, the responsibility of other tasks in this structure was for one or two people. The variety of obligations suggest that the role of the artistic director, especially when the artistic decisions are shared amongst members of the ensemble, is more of leadership, guiding the performers towards sharing a vision and achieving artistic goals.

Schein (2010, p. 195) claims ‘the unique function of leadership that distinguishes it from management and administration is this concern for culture’; the responsibilities and concern for a group’s values by participants who were artistic directors reflect Schein’s assertion. Musical ensembles develop a collaborative organisational culture based on creativity, artistic integrity, shared goals and vision, and mutual passion for sharing music. The responsibilities of the artistic directors demonstrated that maintaining this culture is important to them and the ensemble. Although roles of the artistic director included administrative tasks, overall the artistic director’s obligation is to reinforce these beliefs. Xiao et al. (2013) explain:

A team leader must perform two critical functions: helping the group accomplish its task and keeping the group functioning. Task functions include accomplishing goals, making decisions, adapting to changes, solving problems, and making plans. Team functions include developing a positive climate, solving inter-personal problems, satisfying members’ needs, and developing cohesion.

(p. 66)

As discussed in detail in Chapter 8, artistic directors of ensembles have a number of different functions, including acknowledging the perspectives of other people (players, audience), and aligning the culture of the ensemble with its aims. Comparing the importance of these responsibilities and that of the function of a team leader as presented by Xiao et al. (2013), the artistic director of an ensemble displays more leadership qualities rather than taking a managerial role, thereby ‘artistic leader’ appears to be a more apt title for this position than ‘director’.

Artistic directors or leaders involved in the research felt that it was necessary to focus on and think about the performers and the audience. This again demonstrates qualities associated with leadership. Guiding the ensemble towards achieving its goals while allowing the members to develop and contribute ideas is the role of a leader, whether it is artistically or not. Artistically, there were examples of shared leadership and participative (democratic) leadership, which were the most common leadership styles for artistic directors in rehearsal and performance. On organisational matters, it was often the case that the artistic director was responsible and did not often work within a team.

The value of this research is that it emphasises the importance of maintaining the group’s culture and ensuring member satisfaction. This knowledge would assist those embarking on creating an ensemble or those simply trying to iron out issues within their existing group. It also provides further examples of leadership practices, adding to the research of leadership in organising music making, as for

example the work of Beech and Gilmore (2015). These findings present a unique acknowledgement of the role of the artistic director within an ensemble (as opposed to an artistic director or curator of a festival or program) and suggest that further research focusing on this particular type of role would be worth investigating.

The eighteen ensembles discussed within the population sample that have artistic directors or leaders but do not include managerial boards provided a unique opportunity for investigation. These structures appear to be more common amongst non-traditional ensembles, as they are slightly bigger in size (often seven to eleven performers as a core group) and are flexible in construction (performers are selected by a pool of players); therefore, it seems this type of ensemble requires a higher degree of leadership and management. These kinds of ensembles provided rich information regarding the responsibilities of the artistic director and more insights into how creative decisions are made within the group. Although there was someone overseeing the group, creative musical decisions were made more democratically. These ensembles worked in rehearsal similarly to ensembles without a clear leader. In order to have this democratic style of working, all players demonstrated a high level of professional skills on their instrument, allowing for respect and trust when participating in creative discussion.

The recent and numerous changes for music ensembles in the unpredictable environment in which they work were seen to have an effect on both music making and management. Based on the participants' responses, funding is one of

the main topics for concern amongst members of these small to medium sized ensembles, as they require funding to pay personnel, record their music, and perform in prestigious venues. Reduction in government funding has had an impact on participants, no matter which country they resided. This required some groups to adapt structurally and operationally to these changes by making the group smaller, touring away from their local area, and finding private or crowdfunded support.

Developments in Web 2.0 tools and social media proved to be essential in developing an ensemble's presence in today's market. A complete media package contains a website, Facebook page and YouTube channel (Electronic Press Kit), allowing ensembles to provide biographical information, give updates on new projects and share excerpts of performances with a larger international audience or fan base. This research did not probe the participants' use of web presence or social media tools but did survey the use of different web platforms. However, the responses received suggest that further investigation into the 'monetisation' of web presence (Hackley, 2015), and the particular tools used for branding and marketing for these types of ensembles would be worthwhile for both new and existing ensembles.

Chapter 8 presented a number of external influences that have an effect on the ensemble in terms of each member's time. Considering each participant holds a portfolio career balancing other work and projects, influences such as collaborating with composers to develop new works or devoting time to

researching historically informed practice impact the ensemble as far as productivity in rehearsals and preparation in the lead up time to performances. These ensembles often played repertoire that was not easily accessible through libraries or did not previously exist; therefore, developing programs required more effort than ensembles of traditional or conventional music genres. Balancing the time it takes to develop new repertoire with other projects that members may be equally as invested in proved to be a challenge for non-traditional ensemble players. Not only does commissioning a composer to write a new work for an ensemble take planning, the ensemble then requires the composer to deliver the work prior to the ensemble's deadline for performance preparation (including any prior workshops needed with the composer), and this adds extra pressure on economic decisions for the group.

In this research, the audience was identified as an external influence upon the ensemble as an organisation. Like other enterprises, the audience acts as the 'consumer' as they are buying tickets and attending concerts. Sicca (2000) defines the audience as a 'prosumer' (producer and consumer), which 'expresses the element of active participation on the part of the "consumer" in the production process of any performed art' (2000, p. 146), and the duality of audience roles is certainly reflected in my research. Chapters 7 and 8 both discussed the role of the audience in a performance. In particular, Chapter 7 reflected Sicca's description of the prosumer, in that participants noticed how much the audience plays a role in the successful performance of an ensemble. Acting as 'prosumer', the audience's reactions to a performance as expressed through feedback regarding their musical or artistic preferences, and/or opinions about the quality of a

performance, are all communicated in various ways both during and after the performance. Chapter 8 described in more detail other ways in which the audience influences an ensemble. It was noted that the participants were able to provide information about how to maintain positive reactions from an audience, and D. R. Young (2000, p. 134) similarly observes that ‘the reactions of audiences during performances also provides relevant feedback information’.

The research points to one of the likely reasons unconventional or non-traditional chamber music ensembles may find it difficult to develop an audience is because the unusual or unknown repertoire is less accessible or familiar to the general public. However, the ways in which these ensembles perform leads to close communication on stage, which participants found was something audiences enjoyed. The ways in which these ensemble musicians interpret feedback from audiences during a performance echoes D. R. Young’s (2004, p. 134) observation that the quality of playing, the repertoire, the cost of attending, as well as the convenience and comfort afforded by the venue are all factors that are taken into consideration when developing programs, finding performance opportunities and developing a profile and reputation.

9.3 Implications for practitioners, education and organisational behaviour

Chapter 1 identified three areas to which this research aimed to provide a significant contribution of knowledge. Throughout the data collection and analysis, it quickly became apparent that the information gathered could be useful in advocating for change and as an impetus for informing further research, especially in regard to the education and training of professional musicians. This research shows that understanding the lives of chamber musicians and how they operate in the current cultural, socio-political, and economic environment has implications for the future training of musicians. These also include current music practitioners and many other professionals outside the field of music, due to the shared nature of operations.

The research has revealed particular aspects of group dynamics and collaboration that are unique to non-traditional ensembles. Unlike previous studies where homogenous ensembles, such as string quartets, have been chosen because of their ‘essentially comparable instrumental techniques’ (Davidson & Good, 2002, p. 187), the intention of this research was to explore how coordination and collaboration evolve within heterogeneous groups, or ensembles that are unique and eclectic. For these non-traditional ensembles, there was greater complexity in group dynamics because collaboration relied on balancing different backgrounds and experiences of various musicians and their individual instrumental training. Members of these groups also had to be adept at developing communicative

methods to share musical interpretations and ideas amongst a mixture of instrumentalists and vocalists and to contribute to various ensemble structures and leadership styles. Different management scenarios that feature distinct working methods and problems require resilience on the part of musicians and the ability to self-reflect, evaluate and find solutions to issues that may arise. It is hoped that educational institutions will use the information gained through this research to inform trainee musicians about aspects of collaboration. The research also points to the need to raise the profile of other musical careers and possibilities rather than prioritising traditional competitive orchestral or operatic careers within higher education institutions, which was found to be a common experience amongst the orchestral players and singers interviewed in this study. This could lead to new courses in leadership or collaborative music making with an equal focus on creating music, building communication, and teamwork. By incorporating these elements into music courses, student musicians will be taught lifelong learning skills, invaluable for freelance musicians today.

One of the most important implications of this study is understanding the chamber musician's career. Considering the growth in the number of portfolio careers and the fact that many musicians use chamber music as an ongoing artistic output, understanding the reasons why one chooses this trajectory and strongly associates as a chamber musician is important. Practising musicians should be encouraged to reflect and consider their decisions for choosing particular career paths. By recognising their motivations, training organisations such as universities and advanced performance institutes can better prepare musicians when searching for career options. Through a more targeted approach, music students can learn to

embrace or recognise the entrepreneurship that is needed in their music career and use both business and art as a way of propelling their career forward. The organisational aspects of this study present clear evidence that points to a lack of knowledge and experience amongst musicians about business practices, as well as an understanding of how the culture of an ensemble can be upheld. Improving preparatory education in this area would be of great benefit both musically and commercially, particularly for early career musicians.

The growing number of companies that are looking for business models to enhance their organisational culture and enterprise opens a number of implications for this study. Considering the currency of the project run by Beech and Gilmore (2015), to compile a number of different studies of organising music from a number of different perspectives, and the research of Schiuma (2012), demonstrating the implications music organisations have on other management, leadership, organisation and collaborative processes and practices, this research is quite timely, providing another perspective of organising music. By placing an ensemble into an organisational framework, organisations in fields outside music can see the correlating elements of business, humanity and creativity. Schiuma (2012) states that there is now a ‘need to develop new management systems that integrate traditional management approaches and tools with new methods for interpreting and solving business problems that fully take into account the human nature of business activities’ (p. 10). Studies of musical ensembles provide rich new information in regard to collaborative techniques, leadership, and management practices in an ever-changing, fluid environment. This study of unconventional ensembles and the challenges they face provides further

knowledge and understanding of collaborative practices that can be applied to solving business problems across a number of organisations.

9.4 Limitations of the research

The participants chosen for this research were selected for their experience in chamber music and so were established, professional musicians. The research, therefore, is reflective by nature, in that participants related stories of past practices and events, and the ensembles they belonged to had been established for some time. This was a deliberate sampling strategy because the view taken was that there was a breadth of experience amongst these musicians that could be drawn upon in the research. However, it did not take into account the experiences and perspectives of early careerists who are embarking on their career as musicians and experimenting with different elements. This posed some limitation on the research findings, as it was not representative of the broader population of chamber ensemble musicians. In another sense, however, the participants involved had at one time been early career musicians and many did relate experiences that were connected to the formative stages of their careers.

The participants were also from classical chamber ensembles, performing Western art music. Although this was a particular focus of the study, an investigation of groups from different genres (popular or folk), and cultures (non-Western musical cultures), would offer a broader analysis and comparison of different working methods and processes within ensembles that may provide perspectives not considered in the classical music genre. Furthermore, this research is based on the

perspectives of freelance chamber musicians and does not take into account those that work full-time with a small ensemble (however rare that may be), as ensembles of this type tend to be more mainstream or traditional, such as a string quartet. Thus, a limitation of this study is that it does not present the views of musicians who may devote all their attention to one particular ensemble.

There can be limitations in any research design but the choice of qualitative methods was believed to be most appropriate to the subject of the research. A focus group was used at the beginning of this research to establish further lines of questioning for the individual interviews. As this form of data collection is conducted in a group situation, there is the possibility of 'group think' or one member becoming more dominant than others, not allowing for an even contribution from other participants. Although special care was taken to avoid such situations, and I was there to act as moderator, ensuring the focus was on the topic questions and allowing the group to discuss in a manner they felt comfortable, information may have been limited and personal viewpoints may not have been fully expressed.

9.5 Future research

This current research sets the groundwork for a longitudinal study to gain further knowledge of what occurs when developing an identity as a chamber musician and the kinds of experiences encountered in different ensembles and contexts. It is felt that a longitudinal study would observe aspects brought forward by this research that would be revealed in more detail over time. Specifically, such a

study would likely illustrate how changes made by ensemble group members might affect the impact of external influences on ensembles and how these are managed in real time. In addition, such research might benefit from including musicians who are at the point of leaving tertiary education and moving throughout their early career towards establishing an ensemble. This would allow researchers to map the challenges and successes during different stages and investigate how a group approaches these during a significant proportion of the ensemble's lifespan. Taking into consideration the contextual influences presented here, conscious attempts could be made to lessen the negative impact of internal and external forces, by experimenting with different approaches and strategies.

An alternative arrangement would be to conduct a comparative research study between genres and cultures to see if any of the findings in this research complement or inform procedures of other groups. For example, the findings suggest there is less conflict of identity between individual musicians and the classical chamber music ensembles they are members of, compared to their professional peers who are members of indie, folk or popular music groups. Such research could build on the data from this study and possibly incorporate quantitative measures to conduct a larger survey of the field to see how many ensembles already implement some of the recommendations made in this research.

The role of the artistic director or leader of an ensemble invites further investigation because this seems to be a unique structure established within small

ensembles. Further examination of the leadership qualities, styles and approaches of people in this position would be worth undertaking. Investigating the duality of leader and ensemble member and the division of artistic and organisational activities could provide further engagement with organisational and leadership practices outside music. It was striking when reviewing the literature in the field and the transcripts of the interviews conducted that the term ‘artistic director’ was not necessarily universal; ‘artistic leader’ was the title most often used in Europe and the United Kingdom and ‘artistic director’ was more prevalent in Australia. This establishes an interesting discourse, and reveals much about how the person who carries the different titles see their position in regard to their responsibilities and attitudes towards others in an ensemble.

The organisational model developed by Cooksey (2003) through his research was used to inform ensemble processes and influences. Applying this allowed me to focus the analysis, deepen knowledge of the workings of chamber music ensembles and obtain a better understanding of how the information extracted could be used to enhance collaboration and teamwork within businesses outside music. Placing the skills, knowledge, and abilities of the participants within this framework emphasised how ensemble members develop strategies that allow them to work effectively together as a cohesive team. This information can inform leaders, project managers and collaborators of the importance of trust relationships, respect for professional skills and achievements, and the need for supporting communication strategies within their organisations.

9.6 Conclusion

This thesis has investigated the qualities and characteristics of individual chamber musicians, providing information about the musical and non-musical skills and personal choices made by these particular musicians. By isolating specific qualities they share such as their motivations, the enjoyment of working in a small ensemble, and the freedom to explore more musical opportunities, my research has resulted in providing a clearer picture of today's chamber musician, musical entrepreneur and portfolio careerist. Using the participants' personal journeys and experiences to discover ways of forming solutions to challenges they encounter as classical chamber musicians, this thesis looked at the external environment and organisational aspects as impacts on some of these challenges. The research demonstrated that these external or non-musical influences including funding, marketing, goal setting, and audience, affect ensembles as much as the internal dynamics, and are factors that must be taken into consideration when beginning or sustaining an ensemble. During the focus group session and the interviews, a number of participants stressed that they were running ensembles through trial and error, picking up ideas and suggestions along the way from more experienced musicians, and they openly described instances of failed attempts. Although many of the musical skills applied to music making were inherent – listening, reacting, pre-empting what a colleague is going to do – few had sat down to think about what they have done to create a prominent ensemble, or reflected on the inner workings of the ensemble, or considered how external forces can affect the group. *Going with the flow* or *having a go* attitudes had not always worked in the past for some, yet reflecting and learning more about the elements that could support

continued success as an ensemble musician was not something they typically considered.

The results of this research demonstrate that the unpredictable, changeable and competitive world these musicians delve into, and the culture of small ensemble performance, requires strategic thinking and the development of entrepreneurial skills, things that in some cases challenge a musician's identity. It reveals that musicians who embark on careers as chamber musicians are searching for a clear idea of structure: a schema that encompasses, shares and relates both artistic and organisational endeavours. Thus, by capturing firsthand experiences, this research provides evidence-based recommendations as to the ways that classical chamber music ensemble musicians may successfully navigate a career that is inherently complex, often stressful but ultimately personally rewarding, within a 21st century world and beyond.

Setting the solid groundwork towards further research of small ensemble practices, this thesis was an opportunity for the participating musicians to share their stories, their experiences, their challenges and advantages. It provided a springboard into the lives and worlds of unconventional or non-traditional chamber musicians and their ensembles. Taking these experiences and opinions, and looking through the lens of organisational strategy and behaviour, clear similarities are identified proving that an ensemble can be considered as a small to medium arts organisation. In organisational theory, the focus on humans as an essential part of the organisational culture, and the attention to ensuring values

and aims are shared to form a group identity, assist with collaborative and branding perspectives. The research demonstrates that developing a business, and maintaining musical integrity are two aspects that can be closely associated. This way of thinking also lends itself to using these more unusual ensemble types, where musical integrity is more often protected, as archetypes for business organisations that need to focus on the organisational community, and place the process before the product.

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Appendix A



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HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM TO: Dr Terrence Hays, Dr Eve Klein & Miss Alana Blackburn

School of Education

This is to advise you that the Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the following:

PROJECT TITLE:	Leadership and inter-individual decision making: how musicians develop a professional identity and maintain success within self-managing chamber music ensembles
APPROVAL No.:	HE14-283
COMMENCEMENT DATE:	01 November, 2014
APPROVAL VALID TO:	01 November, 2015
COMMENTS:	Nil. Conditions met in full

The Human Research Ethics Committee may grant approval for up to a maximum of three years. For approval periods greater than 12 months, researchers are required to submit an application for renewal at each twelve-month period. All researchers are required to submit a Final Report at the completion of their project. The Progress/Final Report Form is available at the following web address:
<http://www.une.edu.au/research/research-services/rdi/ethics/hre/hrec-forms>

The NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans requires that researchers must report immediately to the Human Research Ethics Committee anything that might affect ethical acceptance of the protocol. This includes adverse reactions of participants, proposed changes in the protocol, and any other unforeseen events that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

In issuing this approval number, it is required that all data and consent forms are stored in a secure location for a minimum period of five years. These documents may be required for compliance audit processes during that time. If the location at which data and documentation are retained is changed within that five year period, the Research Ethics Officer should be advised of the new location.



Jo-Ann Sozou
Secretary/Research Ethics Officer

15/10/2014

A14/23

Appendix B

CONSENT FORM for PARTICIPANTS

Research Project: Leadership and inter-individual decision making: how musicians develop a professional identity and maintain success within self-managing chamber music ensembles.

I, ..., have read the information contained in the Information Sheet for Participants and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. **YES/NO**

- I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I may withdraw at any time. **YES/NO**
- I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published using a pseudonym. **YES/NO**
- I agree that I may be quoted using a pseudonym. **YES/NO**
- I agree to the interview being audio recorded and transcribed. **YES/NO**
- I would like to receive a copy of the transcription of the interview. **YES/NO**
- I am older than 18 years of age. **YES/NO**

.....

Participant

Date

.....

Researcher

Date

Appendix C



Alana Blackburn
School of Education
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia
Phone 02 6773 2102
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INFORMATION SHEET for PARTICIPANTS

Dear

I wish to invite you to participate in my research project, described below.

My name is Alana Blackburn and I am conducting this research as part of my PhD in the School of Education at the University of New England. My supervisors are Dr. Terrence Hays and Dr. Eve Klein.

Research Project: Leadership and inter-individual decision making: how musicians develop a professional identity and maintain success within self-managing chamber music ensembles.

Aim of the Research: The research aims to explore and deepen our understanding about the experiences of self-managed chamber ensemble musicians in today's cultural environment, specifically, how is it that a small group of professional musicians can collectively be responsible for not only their own individual quality performance, but also the group's commitment to excellence towards delivering the final outcome as a whole. It will explore such areas as methods of communication, leadership style, decision-making and teamwork on both an interpretive (artistic) and professional (administrative) level that are employed to achieve a highly attuned, collaborative musical performance.

Interview: I would like to conduct a face-to-face interview with you at a convenient location for you. The interview will take approximately one hour. With your permission, I will make an audio recording of the interview to ensure that I accurately recall the information you provide. Following the interview, a transcript will be provided to you if you wish to see one.

Confidentiality: Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study will remain confidential. No individual will be identified by name in any publication of the results. All names will be replaced by pseudonyms; this will ensure that you are not identifiable.

Participation is voluntary: Please understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary and I respect your right to withdraw from the study at any time. You may discontinue the interview at any time without consequence and you do not

need to provide any explanation if you decide not to participate or withdraw at any time.

Questions: The interview questions will not be of a sensitive nature: rather they are general, aiming to enable us to create a discussion of the key issues around the success of self managing ensembles and creating a professional identity.

Use of information: I will use information from the interview as part of my doctoral thesis, which I expect to complete in June 2017. Information from the interview may also be used in journal articles and conference presentations before and after this date. At all times, I will safeguard your identity by presenting the information in way that will not allow you to be identified.

Upsetting issues: It is unlikely that this research will raise any personal or upsetting issues but if it does you may wish to contact your Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Storage of information: I will keep hardcopy recordings and notes of the interview in a locked cabinet at the researcher's office at the University of New England's School of Education. Any electronic data will be kept on a password protected computer in the same School. Only the research team will have access to the data.

Disposal of information: All the data collected in this research will be kept for a minimum of five years after successful submission of my thesis, after which it will be disposed of by deleting relevant computer files, and destroying or shredding hardcopy materials.

Approval: This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE14-283 Valid to 01/11/2015).

Contact details: Feel free to contact me with any questions about this research by email at ablackb3@myune.edu.au or by phone on 02 6773 2102.

You may also contact my supervisors. My Principal supervisor's name is Dr. Terrence Hays and he can be contacted at thays@une.edu.au and my Co-supervisors name is Dr. Eve Klein and she can be at eve.klein@une.edu.au or 02 6773 2622.

Complaints: Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the Research Ethics Officer at:

Research Services

University of New England

Armidale, NSW 2351

Tel: (02) 6773 3449 Fax: (02) 6773 3543

Email: ethics@une.edu.au

Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to further contact with you.

Regards,

Appendix D

Interview schedule for focus groups and semi-structured interviews

General information

- (i) General information about participants
 - Name, age, work experience
 - Musical education and general life experience of music
- (ii) What is your experience working in an ensemble?

Topic 1: Professional Identity

- (i) How have you developed a professional identity as a group?
 - a) Have you had to modify your individual professional identity? If so, how and why?
 - b) Based on your experience, what can you identify in yourself, between your individual identity and the ensemble's identity?
 - c) Do you change your approach when working with different musicians? How? Why do you think is necessary?

Topic 2: Social factors of working in a chamber ensemble

- (i) Interpretation is quite personal and highly individualised. How do you respond to conflicts of opinion?
- (ii) In what ways do you communicate to your co-performers?
 - a) in rehearsal
 - b) in performance
 - c) as feedback

Topic 3: Professional factors of working in an ensemble

- (i) How would you describe the ensemble process in terms of teamwork and leadership?
- (ii) Who takes on the administrative/managerial roles for the ensemble and how does the group decide this?
- (iii) When an ensemble is working 'at its best', how do you perceive the performance as a musician, how does the audience react?
- (iv) How do you define 'an ensemble working at its peak'? Can you provide personal examples?

Appendix E

Definitions of data codes

Age: References to issues concerning age. Age of ensemble, age of members, difference in ages and conflicting and complementary ages.

Art vs. money: Discussion around the purpose of creating music, whether it is as a creative outlet or for financial gain. The challenges associated with this.

Artistic Director: Mention of artistic director and description and interpretations of the role of the artistic director, including the relationship of the artistic director to the ensemble, and the members of the ensemble.

Artistic Freedom: The ability to explore repertoire, sounds and techniques. Discussion surrounding the creative autonomy of chamber music ensembles.

Artistic Integrity: Discussion surrounding the value and vision of a group in terms of its creative results. Creativity through the group as a source of individual artistic honour.

Artistic Output: Reflections on the productivity of an ensemble in regards to performance.

Arts Organisation: Reference to the ensemble as an arts organisation, business or enterprise.

Audience: Discussion surrounding the impact the audience has on the ensemble, the impact the ensemble has on an audience, audience demographics, and audience taste, development and maintaining and audience.

Branding: The use of branding in marketing and developing a group identity.

Budget: Discussion surrounding the need for budgeting, how it is effected by outside influences, as well as the impact on external budgets (such as government).

Chamber musician skills: The skills perceived by the participants as integral to being a chamber musician. These include musical, technical and business skills.

Collaboration: Refers to working creatively with other organisations, artists, co-performers and people from different fields.

Commitment: The self-investment of time and contribution to the group.

Communication: Ways of communicating including verbal and non-verbal in rehearsals and performances. Challenges of providing feedback, criticism, and praise. Communication from an audience.

Composer: References to the working relationship between ensembles, artists and composers. Discussion surrounding commissioning composers, composer fees, engaging composers to write for the group and working with composers.

Compromise: Situations where compromise is needed or could be considered. Techniques for accommodating differences of opinion, and the impact compromise has on an ensemble.

Conductor: Use or non-use of a conductor, the conductor's role, the relationship between conductor and ensemble and leader-follower situations within an orchestra.

Conflict: The impact conflict has on an ensemble, when it comes about, how it is resolved, negative cases where conflict has not been dealt with, and positive cases where conflict has been resolved.

Connections and networks: Professional connections between another organisation, ensemble or person. Participants discussed the value of creating networks with other artists and organisations for future planning of the ensemble.

Control: Includes instances of controlling behaviour, participants admission of controlling aspects of the ensemble (artistic and professional). Feelings of being in control and out of control in terms of managing members of the ensemble and decision-making.

Creative Process: Descriptions of the decision-making process of creating art, be it composing, programming, improvisation, experimentation, and including other art forms.

Cultural differences: Benefits and challenges of having members from different cultures and backgrounds within an ensemble. Shared experiences of different work ethics, priorities and beliefs impacting the ensemble.

Cultural Environment: Comments and experiences of the environment in which an ensemble may sit, this includes opinions of government policy, competition in the market, audience development and niche finding.

Decision Making: Understanding of decision-making, experiences of who makes the artistic decisions in the group and who decides aspects of organisation. Are tasks divided? Includes discussion surrounding aspects of leadership and democracy.

Division of labour: How are tasks divided? Concerns regarding the division of tasks, successfulness of labour division, different ways in which tasks are divided.

Early vs. Contemporary music: Accounts of similarities and differences between preparing early music and contemporary works. The similarities and differences in leadership and instrumental roles within these different fields. Includes especially participants experiences of both.

Education: Comments regarding the educational background of the participants and the effect this has had on forming an ensemble.

Ego: Self-admiration and the balance of egos within an ensemble. How ego impacts on the working relationships between members. Comments pertaining to personal ego in relation to a group environment.

Entitlement: Personal belief of entitlement towards the group. Participants experience of entitlement and descriptions of members feeling entitled.

Entrepreneur: Examples of entrepreneurial skills involved in ensemble management and behaviour. Interpretations of entrepreneurialism, identifying as an entrepreneur. The importance of entrepreneurial skills as a musician.

Experience: Comments regarding the background experience of performers in other groups, while training, and other experience (travel, recording, etc.)

Flexible Ensemble: Examples of ensembles that are flexible in their composition in terms of instruments and players. The effect this has on developing professional and personal relationships with co-performers and the advantages and disadvantages in regards to organisational behaviour.

Freelancing: Reference to musicians as ‘freelancers’ and the implications this has on the identity of a musician, the ensembles they perform in and setting priorities.

Frequency of performance: Comments regarding the amount of performance the ensemble engages in. Descriptions of reasons why the ensemble is/is not productive.

Future planning: Descriptions of future plans, as well as discussion of setting aims/goals/objectives and experiences related to how this is done within the group.

Geography: The effects of geographical location of players.

Goals/vision: Discussion and reflection of the aims of the group and how these are developed. The effect these have on the group and if they are used to form group identity.

Group dynamics: Experiences of positive and negative group dynamics and the factors that contribute to these. Group cohesion and how this is formed, understanding of individual differences and similarities that form a group and have an affect on its group identity and dynamics.

Group identity: Aspects that shape the group and separate it from others, including, relationship between the group’s name and its vision, interpretations

concerning what the group is about and what it does. Values and beliefs concerning the group as a whole.

Group size: Reference to group size and descriptions of group structures. Positive and negative cases concerning group size, decision-making and leadership.

Hierarchy: Experiences of hierarchy within a group including descriptions of hierarchy and whether it exists within the music, or the instrumental roles in particular groups.

Honesty: A contributing factor of group dynamics, leadership and communication. Feelings of honesty, experiences where honesty was not present, importance of honesty.

Inspiration: Comments referring to feelings of inspiration from other artists, co-performers, composers, and other ensembles. Experiences of group flow also evoke inspiration.

Instrumental Roles: References to different instruments and their role musically in an ensemble.

Leadership: Examples of orchestra and conductor, artistic directors, founders and co-founders, democratic leadership, different leadership styles, leader-follower situations and egalitarian groups.

Learning: Reports of ensemble playing as a learning experience, lifelong learning, developing skills otherwise not known. Comments relating to learning from others, including outside the ensemble, engaging in professional development opportunities.

Long-term vs. project work: Reflections, thoughts and opinions regarding working within an ensemble with the same personnel for a long period of time, or coming together for projects. The development of relationships, feelings of trust and professionalism.

Management: Management structures, references to executive board, agencies, and managers.

Membership: Flexible or stable membership of ensembles, related to **long term vs. project work** but includes discussion of the type of people.

Money: Impact money has on an ensemble; financial stability, making money, spending money, investment of money from members, and having financial security personally, while working as an ensemble musician.

Motivation: The effect this has on a group, where motivation comes from, personal motivation for chamber music, group motivation.

Musical background and education: Reference to musical background and musical education of members.

New or contemporary music: The influence this has on the rehearsal process, performance and audience.

Non-Western traditions: Examples of non-western ensembles and their traditions.

Opportunities: Experience of taking advantage of new opportunities, developing and creating opportunities and the results of these.

Orchestra: Reference to orchestras, orchestral structures, conductor-orchestra relationship. Comparison of orchestral and small ensemble behaviours, pros and cons of orchestral life.

Organisational aspects: All non-artistic aspects of an ensemble, the practical administrative side of running and ensemble.

Organisational structure: Descriptions of the structure of an ensemble in terms of hierarchy and management.

Ownership: A sense of belonging, a feel that as a participant they have a sense of partnership and a claim in the ensemble.

Performance: Descriptions and experiences of performance.

Personal identity: Descriptions, opinions and personal experience towards developing a professional identity. Personal descriptions of their musical self, motivations and inspirations towards being a chamber musician. Experiences that led to this decision or path.

Personal vs. professional relationships: Examples of challenges between personal and professional relationships, how these situations are handled, the influences of these relationships.

Personality of players: References to personal thoughts on personality (ego, identity), or the personality of others. How these affect the group dynamics and how they affect the relationships between members.

Portfolio career: Examples of portfolio careers. The skills and knowledge musicians possess, freelancing, multiple sources of income, varied projects.

Pride: Sense of pride established within the group, individual reasons for feeling pride, the impact of pride on one's individual identity, and of the group.

Priorities: Examples of good and bad setting of priorities. Opinions of conflicting priorities, feelings of mistrust. Work ethic, group understanding of priorities.

Professional/outside help or coaching: Examples where coaching and professional assistance has been used to help the group set goals, develop marketing strategies and give overall management guidance.

Professionalism: An aspect used to describe a characteristic of a good ensemble member.

Programming: Comments on programming, the process in which this is done, how it is devised and the communication, decision-making and negotiation strategies used. This also includes the emotional reaction of the audience, how the audience is taken into account when programming.

Rehearsals: Experiences of rehearsal processes, frequency of rehearsals, challenges associated with rehearsals in practical and social circumstances.

Relationships between players: Opinions of friendships, romantic relationships, and professional relationships and how experiences of the differences of relationship status affect the group dynamics.

Repertoire: The impact of repertoire, the importance of repertoire choice, audience reaction to certain repertoire. Repertoire as a factor of group identity.

Resentment: Feelings of resentment towards a leader or the ensemble.

Respect: Feelings of respect for other players, including their professional and technical skill and decision-making. Respect for the group and what it has achieved.

Responsibility: Examples of different levels of responsibility from playing to organisational tasks. Feelings of responsibility for artistic input and taking a share of the organisational aspects of the group. Opinions towards shared responsibility and inequality.

Risk: Financial risks, creative risks, musical risks and when and where these can be taken. Examples of risk taking and the affects of taking risks.

Self-investment or self-sacrifice: Opinions as to whether this is necessary, whether it is important to ask members to self-invest. Self-investment of time, money, resources and knowledge. Self-sacrifice includes working towards the 'greater good' of the ensemble rather than achieving individualistic goals.

Self-reflection: Accounts of self reflection during the creative process. Discovering different personal characteristics developed while working with others.

Shared interests: Explanation of shared musical interests including style, genre, period.

Shared values: Explanation of shared aims and goals for the group, shared beliefs, standards, ethics and artistic integrity.

Skills of players: Reference to player skill, expectations of players in groups.

Someone managing from outside: Examples of employing a manager external to the group.

Sponsorship and funding: Thoughts and experiences regarding sponsorship and funding. Opinions regarding the benefits and limitations of receiving financial assistance.

Stress: The causes of stress in rehearsal and performance. The impact stress has on the group including group stress and individual stress.

String quartet: References to string quartet as a comparative ensemble.

Teaching: Teaching as a form of income.

Teamwork: Group cohesion, forming a group, conflicts within an ensemble (personality, beliefs, understanding). Examples of group processes.

Technology: Descriptions of the use of technology, creatively and administratively. Includes use of internet, social media, transport and technology in performance. The impact this has and the benefits and challenges of using technology in all these areas.

Time: Examples of limitations of time in rehearsal and/or project work.

Trust: Feelings related to trust, trust towards the artistic director, other players and between ensembles. Trust as an important element in group work, effects of mistrust.

Understanding: Feelings related to understanding, understanding of members with different backgrounds, cultures, knowledge, and skill. Understanding of other players in terms of physical, emotional and cognitive limitations.

Unusual vs. conventional ensembles: Comparisons between traditional or conventional ensembles and those discussed by the participants termed unconventional or non-traditional.

Value: The value given to the ensemble, the creative output and the players.

Venue: Experiences of different venues, the impact a venue has on a performance.

Vocal opportunities: Discussion around performance and work opportunities for vocalists.