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Characteristics of Lifelong Musicians

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Music Education

by

Austin Farnam
Missouri State University
Bachelor of Jazz Performance, 2012

December 2016
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This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate causes for lifelong musicianship through examining the life experiences and influences of ten lifelong musicians. The participants in this study have played music starting in their childhood and into adulthood. Ages of participants range between 35 and 60 years of age. All participants have separate careers in conjunction with being active musicians.

Data collection was attained through a three phase process of an observation, interview, and collection of artifacts. Data was coded using open, focused, and axial coding and further analyzed for the purpose of identifying emerging themes. From the analysis, the researcher organized 14 themes focusing around life experiences and social factors that led to interviewees' lifelong participation in music. Common themes between participants include learning music by ear, engaging in music relating to participants on a personal level, and motivational factors for continued interest in music. The final chapter is a discussion section offering ways for educators and parents of young musicians to implement characteristics of lifelong musicianship.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents Cheryl and Troy, and my wife Natasha. You all are an integral part of why I am a musician. Without your love and support I would not be where I am today.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Background

“Man is a thinking organism possessing capabilities that provide him with some power of self-direction” (Bandura, 1977). Pinpointing exact rationale for the choices one makes is a highly complex endeavor. There are so many factors in every decision made. Decisions are in many cases a combination of conscious thought through the subliminal lens of our past experiences. Thus, a theoretical framework must look from an elevated view. When navigating an avenue of thought to understand factors that create lifelong musicians, there are two factors the process can be reduced to: influence & choice.

Factors involved in motivation and influence can come from a variety of sources (Bruenger, 2009). Rugutt & Chemosit (2009) stated that positive teacher-student interaction is highly influential in student motivation. Shumow, Schmidt, & Zaleski (2013) found that lack of teacher engagement with students resulted in a low level of interest in the subject being taught. Factors such as musical concept, musical ability, and family background in music are highly influential in determining participation in school music ensembles (Clements, 2002). It is reasonable to surmise that if teachers, parents, peers, and others are not engaged and supportive with a musician’s passions or interests that the motivation for continuation will, in many cases, eventually dissipate.

McCarthy (1980) declared that socioeconomic background was a factor in students’ choice to participate in school music ensembles. Liu, McMahon, & Watson (2015) stated that parents are a highly influential source on their children’s values and schemata for career choice. The researchers revealed themes of similarities between children’s and parents’ views of gender, importance of education, and principles for decision making in relation to career choice.

Definition of Terms

Before beginning with background information it is worthwhile to discuss some key terminology that will be used throughout the course of this document. Definitions discussed are intended to help the reader understand terminology that might be more commonly used amongst educators or musicians. The terms to be mentioned are intended to help the reader further identify with the research and its purpose. By having a more thorough understanding of the terms, the reader will glean a deeper understanding of how these terms connect to the background of the individuals interviewed.

Traditional education, traditional training, and traditional learning are defined in this document as music related instruction from a school such as a band program or private lessons where there is a clear separation between student and teacher. Traditional education consists of information that is shared on a consistent basis. An example of traditional education would be a student who participated in a public school band program during middle school. On the contrary non-traditional education, non-traditional training, and non-traditional learning is musical knowledge attained from people or environments outside of school. Some examples of non-traditional education could be peer led ensembles such as “garage-bands” or non-traditional encounters with more experienced musicians. Non-traditional learning could also be considered as a participant’s past experience at a concert or feeling inspired to learn an instrument from listening to an album.

The phrase “lifelong learner” will be used throughout this thesis both as a lifelong learner in music and a lifelong learner in the general sense. A lifelong learner is defined in this study as a person who continues to seek and attain knowledge and/or skills throughout their lifetime. A lifelong learner in music is a person that has been an active performing musician for at least ten

years. This number takes into account Gladwell's (1963) findings that one must practice approximately 10,000 hours to master a skill. The researcher does not assume that participants have undergone 10,000 hours of study but rather considers that it would take an average of ten years to gain this much experience. Ten years is merely a baseline figure to define what would begin to qualify as a lifelong learner in music. A true lifelong learner is not only a person who plays an instrument, but is also one who strives to better themselves at their craft. This could be through an exercise such as instrumental development in practice sessions, actively pursuing education such as private lessons, or a musician who performs regularly.

The title of this thesis states that the researcher is actively looking to find characteristics of lifelong learners in music (i.e. lifelong musicians). The researcher considers these characteristics to be influences and experiences more than qualities such as hard work and consistency. While the latter are necessary skills to attain mastery of a field of study they are not the sole purpose for research. Characteristics of interest include life experiences in music such as performances or accomplishments that foster a greater interest in music. The term "characteristics" also pertains to interviewees' personal experiences with influential people in their musical lives, such as their parents, peers, teachers, and other musicians. Also worth noting is the phrase "musical lives," which refers to any experience in an interviewees life that pertains to their musical experiences and development as a lifelong learner in music.

Problem Statement

Music educators must be tasked with finding new and creative ways to engage students in musical activity that is relevant to the student's life, interests, and the society in which they live (Kruse, 2014). Despite their best efforts and intentions, teachers can lessen student interest in a given field of study. The influence of parents and teachers alike can have a truly impactful effect

on the interests of a child (Brand, 1986). Regarding lifelong musicianship, the problems that exist are the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that cause students to lose interest in music participation all together. Bishop (2015) found that students quit orchestra after graduating from high school due to lack of motivation, peer influence, socioeconomic status, and self-perception of musical ability. The problem statement could be best summarized with the question: “How do we (teacher, parent, or other direct influence) engage one in their formative years so that they maintain active interest in musicianship after leaving compulsory education?”

Purpose of Study

One of the top priorities of a music educator is to have a strong and positive impact on our students through music. A goal of music education is that the time and effort invested by the teacher will be rewarded through producing students that will continue to engage in music-making or at the very least have a deeper understanding and appreciation for music. The process of teaching music can be nebulous at times. The purpose of this study is to find results that could answer how teachers can engage students to learn new material and skills at a high level while simultaneously maintaining their interest and fueling students’ passion for music?

The purpose of this study is to research participants who are identified as lifelong learners in music. The researcher aims to find themes that will qualify as tangible evidence supporting participants’ choices to be lifelong learners in music. Such evidence presents itself in various forms. Examples could be the presence of supportive people that influenced their musical lives, performances that deepened interest in musical engagement, experiences with other musicians, or experiences within traditional and non-traditional learning.

Through examining ten personal accounts, the researcher will study correlations between the participants and the social influence existing in their music-learning experiences. To further expound upon this idea the researcher will study how family, teachers, peers, and

other musicians influenced the interviewees' interest in music during their developmental years.

Results found by the researcher will hopefully further the understanding of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence people to continue musicianship throughout their lifetime through categorizing rationale associated with a strong passion for music in the form of emerging themes. The benefit of potential results found could help educators create classroom environments and relationships with students that are impactful and long lasting, and will help students find that lifelong learning in music is a worthwhile experience. For parents, potential results from this study are aimed to further the scope of how parental encouragement in music during a child's formative years can have long lasting impact into adulthood.

A sparse amount of documentation exists pertaining to musician rationale for becoming a lifelong learner in music. Many researchers have conducted studies on both professional and amateur lifelong musicians. Stokes (2000) interviewed 40 jazz musicians about their experiences with music growing up and their professional music careers. Antonelli (2015) interviewed 5 professional musicians to discuss life experiences and influences that lead them the development of their sound and ability to improvise at a high level. Other researchers have also studied amateur musicians, mostly participating in community bands, to assess rationale for participation, and influences related to their interest in music (Rohwer, 2005; Patterson, 1985; Sheldon, 1998). These researchers take into account a large quantity of participants. This study differs from the aforementioned studies by decreasing the number of participants in order to delve into greater detail so the researcher can analyze and share a more descriptive understanding. The researcher believes that results of these analyses aim not only to describe the most influential life experiences of each musician's life but why the experiences and the people involved were so influential.

This study differs from the previous research in that the researcher's goals are to find what influences and experiences in the musicians' lives are solely connected to their decision to become lifelong learners in music. The participants involved in this study are considered part-time musicians not for lack of talent, but merely for the reason that music is not their primary source of income.

The research presented is a study of musicians who play for the love of music only, rather than as a means of survival. These musicians come from diverse backgrounds. Through interviews and analysis the researcher hopes to offer information that will explain why these musicians have a passion for music and how these experiences can be imposed onto current and future music learners. As music educators, it is reasonable to assume that the primary goal is not to make every student the next musical prodigy. Instead, a satisfactory goal would be to produce students who are passionate about, or at the very least interested in, musical engagement of some form.

Through interviewing these musicians who grew up with different musical backgrounds, the researcher hopes to offer results that provide an array of insights as to how one becomes a lifelong learner in music.

Rationale

Understanding factors in an individual's choice to be a lifelong musician can help further the field of music education. These results could help further active student engagement in music by creating a deeper interest and appreciation for music. The findings from this research have the potential to help music educators find real world applications for their students to engage in musical activities that are meaningful and provides a positive impact.

Research Questions

The specific research questions guiding this study are:

1. What themes can be derived from a musician's life that leads them to lifelong engagement in music?
2. To what degree do parents, other family members, peers, teachers, and other musicians influence lifelong learning in music?

Limitations

The results of this study will be gathered through observation, interviews, and artifact collection of ten lifelong musicians. Due to the specific nature of this population, all interviewees are from a targeted population. It is worth noting that results may vary depending upon participants. All participants are Caucasian, middle aged males from the southern United States. Results are in no way intended to be interpreted as finite answers that generalize all musicians. Results may vary among the larger population and among various demographics.

Assumptions

This researcher assumes that all participants have honestly shared their life experiences and influences that are relevant to their background and musical lives.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

Mahoney and Thoresen (1972) wrote, “*A free person is one who guides and directs his own actions.*” Humans are constantly put to the task of making decisions. Our decisions are highly influenced by the intrinsic and extrinsic factors of our environment such as important people in our lives and impactful life experiences (Woody, 2004). Being aware of our environment, altering the environment to meet our needs, and programming our behavior are three ways of creating a world that will aid in a desired outcome. The key to accessing these three principles is through motivation (Macdonald, 1973). In this literature review, the researcher examines early influences on children, the psychology of lifelong learners, the psychology of musicians, and studies of professional and amateur musicians.

Early Influences on Children

Parental involvement is one the largest determining factors in whether a child will take to music or not (Yoon, 1997). A three-month study from Brock University was conducted on elementary students’ engagement with music in-and-out of the classroom. The researcher found that students couldn’t describe any clear connections between the music and musical activities learned in the classroom with musical activities learned outside the classroom. Practitioner suggestions included making parents a part of the curriculum-making process, allowing children to share music and musical experiences with each other, students keeping a music journal, and music teachers offering multiple occasions throughout the school year for children to talk about their musical interests and disinterests (Griffin, 2011).

Donald Mackinnon (1962) defines creativity as a brilliant idea that can be adaptive and developed to its full potential. Research conducted on creative architects found that most of them had parents who were highly supportive to their child’s needs for creativity and independence.

The researcher also found most of the families with “creative types” moved a lot and practiced emphasis on ethics more than traditional religion. A Strong Vocational Interest Bank was used to determine similarities between the subjects and professionals in other occupations. All creative subjects shared similar interests with musicians, psychologists, artists, lawyers, and journalists as opposed to other professions such as farmers, bankers, and office managers.

A student’s instructor can play a major role in their career decisions (Rickels, D., Council, K., Fredrickson, W., Hairston, M., Porter, A., & Schmidt, M., 2010). The researchers studied college music majors (n=228) to find what their biggest influences were in deciding to become a music education major. By the time participants were in High School, 77% of participants were already certain they would major in music education during college. The results showed that a love for music, influence from their instructor, and a passion to teach others how to play music were among the largest influences in participants’ decisions to become a music major.

Taylor (2009) interviewed male high school flutists (n=18) that qualified for Texas All-State performance ensembles to find out why they chose to play the flute. The flutists were initially attracted to the instrument’s timbre, the look of the instrument, or influence from friends who played the flute. Seventeen of the eighteen musicians participated in private music lessons. All participants said their biggest supporters were their parents. Nine of the eighteen participants went on to be music majors in college. All participants commented that they had an interest in continuing to play the flute recreationally after high school.

Boyle (1993) asked middle school band students (n=990) what their influences were for their instrument choice. 54% of respondents said that they had family members who played musical instruments. Participants responded that their influences from greatest to least were the sound of the chosen instrument, influence from middle school music teacher, influence from

parents, influence from friends, availability of instrument, size of instrument, influence from television, influence from elementary music teacher, cost of instrument, influence from other teachers, and influence from other sources. The results show a strong similarity between male and female influence behind instrument choice.

Giebelhausen (2015) interviewed three women about life-influences that led them to become musical composers. Family support, positive mentors, multiple experiences working as composers, and perseverance were common themes pulled from all three interviews. All interviewees exhibited interest in composing music at an early age through writing their own songs as well as transcribing other compositions on paper and their instrument.

Gorard & Selwyn (2005) found that parents (n=1001) have a profound impact on their children's level of achievement. The researchers stated that gender, ethnic background, geographic mobility, and family background are influential factors in lifelong learning. Among these factors, family background is one of the strongest determining variables in participation of life-long learning.

“Musical preferences change according to the age of the individual” (Schulten, 1987). Schulten studied high school students and adults to find differences in musical preference between the two groups. Overall results concurred that high school students explain musical preference in relation to finding their identity while adults' musical preferences relate to their past and various connections with specific genre preferences throughout their life. The researcher concluded that while age is not an independent variable for determining musical preference, time does indeed cause change in musical preference as ones' self-perceived identity develops.

Warnock (2009) studied middle school students (n=253) to determine factors associated with participation in band and choir (Warnock, 2009). Variables of the study included gender,

parental support, interest in music teacher, encouragement from friends participating in music, interest to participate in music, listening to music with parents, & encouragement from music teachers. Parental support was the largest determining factor in students' choice to participate in band or choir followed by students' interest to participate in music.

One hundred twenty students (ages 9-10 and 13-14) were surveyed for differences in musical involvement between home and school (Hargreaves, 2004). Forty-three percent of students said they preferred performing musical activities (singing & dancing) while listening to music at home, 40% listen to music while performing nonmusical activities at home, and 15% solely listen to music at home. While at school, 57% of students said they preferred performing musical activities (singing & dancing) while listening to music, 4% listen to music while performing nonmusical activities at school, and 33% solely listen to music at home. Hargreaves indicated that children's primary function of music listening at home is emotional while musical participation at school is focused on intellectual facets.

What Creates a Lifelong Learner?

The inception of lifelong learning comes from a learner's curiosity to find relevance and meaning of information in their own lives (Linn & Muilenburg, 1996). "Adult students are often self-directed, preferring to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their learning, and choosing educational pursuits relevant to their personal lives", (La Porte, 2004). Stickford (2003) interviewed three high school musicians that support these ideas of lifelong learning. Themes pulled from the interviews of these high school students' participatory experiences in the school music program were self-esteem, pride in accomplishment, intellectual curiosity and stimulation, individuality, belonging, and enjoyment.

MacNamara, Á., Holmes, P., & Collins, D. (2006) studied eight professional musicians to

identify and prescribe solutions to the challenges that arise as one develops a musical skill. Commonalities between the musicians were discovered. From an early age, all musicians accounted that they were self-motivated and that music gave them a sense of identity. As musicians grew in age and ability, they engaged in competition and a further dedication to practicing their craft. Participants in later years mentioned struggles with juggling music and their families, as well as financial obligations. However, a passion for music remained a relevant influence still for all participants.

In 2012 a survey of 107 high school students was conducted to gain insight the various levels of motivation of students in the music classroom (MacIntyre, P. D., Potter, G. K., & Burns, J. N. 2012). The researchers looked at the relationships between motivation and other elements of performance such as anxiety, attitude, support, and achievement. Overall achievement was lessened as anxiety increased. Students who were highly motivated through their teacher, peers, positive attitude, and/or environment consistently showed a higher level of dedication through their time practiced, a higher self-perceived competence, and achievement level.

Researchers who have studied high achievement musicians find many similarities between the backgrounds of professional musicians (Woody, 2004). All researchers agreed that musicians of this caliber are highly motivated. All musicians made mention that their parents were interested in music and engaged in musical recreation with their children such as concerts, listening to music at home, and getting their children involved in private lessons. All the musicians remember their first music teacher as warm and friendly. Encouragement from peers and peer musicians helped further motivate these musicians. All expert musicians remarked on having many opportunities to perform as well as many memories of parental encouragement.

Engaging students in-and-out of the classroom

Teachers play a highly influential role in the future success of students. While the goals of education remain the same as they always have, the methods for achieving the desired results are constantly changing (Pike, 2011). Deliberate practice is key to success in any field. The teacher must: set goals for students that are challenging, yet attainable; give critiques that are truthful, yet encouraging; and help to create a student academic culture that is rigorous, yet motivational.

Robinson (2012) conducted a study of music teachers in the U.K. by interviewing eight instructors about their experiences as self-taught instrumentalists and their transition into academia. The focus of the study was narrowed down between two teachers with similar backgrounds. Both teachers started music in band and quickly lost interest only to later regain interest in music as self-taught learners. Though the instructors had similar learning experiences, their teaching styles could not have been more opposing. Instructor A worked with children in a very similar fashion to his self-taught experiences such as learning by ear, playing along with recordings, and creating a fun learning environment for kids using music games. Instructor B reverted to a teaching style similar to his childhood band teacher. Instructor B even used the same method book he played in band that caused him to lose interest in the first place. The discussion that followed summed up the idea that the backgrounds of musicians do not have a predictable impact on their teaching strategies.

Hallam (2012) looked for effective practicing habits and their correlation to performance scores. Through studying beginner musicians through high school, the results indicated that success was not based on age, but practice strategy and aural framework. Students with a higher level of aural perception skills were able to more easily identify and resolve difficult sections of material during practice. Practitioner suggestions for educators were incorporating ways to instill

confidence and strong aural perception in students for increased success.

Parental influence, self-motivation, and overall value for content are three overarching considerations for true engagement in learning (McPherson, 2009). Aspects of expectations within the learner include perceived interest, importance, usefulness, difficulty, competence, and confidence (McPherson & Davidson, 2006).

Perez (2011) surveyed middle school students (n=329) and found that 80% of students' parents encouraged them to practice. Emerging themes for student influence included positive reinforcement, ego-oriented goals, having a proper space, and proper equipment. Perez also noted 20% of students either experience negative parental reinforcement while practicing or no parental encouragement to practice.

Psychology of Lifelong Learners

Adult learners are the primary focus of lifelong learning in the educational world (Gorges, 2015).

“Societally speaking adult education has been the most expanding sector of education the last few decades.”, (Salling Olesen & Weber, 2002).

Researchers conducted a study of adult learners taking an online English as a foreign language course. The researchers noted that learners' varied levels of metacognition in language learning effected their overall success and opinions of the class. As the level of metacognition varied in participants, there were correlating effects between the participants' abilities to self-manage and interactions with students and teachers (Fincham, 2015).

Cherner (2016) studied adult learners on their second attempt of an introductory technology course to research factors involved in the failure of their first attempt. Information was gathered through an interview process and an open-ended survey. Students reported that the instructor was a major reason for failure of the first course due to lack of instructor preparation and guidance.

Amador (2014) conducted a seven-month study on elderly adult learners in a Spanish as a second language course studying emotional and cognitive interactions of students. Participants reported in their interview that their rationale for taking the course was more for social and cultural knowledge than it was for learning the language. Another major theme that arose for taking the course was to maintain or improve cognitive function. Laughter was reported as a common reaction when there was difficulty with material. This is shown to differ from higher stakes courses with younger learners (Kurhila, 2006).

In a case study of adult learners, researchers looked for motivational factors involved with learning models that use technology (e-learning). In regards to technological motivation, learners found it beneficial to be able to access an array of information at their convenience. Major motivational factors for adult learners included usefulness of the information being taught in relation to finding employment and broadening life skills (Lowden, Jurkovic, & Mozelius, 2013).

Weber (2010) conducted a study on adult learners in Denmark. The researcher found that women reacted with more enthusiasm towards lifelong learning while men were less accepting unless it would directly benefit them through their career.

Psychology of Musicians

The director of admissions at the Peabody Conservatory of Music, David Lane (1988), wrote about his encounters with incoming music applicants who grapple with the question of why people choose to become music educators. Lane shows that many musicians, regardless of accomplishment level, have a difficult time explaining why they want a career in music. The author synthesizes that musical experiences connect with the musician on a social, interactive, emotional, and artistic level. Lane postulates that the ability to connect with music for the sake of the music itself is what attracts a person on a deeper subconscious level. Going into further detail

he explains music offers an avenue for social acceptance, love, joy, and respect during an essential and formative time in our early lives.

Rankin (2005) conducted a study of personality traits in rock musicians (n=74) and found characteristics that are distinguishably different from musicians in other genres. The rock musicians that were studied showed elevated levels of extraversion and self-esteem; this finding was contradictory with studies of musicians in other genres.

Garder (1955) studied outstanding high school musicians (n=279) and high school non-musicians (n=281). Garder found that music students participated in more after school clubs, won more awards, and were rated with academic achievement superior to the non-musicians. The researcher also explained that higher achieving musicians rank higher in the previously mentioned categories than lesser musicians.

Over time, personality traits tied to a specific gender have dissolved (Kemp, 1982). The conclusion states that people who are more “*psychologically androgynous*” have a broader range of temperaments, which is conducive for success in music.

Professional & Amateur Musicians

Rohwer (2005) recorded practice habits of 3 adult beginning musicians. All 3 musicians were part of a community band working on music for a performance. All three adults displayed a high level of dedication and concentration during their practice sessions. Despite having other interests the musicians showed a commitment to playing their performance repertoire successfully and continually worked to achieve as few errors as possible.

Sheldon (1998) surveyed 165 community band musicians and found that 60% of the participants had no family members that played musical instruments. Practice times ranged greatly throughout participants. Only 7% of participants reported involvement with private

lessons. Participants' rationale for making time to participate in an ensemble were that music is fun, music reduces stress from work, music is a hobby, and the community band was an opportunity to make friends.

Community bands provide a medium for lifelong participation in music (Patterson, 1985). Patterson (1985) surveyed 9 community bands in the Massachusetts area discovering that most participants had continued education past high school. Most participants had taken private lessons and played an additional instrument. A majority of the participants rated their high school and college music instructors as only slightly influential while participation in ensembles like marching band and jazz band were regarded as having a positive influence in their continuation of music.

Chapter III: Methodology

This chapter will discuss the epistemology, theoretical framework, and overall methodology used during this study for retrieval and analysis of data collected from participants. Details pertaining to the data collection process as well as the participants interviewed can be found in this chapter. Processes for research approval and steps to ensure participant confidentiality are discussed in detail.

The researcher chose 10 participants through targeted recruitment. While all participants fall into the category of lifelong learners in music, each participant was chosen for their unique background. Details about interviewees can be found in the “participants” section of Chapter 3. Data was gathered through observations, interviews, and collecting artifacts and coded using open, focused, and axial coding.

Qualitative Research

The researcher chose to utilize a qualitative research design. Through the process of observations, interviews, and collection of artifacts the researcher was able to better develop ideas and insights. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggest,

“The word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on the processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry.” (p.8).

The results offered from a qualitative design are meant to gain further understanding while still considering that the results are not finite or by any means the only answer to a problem. Qualitative data is gathered, interpreted, and presented from the researcher’s point of view. The researcher believes it is important to recognize this fact as this is part of qualitative research. Qualitative research can be inhibited as internal and external factors alter the views of the

researcher and the subject (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

In order to research and analyze the thoughts, beliefs, and backgrounds of the ten participants interviewed, an interview and content analysis method was deemed the most applicable avenue for understanding potential similarities between participants. As Glesne (1992) states, “qualitative inquiry is a search that leads into others’ lives”. A content analysis method was used to analyze data and produce any themes that emerged. According to Berelson (1952) content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.

Another qualitative method utilized in this study was an interview method. An interview method was chosen to help the researcher understand and decipher the meaning of subjects’ life experience in music. Interpreting participants’ factual information as well as the emotional connection to their experiences were taken into consideration by the researcher. Kvale (1996) suggests a qualitative research interview seeks to cover both a factual and a meaning level, though it is usually more difficult to interview on a meaning level. The interview method is particularly helpful in weaving together a story of an interviewee’s experiences as well as their opinions of those experiences. As suggested by McNamara (1999), each participant in this study began the interview process with a brief verbal survey that helped the researcher further investigate specific details of each participant’s life.

Epistemology

For purposes of this study the researcher chose to conduct research through a constructivist viewpoint; specifically social constructivism. Constructivism approaches information through the lens of constructs of knowledge in relation to human perception and experience (Flick, Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004). “Constructivism is a theory about knowledge and

learning; it describes both what knowing is and how one “comes to know.” (Fosnot, 1996).

An advocate of the constructivist viewpoint, John Dewey, believed that the constructivist approach to education was that learning should be grounded in real-life experiences that would guide comprehension of knowledge through a practical experience (UCD, 2016)

This ideology applies to music in an almost inseparable manner. In order for music to be made and for new information to be understood, one must learn the physical skill to be performed on their instrument. Student performances offer real-world application or “direct-living” as it was stated by Dewey. Students participating in ensembles such as a school band program also learn through social influence from peers and teachers (Sichivitsa, 2007).

Before continuing rationale for social constructivism, the researcher believes it is necessary to differentiate between two opposing theories on constructivism: Jean Piaget’s theory of cognitive constructivism and Lev Vygotsky’s theory of social constructivism. Piaget focuses on the idea that knowledge is constructed through experience that is separate from one’s social environment (Piaget, 1973). Vygotsky’s beliefs differed in that he theorized knowledge could not be separated from its social context (Vygotsky, 1978).

Social constructivism hinges itself on collaborative learning through direct influence of a learner’s social interactions and experiences (Overall,2007). Vygotsky believed that the location and setting in which a person grows up has a central role in their development. The researcher chose social constructivism for an epistemological view because of its natural connection with music, the creative process, and the value of social influence in all art forms (Lett, 2014).

Collaborative learning is a staple of social constructivism. As Vygotsky’s work became translated and popularized during the late 1970s the world of education began to focus on the adult’s role in child development as well as social influence factors.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher chose Wenger's Community of Practice as a theoretical framework for this research. Wenger joins the idea of "community" or doing with "practice" which refers to a group of individuals who share a common place in both historical and social contexts. A community of individuals can be created through joint enterprise, mutual engagement, and shared repertoire. "[Practice] exists because people are engaged in actions whose meaning they negotiate with one another." (Wenger, 2008, p.73).

The music community as a whole is a perfect example of a community of practice. While there are several sub categories, the music community is a community of practice. It consists of a group of people with a like-minded interest in music and improving music on an individual level and as a unit. Those who enter the community learn from and are influenced by those who are already active participants in this community of practice. Wenger describes this process as follows:

"Communities of practice reproduce their membership in the same way that they came about in the first place. They share their competence with new generations through a version of the same process by which they develop. Special measures may be taken to open up the practices to newcomers, but the process of learning is not essentially different (2008, p. 102).

Wenger attributes participant interaction as something that is socially organized within a group and social construction of individuals through identity formation. Wegner thinks of both the social and the individual constructs as inseparable in the context of learning (p.12). Wenger's (2008) theory offers a great framework for studying the characteristics of lifelong musicians. A community of practice is a constantly evolving collective that is perpetuated by the participation and engagement of both old and new members in a common interest. For the purpose of this study, the community of practice theory works well in the context of lifelong musicianship and the social constructs within this community.

Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness of qualitative research, it is a primary goal of the researcher to reflect the subjects being studied rather than mirroring biases of the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 1990). Early writing was a primary form of recording data used during the observational phase of data collection. To attain the clearest account of events as they unfold, the researcher used a digital recorder to make observational notes. Wolcott (1929) suggests recording data during or soon after the event to ensure the least skewed interpretation of observation. The researcher observed, interviewed, and studied artifacts from multiple musicians. To ensure validity, the researcher used the aforementioned components to triangulate information gathered and report findings.

Triangulation

Triangulation was the primary procedure for collection of data. Triangulation in research is the ability to pinpoint an objects position using multiple reference points (Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, Creswell, 2005). Using multiple data sources, the researcher was able to better understand and formulate supportive evidence for lifelong musicianship in participants. The researcher collected evidence from qualitative and quantitative information that provided three points of data collection. The process of triangulation will gather evidence through observations, interviews, and collection of artifacts. Using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative evidence helped to create a partnership of evidence where one method of data collection informed the other (Greene, Caracelli, Graham, 1989).

Procedures & Data Collection

Methods for collecting qualitative data occurred in three phases: observations, interviews, and artifacts. The research method chosen was interviews through a qualitative research design

with emergent themes. Interviews were conducted with the intent of understanding the ethnography of participants. Through the process of triangulation, data collected was gathered then coded using open, focused, and axial coding based in grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006).

Observations

All ten interviewees were observed in a live performance setting. Observations were conducted for each of the ten interviewees. Observations were essential to learning more about each participant. The researcher's observations of participants' behavior and musical interaction offered additional insight that was helpful during both the interview and analysis process. The researcher's notes from observations can be found in Appendix A.

Interviews

Phase two of data collection was a one-on-one interview of participants. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for data collection and further analysis. Transcripts were a helpful resource for gathering themes from interviewees. A copy of interview transcripts can be found in Appendix B. Interviews were semi-structured beginning with a survey covering basic information such as age, primary instrument, a series of yes or no questions, and a Likert scale for rating musical influence from various sources. A copy of this survey can be found in Appendix D. Following participants' completion of the survey a typical open response interview was conducted with each participant. Interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 90 minutes. Interviewees were all asked the same series of questions, however, timelines were varied based on the amount of detail given by each participant. Interview questions were ethnographic in nature as the interview questions reflected descriptive, structural, and contrast questions (Spradley, 1979). By addressing these types of questions, the researcher could further his or her understanding of a subject's background, viewpoints, and day-to-day life. The focus of the

interview questions was to have a detailed understanding of each interviewee. Charmaz (2006) suggests that grounded theory ethnography should focus on the process or phenomenon studied, as opposed to the setting in which it occurs. Questions pertained to participant's family, social, and musical background in relation to their experiences and influences as musicians. A full list of the interview questions can be found in Appendix E.

Artifacts

To further the researcher's understanding and depth of background knowledge of each interviewee, phase three consisted of gathering artifacts. Artifacts were gathered through listening to recordings of participants as well as watching video of participant performances and interviews. Through these artifacts the researcher gained further insight into participant's interview responses. Artifacts can be found in Appendix C.

Coding

Coding was formatted to standards of grounded theory utilizing open, focused, and axial coding (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher studied recordings and transcriptions of the interviews in conjunction with observations and artifacts to gather commonalities and recurring themes of each participant. Through the process of abstraction (Robson, 1993), categories were created that became clearly relevant to the research topic. As themes emerged from the interviews, they were categorized and finally connected to other participants with similar responses. The process of coding information is described by Charmaz (2006):

“During the process of open coding, concepts, categories, and properties were developed. Where open codes are literal, focused coding is conceptual. Focus coding encouraged the researcher to look to the broader picture. Axial coding involved the researcher selecting on of the categories or themes identified during open coding and labeling it a central phenomenon.”

Once codes were identified, they were examined and developed into themes that help to

identify answers to the problem statement.

Charmaz states, “Coding routes your work in an analytic direction while you are in the early stages of research” (p.44). The coding process helps to further the researcher’s understanding of data collected and also helps to focus the interpretation of consequent data.

The first step in coding was through the use of open coding. The researcher examined all documents line by line (Charmaz, 2006). The next step in coding was focused coding. This step allowed the researcher to sort important data into categories that were relevant to the problem statement. The last step was axial coding where the researcher made new connections between categories and the interviewees. The results of these efforts culminated with concise terms that identify each theme relating to lifelong musicianship.

Institutional Review Board, Rights and Permissions, Subject Protection

Approval of the researcher’s request to conduct interviews was granted on 9/8/16 by the University of Arkansas Institutional Review Board (see Appendix F). It was the researcher’s goal to protect the identity of all participants in this study. To uphold anonymity and to respect confidentiality of participants, the use of a pseudonym was applied for participants. While participants’ occupations were relevant to the research, a pseudonym was also chosen for participants’ locations in order to obscure the identity of all interviewees. Each participant was required to sign an informed consent form to release data for use in this research. (see Appendix G). The researcher did all that was possible to protect participants’ identities to the full extent of state and federal laws.

Participants

Participant A is a 49-year-old guitarist from Monticello, Mississippi. He has a long history playing in cover bands since the age of 16 to present. Participant A also owned a recording

studio for many years and a screen printing business which he still owns today. Participant A currently plays in one cover/original band as a guitarist and backup vocalist.

Participant B is a 51-year-old bassist from Mountain Home, Arkansas. He has been played several instruments such as guitar, tuba, and bass in school band as well as original and cover bands since the age of 13. Participant B current plays in two cover/original bands. The music they play is described as American roots rock music and the other group is a heavy rock band. Other than playing music, participant B works in a shirt shop as a primary source of income.

Participant C is a 60-year-old guitarist from Earle, Arkansas. He is a retired chemist and has been playing music since the age of 11. Participant C was a saxophonist in school band, as well as an accomplished athlete in high school and college. Participant C now spends much of his time practicing guitar and learning music for the acoustic rock band he plays with. Participant C's primary musical influences are classic rock and American roots music.

Participant D is a 52-year-old singer/guitarist from Little Rock Arkansas. He is a hair stylist. He has been singing since the age of 5 and playing guitar since the age of 13. Participant D had stints in his musical career on the professional level. He currently plays in an acoustic rock band. Participant D's primary musical influences are classic rock and American roots music.

Participant E is a 50-year-old percussionist from Mountain Home Arkansas. He is a radiologist, and has been playing percussion since the age of 10. Participant E played in school band programs from middle school through high school. Participant E also had siblings who were musical, specifically percussionists. Participant E's primary musical influence is Soul music.

Participant F is a 40-year-old guitarist from Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Participant F is a private music instructor and manager for a music store. He started playing guitar at the age of 13. He

participated in choir through middle, junior high, and high school but was never involved in a band program until college where he pursued a degree in music performance. Participant F's primary genre of music is Jazz.

Participant G is a 56-year-old singer and guitarist from Illinois. Participant G is a handyman as well as a private guitar instructor. He began playing music at the age of 6. Participant G was involved in high school band, as well as sports. Participant G's primary form of music is classic rock and original rock music.

Participant H is a 55-year-old percussionist from Wichita Kansas. He is an acoustical engineer. Participant H has been playing music since the age of 6. Participant H played in school band programs from middle school through his junior year of high school. Participant H was also involved in college music ensembles as a non-music major. Participant H's primary musical influence is jazz.

Participant I is a 60-year-old drummer from Wichita, Kansas. He is a retired journalist and current entrepreneur. Participant I has been playing music since the age of 3. He took private lessons and was a member of his school band program from 8th-11th grade. Participant I's father was a professional jazz drummer. Participant I's primary musical influence is Jazz.

Participant J is a 35-year-old trumpet player and instrument repair technician from Little Rock, Arkansas. Participant J played in school band programs from elementary school through high school. Participant J continued music in college as a music performance major. Participant J's primary musical influences include Jazz and Soul.

Chapter IV: Results

Results were recorded and organized through analysis of interviews with supporting evidence acquired through observations and analysis of artifacts. The results culminated in the form of fourteen themes found between participants. Chapter IV will discuss the results for individual participants and be followed by a list of each theme with descriptive statistics and informative quotes. Through the process of open, focused, and axial coding of the data, 14 themes emerged from the informants. Table A represents a list of each theme, as well as which participants were included within each theme. Table B is a record of the interviewee, date, location, and method for each interview.

Interviewees

Participant A

Growing up, he spent a lot of time listening to music from his sister's record collection. "I remember listening to things like, you know the Eagles, the Doobie Brothers and things like that. [My sister] had the KISS live record and I remember looking at [the album cover] and thinking yeah that's what I want to do." Participant A was a member of his school band for one year before quitting. He was not interested in the music the school was playing. "It just wasn't rock and roll." Participant A's mother worked from home and sang in a performing gospel quartet. His father was a pharmacist. In participant A's early college years, he was planning to follow in his father's footsteps, but his passion for music outgrew his interest for pharmacy school. "I can remember when we were really playing a lot of music and the dean of pharmacy called me and I remember him saying 'Chris, you need to decide if you are going to continue playing music or if you're going to become a pharmacist.' I said I think 'I'm going to play music. The school stuff is too tough for me.'" Participant A met a major musical influence early

on in college. He spoke very highly of this musician (John). John was a talented musician and had a lot of knowledge of rock and roll, as well as the underground music of the time. John currently plays in a highly successful band and remains a major influence to participant A to this day. Throughout his lifetime, participant A has played in many rock and roll bands and run a recording studio fulltime as an engineer. He said his largest supporter throughout his engagements in music has been his wife. He claimed to have no recollections of anyone discouraging him from music in his formative years. He attributes much of his interest in music to playing in rock and roll bands with peers during his high school and college years. Based on analysis of participant A's interview, he was placed in 13 of the 14 themes derived from this study. Participant A was not included in theme 14 due to his lack of experience with traditional music ensembles.

Participant B

One of his earliest memories of music capturing his attention were being able to play a recorder for the first time in elementary school.

“You know, just that little recorder you know, I would like take it home and learn songs that I heard on the radio by ear. That was inspiring! A simple instrument made me want to become a much more complex musician.”

Beginning at the age of ten, participant B began learning the guitar. He took three private lessons and quit due to a lack of interest in the music that was being taught.

“I took three lessons and realized that lessons weren't the way I was going to learn. Because I'm not being taught what I want to learn. That's pretty important right there. That's a big one!”

Participant B was a member of his school's band program from middle school through his senior year of high school. He was highly invested and influence by his music teacher. He had a particular interest in his music theory class and found it to be very useful to him as a

musician.

“My band directors were influential big-time...just encouraging me and keeping me going. They never discouraged me. They knew my potential and if I didn’t meet their expectation... they would let me know. They weren’t relentless cracking the whip or anything like that. It was more encouraging than anything.”

Participant B played in non-traditional ensembles throughout his compulsory education in the form of rock bands. Towards his senior year of high school, he became more interested in the rock bands than school band.

“I just knew to myself that I would end up going to college and I would end up teaching middle school band or something and that was just something I didn’t want to do. I didn’t want to. I wanted to keep playing music I didn’t want to teach it. I mean I figured I could teach it and play at the same time but I figured if I was a band director I wouldn’t play anymore.”

It wasn’t until the end of his high school career that participant B got his first bass guitar (his current primary instrument).

“You know I finally got a bass- in lieu of a class ring I got a bass (laughter). My mom was like “Well, did you choose your class ring?”. I was like no mom I want a bass. She was like okay that makes more sense (laughter). I was just ate up with [music]. I still am.”

Throughout the interview participant B showed a deep and incredibly emotional attachment to music. During the interview he stated how music is one of the most important things in his life. His drive and passion for music was very apparent in speaking with him and watching him perform. Based on analysis of participant B’s interview, he was placed in all 14 themes derived from this study.

Participant C

Participant C grew up in a very musically inclined household. His mother played the piano and sang in church and his father was a highly skilled harmonica and piano player. Participant C’s primary instrument is guitar. From a very young age he was attracted to the

sound of the guitar. He began playing the guitar at the age of eleven. Not long before or after he began the guitar, he was taken to a Beatles concert.

“I can’t remember if it was before or after [I began playing guitar] but I can definitely say that concert was the catalyst that made me and lots of other folks want to play. It definitely peaked my interest for sure.”

Participant C’s biggest musical influence was his father. “He was very supportive. He was always going to dish out the compliments. Looking back... he would give compliments probably even if I didn’t deserve them. He would overdo it with the compliments, sometimes, you know, because he was trying to encourage me, and it worked.” Participant C played the saxophone in a traditional band program for six years until his junior year of high school. He also played the saxophone in a dance band with his peers during high school. Participant C stopped playing saxophone in the 11th grade. He was active in athletics, and the football coach forced him and several others to make a decision between football or music.

“They pulled us in there one by one and asked do you want to play football or do you want to play in the band? Looking back... it was probably one of the saddest days of my life. Because I chose football because... well... peer pressure. So I had to give up the band in the fall of my 11th grade year. I called that the day the music died.”

When participant C intended to become a chemist his involvement in music decreased for a couple of years but he still remained active to some degree. “You know I played guitar around the dorm but it was all in a casual setting... it was nothing serious.” As he began his career he has played in several rock and American roots ensembles which he is still actively performing with. As a retiree, participant C spends most of his time practicing his guitar by listening to songs and learning by ear. Although much of his practice time is spent in this manner, he stressed the importance of his traditional music education during compulsory education. “I feel like my traditional training on saxophone was very helpful in teaching me how to reach a high level of proficiency.” Based on analysis of participant C’s interview, he was placed in 13 of the

14 themes derived from this study. Participant C was not included in Theme 11 due to the discouraging encounter with his athletics coach.

Participant D

Participant D had a background somewhat unique to the rest of the group. He was the only participant to be completely taught by ear. His earliest memories of music were listening to records with his brother and trying to memorize all the words before his father did. His father was a bassist and singer. There was a lot of music played in the household. Participant D is primarily a singer but he is also a guitarist. The location he grew up in was rural. He spent most of his adolescence growing up in the country learning to play the guitar and sing with his brother.

“Me and my brother... That was all we had. We just had all these records and we would learn to play all the songs on them together.” Participant D mentioned his parents were to some extent hippies and very encouraging towards anything he and his brother did that was creative or artistic. “It gave me the ability to listen to whatever kind of music I liked. If it was the Beatles, they weren’t like oh my god you can’t listen to that. It was a big musical era. There weren’t video games and things like that. It was all music.”

Although participant D received extremely limited traditional training. He did describe his experiences in general music and a short stint in choir as “boring” due to his lack of interest in the music being played. One of his only memories from his choir experience was singing a Beatles song. From a young age, many of participant D’s peers were attracted to the quality of his singing. He was always the first to be offered a spot in his peers’ rock bands. As he began to perform, he felt inspired by the praise he received for his talent.

“Our parents would have these big parties down on the river at the farm. All these people would come over and we would have big guitar parties. That’s when I started to realize you can get attention for this and I started playing all the time.”

Participant D has played in many rock bands throughout his life. He described playing music with other musicians as a very fortunate and eye opening experience. When asked if he

remembered his first experience playing in a band with other peers he simply responded with “Oh yeah. That’s the only reason you do it isn’t it?” A couple of bands were signed to record labels that afforded him some great musical experiences. When the brink of fame and fortune in music fell through, he found himself very discouraged.

“For [my band] either people [were] being greedy or the timing was wrong. We got signed, we had a pretty good band, played some big shows, and did some cool things... so I was about 24 and then after a bit of time... I was probably 29 or 30 when we started the second band.”

A similar scenario happened with the second band causing another extended period of time where participant D did not pursue music. Repetitively, he found himself coming back to music.

“I honestly get depressed if I don’t do it. It’s kind of like medication. [Music] is the only thing I think I do really really good. I was never really good at anything but playing music. It’s the only thing. I don’t know why. A lot of people are good at a lot of things but I’m just not.”

Currently, participant D is part of an American roots band that plays acoustic covers of songs from the 60’s to the present, including some original music as well. Based on analysis of participant D’s interview, he was placed in 13 of the 14 themes derived from this study.

Participant D was excluded from theme 14 due to his lack of participation in traditional music training.

Participant E

Participant E’s biggest musical inspiration was his older brother. One of his first memories of music capturing his attention was listening to a drum feature in his brother’s high school marching band. Participant E grew up listening to his brother’s records and playing his drums. He never took a traditional lesson on a drum set.

“I don’t remember anybody showing me what to do. I probably watched [my brother play drums] but, the way I learned predominantly was by putting on headphones and putting on music and playing along.”

Participant E also participated in his junior high and high school band program as a percussionist. He spoke very positively of his school band experience.

“Well, I wouldn’t want to do without either [traditional or non-traditional] but as far as bang for your buck, as far as what you can accomplish, I think that traditional training is probably much more beneficial. I feel like I could be a much better drummer if I had drum lessons from a professional drummer but I’m somewhat reluctant to do that because I like the fact that I for the most part get to do it on my own as well as listening to other people.”

Along with his brother, participant E mentioned his band director as a large influence in his music life. He said his director was stern and let students know when they weren’t meeting expectations, but he was passionate and brought out the very best in his students. Participant E also had a rock and roll band he participated in with peers from junior high through high school. Upon entering college and eventually in medical school, he became less involved with music. There were times during medical school where he would play in a bands with other medical school students but it was short lived. It wasn’t until he began his career as a radiologist that he began to revive his passion for music. A typical practice session for participant E occurs two to three times a week and is followed by consistent performance opportunities on the weekends. His primary purpose for continuing music is to engage in performance opportunities for live audiences. “Primarily for me, I enjoy the act of making a piece of art live with other people. I enjoy the act of making music.” Based on analysis of participant E’s interview, he was placed in all 14 themes derived from this study.

Participant F

Participant F’s current musical influences are Jazz and Classical music. This is interesting because he was the first of the interviewees to have a preference for these genres and his parents were also Jazz and Classical music fans during his formative years. Participant F mentioned his dad taking him to see classical guitar concerts and as well as seeing Jazz artist Dave Brubeck.

His parents were also into popular music of the time such as Simon and Garfunkel, Roy Orbison, Ray Charles, and Super Tramp. Many of participant F's first memories were related to music.

Guitarist, Eddie Van Halen was a major influence in participant F's interest for guitar.

“For me it was all about the fact that [Eddie Van Halen] seemed like he was having the time of his life, and I wanted to have as much fun as him. I just thought if that's what it's like to play music, then I want to do that.”

Participant F is an extremely dedicated musician. He practices for many hours almost every day and has multiple performances every week. I hypothesize this has to do with his type A personality, as well as his yearning for opportunities to engage in music. He mentioned many failed attempts at convincing his parents to get him a guitar before he finally succeeded in convincing them.

“I was 13 years old and it was like all of a sudden I had a direction for my life. I had something to focus on. I was crazy with it. Really kind of still am. Fascinated with the guitar and all the stunts and stuff you can do with it.”

He also had many failed attempts at starting a peer lead ensemble until he got to college. His time spent as a music major was a truly blossoming period for him as a musician.

“I thought if I could do music full time I could actually make it through college. I thought it would make my parents happy. If I have a choice between studying music and studying anything else and I've got to be here anyway then I'm definitely going to study music. There was like no other way.”

Participant F stressed the importance of traditional and non-traditional musicianship. Upon entering college, he couldn't read music. “When I got into college and I started music programs and I couldn't read music at all. It was hard.” On the first day of class his professor handed everyone an assessment sheet.

“I literally wrote my name on it and gave it back to him. I seriously knew nothing. I had to bust my ass that first semester just to get the knowledge that everyone else came in with.”

By the end of the semester he received an A for the class. This story shows participant F's dedication and passion for music as well as his experience with both traditional and non-traditional music education. Based on analysis of participant F's interview, he was placed in all 14 themes derived from this study.

Participant G

Participant G's childhood was spent under the musical influence of his grandfather. His grandfather was an accomplished jazz drummer and vocalist that had a large impact on participant G's interest in music. Participant G desired to learn the drum set. He took private lessons for three years. He told a story of how he would run to every lesson so he could get to playing the drum set faster. When I asked how influential participant G's teacher was, I was surprised to hear that he was not considered an influence to participant G. His pure interest for lessons was to get the opportunity to play on a full rock and roll on a drum set. "Oh yeah, it was great, I got to play on a full Ludwig kit, and he was obviously into rock and roll and I was like okay this is cool."

Participant G played in several rock bands as a bassist and a singer. He also played tuba in middle school, junior high, and high school band. All of participant G's siblings were also involved in the school band program as well as various sports. Participant G's parents were music lovers. The center piece of their living room, as he recalls, was a large stereo system, and his parents would play music in the house all of the time. He eventually gave up band for sports. His reasoning was that he didn't like the band director and he was more interested in playing bass in a rock band. Participant G took a job at general motors straight out of high school so he could have a steady income while pursuing music. He made several attempts at making a full time career as a musician with some degree of success. There were three bands he performed in

that eventually fell through due to issues within the group. All three were rock bands. Based on analysis of participant G's interview, he was placed in all 14 themes derived from this study.

Participant H

Participant H spends a good deal of time discussing his early passion for music and the support system set in place by his parents and teachers from an early age. Participant H began playing the drums at the age of 6.

“Yeah, although they weren't musical, they were very supportive of me. It was obvious that [music] was what I wanted to do and they were supportive of it and encouraging you know of... you know taking me to drum corps practice twice a week and private lessons and all that stuff.”

Participant H also spent a great deal of time talking about how his teachers in junior high and high school had him focus on the fundamentals of percussion, and how learning those skills were essential to his musicianship today.

“Like I said, my first teachers were drum corps guys and I was fortunate, I believe, to have that as my first exposure and you know educational experience to get a really strong rudimental background and just snare drumming, you know.”

All influential teachers in participant H's life were mentioned for their abilities as great musicians and teachers that engaged participant H in activities and skill development relevant to his interests in music. Participant H spoke of the benefits of traditional and non-traditional learning as valuable skills that are essential to all musicians. Participant H's views on non-traditional music experiences can be summarized in the following quote,

“Non-traditional learning teaches you how to interact with other musicians and, you know, go off the page. So you have to learn how to really play music at that point, whether its country, or rock, or jazz or whatever, you know now you learn to speak the language. You're not reading it off of a script anymore.”

Participant H's views on traditional learning are as follows,

“I know there's a lot of good players that never did that but I think you'd be at such a disadvantage, you know. I equate it to being a poet and not knowing how to read and write

the English language. You could be a great poet but wouldn't it be a disadvantage if you couldn't write it down, or pick up a piece of paper and read somebody else's poem?" Based on analysis of participant H's interview, he was placed in 13 of 14 themes derived from this study. Participant H did not identify with theme 1 as he did enjoy his experience in school band programs and would happily be involved in a similar setting such as a community band if the opportunity were to become available.

Participant I

Participant I was a drummer whose father was a professional jazz drummer. His earliest memories are playing drums to the radio on pots and pans. During his early childhood, Participant I recalled listening to a lot of music at home, mostly his parent's jazz collection. "I knew all about Charlie Parker when I was 9 or 10, but I didn't know anything about the Beatles." Participant I did not seriously pursue music until the age of 13, when he inherited his father's drum set after he had died in a car accident. Participant I feels that through playing the drums he has a way of connecting with his father. During his formative years he had a father figure who was also a professional musician. They worked together for many years. Participant I was highly influenced by this man's high level of musicianship as well as the great musicians that were in his jazz ensembles. "The Methenys might come in. Pat or Mike or both. Clark Terry would come. Anybody that was kind of hanging out would come in and hang out at the music store where I worked." Participant I was also involved in a school band program, specifically jazz band, for a period of time until he quit. "I was in the jazz band, but I didn't take orchestral band because I just felt I was too cool."

In an effort to forge a path for his future, Participant I joined the army and was forced to quit playing music for many years until he was discharged and moved to Arkansas. Not long after arriving in Fayetteville he sought out a way to play music through an audition he had heard

about. “I went in and auditioned and [the judge] ended up hiring me to teach an [ensemble] that day so I started playing [gigs] with him at the Hilton that night. I've been playing in Fayetteville ever since.” Based on analysis of participant I’s interview, he was placed in all 14 themes derived from this study.

Participant J

Participant J started out as a classically trained musician. He began playing in traditional music ensembles in the 2nd through 4th grades at an arts magnet school. His older brother was a trumpet player and spent time during participant J’s middle school years giving him trumpet lessons and helping him improve. Participant J had an interest in classical trumpet music from an early age. His band director through high school was highly influential. Participant I’s first performance that was not school-affiliated was setup by his band director.

“The band director I had at those times, he was a trumpet player as well, and he really took me in and, I think, sort of changed my direction in music, to a degree. He sort of focused me a little bit more. So, like, for example, we played a Christmas cantata one year. I remember bits and pieces of that pretty vividly because it was one of the first paid gigs I ever did.”

Participant J felt highly influenced by attending his brother’s jazz band performances. “I would say that was probably the first time I heard music in a really inspirational level, that made me want to do that.”

Participant J also attended college as a classical music performance major. He would spend 6 to 8 hours per day practicing and playing in both traditional university ensembles as well as non-traditional ensembles in the form of jazz ensembles, church bands, and rock bands. Based on analysis of participant J’s interview, he was placed in 12 of 14 themes derived from this study. Participant J did not identify with theme 1 due to his interest in classical music and band literature. Participant J did not recall a significant amount of music being played at home either,

although he did have recollection of his mother playing various records at home. However, due to his initial response and overall suggestion he was removed from theme 13.

Themes

Theme 1: Disinterest in school music programs due to a lack of interest in the musical selections played. There were 24 instances where the musicians interviewed mentioned their “interest” or lack thereof in specific music ensembles. Eight of the ten participants claimed to have either discontinued or to have had a decrease in their level of interest in school band or private lessons. Rationale for low levels of interest were centered around participants not being interested in the music taught. Theme 1 reflects results from previous studies that show student music preference and ensemble participation coincides strongly with personal identity (Schulten, 1987; Linn & Muilenburg, 1996; Warnock, 2009). Participant B mentioned discontinuing private guitar lessons after his 3rd lesson. “I took three lessons and realized lessons weren’t the way I was going to learn, because I’m not being taught what I want to learn.” When asked about his disinterest in school music programs, participant A said, “[School band] just wasn’t Rock n’ Roll.” Participant C said, “I really didn’t care too much for the music we were playing [in school band].”

Theme 2: Experiencing live music as a catalyst for interest in playing music. There were 29 instances that participants mentioned “concerts” as a positive experience in their musical development. All participants mentioned that they had several musical influences growing up and still do as adults. Many participants were able to see some of their musical role models perform live. Finding relevance and appreciation for live music that is interesting to participants reflects findings in studies by Linn & Muilenburg (1996). Participant C stated, “I can definitely say that [seeing the Beatles] was the catalyst that made me and lots of other folks want to play.”

Some participants mentioned seeing peers and older siblings perform made an impactful impression on their level of interest in playing music. Participant E claimed,

“One [memory] that comes to mind is when I was probably about 6th or 7th grade and I saw my older brother playing in the high school band, and he was in the drum corps. He had a drum, percussion solo during halftime at a big football game and I thought that was very awesome.”

Participant J said,

“...My brother being in high school jazz band. I was probably in 4th grade. I would say that was probably the first time I heard music in a really inspirational level, that made me want to [be a musician].”

Theme 3: Having an influential music figure during formative years. The transcripts revealed 23 instances where “influence” was attributed to participant growth as musicians. Influential figures ranged adult figures such as a teacher, parent, or family friend to younger mentors like peers and siblings. All participants mentioned that their mentors were encouraging on some level. Whether it was through a competitive atmosphere between siblings or a pacesetter band director, all participants’ mentors showed clear signs of motivating participants to be better musicians. These results reflect that of (Rickels, D., Council, K., Fredrickson, W., Hairston, M., Porter, A., & Schmidt, M., 2010; Giebelhausen, 2015) where findings show that instructors influence student decisions. Another quality mentioned by participants was that their mentors were great modelers, in terms of possessing skilled instrumental ability that inspired participants to be better musicians. Participant H mentioned his first teacher drawing him into music through his ability to play the drums at a high level.

“I used to go down and sit on the front porch and listen to [my teacher] play and he would invite me in and he would let me play on his drums and he was the one that started giving me my first lessons.”

Participant D spoke about inspiration from better musicians as well as competition between

siblings as a means of rapid improvement.

“As you’re going along in the music you see musicians who are better than you and you gravitate to that and that’s how you get better, you know.”

“[My brother] would learn something then, I would learn something, he knew more than I knew so then I would want to know that to. “[Competition] is what made me really good.”

Theme 4: Playing in a music ensemble not affiliated with school band or choir. There were 16 instances where the genre “rock” was mentioned, 16 instances where “church” was mentioned, and 14 instances where “country” was mentioned as an alternative performance ensemble opportunity for participants. All participants had experience playing in garage bands or playing in church bands. Participant J mentioned that his first performance outside of school was playing in church. He also played in a Jazz band with musicians who were much older and who possessed great experience and skill on their instruments. “I think that’s where I got some of the best learning experience available.” This statement falls into alignment with Wegner’s (2008) community of practice where the older more experienced members of a community share experience and knowledge with newer members. All participants had distinct memory of their first non-traditional music experience. All participants held these experiences as highly valuable in terms of both learning how to play with other musicians and making a major impact on their love for music. When asked if he felt a heightened sense of joy while playing with other musicians, participant D plainly stated, “That’s the only reason you do it, isn’t it?” Participant E talks about his first experience making music with friends: “The first time [my friends and I] played music, it was special. Like that feeling of making something together with other people that was recognizable. That was enjoyable for us. I think that was very rewarding.”

Theme 5: Performance as an impactful motivator for continuing music. “Performing” was mentioned 20 times throughout participant interviews. This correlates strongly with

(Giebelhausen, 2015) whose findings showed that interest in a career in composition flourished as participants were able to engage in hands-on learning and performing experiences. All participants mentioned live performance for an audience as a motivational factor for continuing music in adulthood. Participants mentioned that performing music at a high level with other musicians creates an energy that inspires them to continue playing music. This euphoric feeling shared between the performers and the audience is mentioned by all participants as a major factor in why they continue to play music. Participant H said,

“That’s the drug isn’t it. That’s what you live for and you wait for, but yeah I can remember it in all those contexts, you know, whether its marching band, drum corps, school jazz band, or even the bluegrass. It’s all exhilarating.”

Participant E said, “Primarily for me, I enjoy the act of making a piece of art live with other people. I enjoy the act of making music.” Participant A talks about performance as his primary form of engaging in music as an adult.

“I mean, right now basically just playing with my band. You know, at my age and with how busy I am with my business I really don’t have a lot of time to do sit down type playing or just playing for fun, so not a whole lot at this point in time in my life. It’s more just when we have gigs, or when we get together to play.”

When prompted to expound on the euphoric feeling that all participants have described to get from performing for an audience, Participant D said, “Everything you’re asking me about why I play music, that’s why I do it right there.”

Theme 6: Receiving attention or recognition for musical accomplishments and ability.

The terms “attention” and “recognition” were mentioned in 10 separate instances between participants. None of the participants mentioned attention as their primary purpose for playing music. However, they do enjoy recognition for their talents. On the subject of recognition participant E says, “I like to have people say, “oh that sounded great!” MacIntyre, Potter, & Burns (2012) as well as Stickford (2003) described increased levels of motivation and

participation in music students who receive recognition and support from teachers and peers.

Participant J spoke about a feeling of pride and accomplishment during high school when he got to play with upperclassmen. He stated,

“I was surrounded by upperclassmen playing lead trumpet, and I was the only one of my age group playing the first trumpet part. To me, that was a really big deal because I had been working a while on trumpet.”

Theme 7: Learning through aural dictation. There were 52 instances where “listening” was mentioned. Whether participants came from traditional or non-traditional training, all participants mentioned aural dictation as an important method for learning. Participants said that learning music by ear is an essential part of learning how to properly model on a given instrument and develops aural perception in a way that reading music cannot. All participants mention spending hundreds or possibly thousands of hours listening to recordings and copying what they heard. When asked to talk about his practice routine during high school, participant J said, “I spent nearly every spare moment practicing and playing along with recordings and trying to imitate.” Participant E said, “I learned [to play drums] predominately by putting on headphones and putting on music and playing along.” Participant A said, “I just remember rewinding over and over for hours and hours and hours to figure out how something was played.” Giebelhausen, (2015) also found that composers successful in their field spent time during childhood engaging in aural dictation. Reflections of theme 7 also can be found in a study by Antonelli (2015) and Hallam (2001) where all interviewees spent significant amounts of time practicing and learning through aural dictation.

Theme 8: Participants spoke of parental encouragement during formative years. Interviewees mentioned their parents in 33 instances as “supportive” or “motivational” figures. Parental encouragement came in many forms that were both direct and slightly indirect. This

correlates well with findings from (Yoon, 1997; Mackinnon, 1962; Taylor, 2009; Giebelhausen, 2015; Gorard & Selwyn, 2005) that parents play a large role in student's choice to participate in music. Participants mentioned parental encouragement through parents' verbal affirmation, purchasing instruments, attending concerts, encouraging participants to practice, taking participants to concerts growing up, and driving participants to rehearsals and performances. Participant H spoke about his parents' role during his formative years.

“It was obvious that [music] was what I wanted to do and [my parents] were supportive of it. Encouraging, you know, and taking me to drum corps practice twice a week, and private lessons.”

Participant J spoke about verbal encouragement from his mother. “[My mother] always encouraged me. No matter how bad I must have sounded, she always said it sounded wonderful. My parents, even through college, came to every single performance.”

Participant B told a story about how he would carry his tuba five miles to-and-from school every day, until his family bought him a tuba to practice on at home.

Theme 9: All participants display high levels of motivation to practice and perform music. “Performance” was mentioned in 18 instances throughout all interviews. The term “practice” was mentioned 75 times throughout the interview process. Participants continually seek to play music with others throughout their lifetime. From an early age, all participants showed a high level of interest and dedication to music and practicing. Participant F said, “I used to tell my mother that I was sick so I could stay home and practice the guitar.” Participant B said, “I would stay at the school practicing until the band director would literally have to kick me out.” Into adulthood all participants find ways to stay actively engaged in the music making process. Participant H said, “There's hardly a week I don't have some type of musical activity. It's at least 1 or 2 rehearsals or a gig or something.” Participant A jokingly stated, “I've always tried

not to do music but it just doesn't work for me." Findings from La Porte, (2004) resonate with theme 9 as learners who are self-directed and motivated prefer to take action upon pursuits that are relevant to their lives and learning interests. Other studies relating to increased motivational levels in musicians are (MacNamara, Á., Holmes, P., & Collins, D. 2006; MacIntyre, P. D., Potter, G. K., & Burns, J. N. 2012; Woody, R. H. 2004; Macdonald, 1973).

Theme 10: Participants that had multiple years of traditional training, such as private lessons or experience in a school band program; as well as non-traditional training, such as playing in rock bands or playing along with recordings, concluded that both methods were not a necessity, but overall more beneficial than exclusivity to one. There were 138 instances where the term “learn”, “learned”, or “learning” was mentioned both in the context of traditional and nontraditional ensembles. Participant J stands out among the other participants in terms of having both an extensive background in traditional and non-traditional training on his instrument. Participant J has engaged in traditional training on the trumpet since the second grade and has spent years playing in non-traditional ensembles as well as practicing through aural dictation. His justification for the benefits of both traditional and non-traditional training are explained.

“I certainly spent a great deal of time trying to sound like other trumpet players, and I think it's really benefited me over the years to be flexible. I think that classical style of training in school with private lessons and practicing techniques and all of those things for hours and hours at a time... I think those benefit you in certain settings more than non-traditional training ever could. So some obvious examples would be playing with the symphony, playing in the brass quintet, playing solo trumpet performances at the feature soloist, some orchestral thing—all of those are scenarios where it really kind of fits. [An individual] learning things by recording and just playing along, [spends] loads of hours learning by aural dictation. I think the person that learns that way, or has experience in their career learning that way has a huge leg up in the jazz world, obviously. I think also in the classical world too, because I think you are a little nimbler in terms of reacting. I think that is crucial in a musical situation on a professional level. Being able to adapt quickly and change the way that you play something when you are asked to on the spot, I feel like I have the benefit of both worlds.”

Participants affiliated with both traditional and nontraditional music ensembles fit within

Wegner's (2008) community of practice. Both the informal and formal ensemble experiences offer participants a learning environment where like-minded people engage and share music. Further support for communities of practice come from Sheldon (1998), who found that a large part of participation in adult community bands was due to social interests among the musicians.

Theme 11: Participants created a compilation of important character traits that experienced musicians look for in other musicians. Compiled characteristics included having a good attitude, being on time, being creative, playing with emotion and musicality, determination, adaptability, being prepared, and intuition. As an example of intuition participant D said, "You have to be able to know what the other musician is thinking. The ability to look across the stage and think I know what he's fixing to do." Participant C said,

"I can tell if they come to a gig and we haven't played for a while... you know if they have taken a step backwards in their proficiency... that's something to me... I don't really like that. If they are not doing their homework, then it effects the way the group sounds and our level of enjoyment is going to go down."

Theme 12: Participants recalled a lot of music being played in their homes during their formative years. There were 15 instances that a "radio" was mentioned and 19 instances where "records" were mentioned. All participants had memory of their parents playing music at home during childhood. Ties can be made to a study conducted by Hargreaves (2004) where a majority of students surveyed listen to music at home. Many of participants' earliest memories of music capturing their attention was listening to music with their parents at home or on car rides. The researcher feels it is worth noting that parent and child preferences for music were very similar. For example, Participant F is a jazz and classical guitarist. Participant F's father was a "classical aficionado" with an interest in jazz. There was a similar thread noted between all interviewees.

Theme 13: Participants claimed to have no significant memories of discouragement. The term "encouragement" was mentioned in 11 instances. Also, the term "discouragement" was

mentioned 12 times as it related to interviewees not experiencing discouragement from others. Participants C and E were the only participants that had a single memory of someone directly discouraging them from participating in music. Participant C had a football coach that discouraged his team from participating in band during high school. “He basically did everything he could to discourage me from music.” Participant C had to choose between sports or band in his junior year of high school. Participant E had a colleague in his profession that mocked the idea of being an adult and still continuing to play music. His impression was that music is something for children.

“It kind of did make me wonder if someone my age should still be going out and playing. If it was perhaps not a serious endeavor that a middle aged person should be doing. It made me wonder about that but not enough to really be a discouragement.”

While both participants said these experiences did have a temporary negative impact on their level of participation in music it did not squelch their desire to continue music.

Theme 14: Participants claim to be constantly thinking about music. A common theme between all participants was that they engaged in some form of musical thinking, seemingly at all times. The term “thinking” in regards to the pursuit of musical development was mentioned in 21 instances throughout the interview process. Whether it was listening to music in the car or humming a tune while doing another task, all participants claimed that this was an occurrence in their daily lives. Participant C stated “I walk around with a song in my head every day. To the point sometimes where it’s pretty damn annoying.” Participant D claimed, “...every minute that I’m not working. I’m listening to a new song or playing at night.” Participant B stated, “I go to bed with a song in my head every night and I wake up with a song in my head every morning.”

Table A

Themes	Participants Involved
Theme 1	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, I
Theme 2	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
Theme 3	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
Theme 4	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
Theme 5	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
Theme 6	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
Theme 7	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
Theme 8	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
Theme 9	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
Theme 10	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
Theme 11	A, B, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
Theme 12	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
Theme 13	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I
Theme 14	B, C, E, F, G, H, I, J

Table B

INTERVIEWEE	DATE	LOCATION	METHOD
A	9/17/16	INTERVIEWEE'S HOME	IN PERSON
B	9/17/16	INTERVIEWEE'S HOME	IN PERSON
C	9/20/16	RESEARCHER'S HOME	VIA TELEPHONE
D	9/20/16	RESEARCHER'S HOME	VIA TELEPHONE
E	9/28/16	RESEARCHER'S HOME	VIA TELEPHONE
F	9/28/16	RESEARCHER'S HOME	VIA TELEPHONE
G	10/2/16	RESEARCHER'S HOME	VIA TELEPHONE
H	10/4/16	RESEARCHER'S HOME	VIA TELEPHONE
I	10/4/16	RESEARCHER'S HOME	VIA TELEPHONE
J	10/4/16	RESEARCHER'S HOME	VIA TELEPHONE

Chapter V: Conclusion

Summary

The researcher's purpose for this study was to derive themes and social influences that contribute to lifelong musicianship. The researcher gained understanding through an in-depth interview, observation, and collection of artifacts from ten participants between the ages of 35 and 60. All participants began playing music between the ages of 6 and 13. Participants were chosen for their lifelong engagement in music, as well as their diverse backgrounds and experiences with music. None of the participants were strictly freelance musicians. All participants have careers in a variety of fields. There were a multitude of experiences and social influences that led to interviewees' lifelong participation in music-making. From the analysis of data collected, 10 themes emerged relevant to all participants, one theme that was relevant to nine participants, and three themes relevant to eight participants.

Discussion

Application from results may be pursued in a plethora of ways. While applications are intended primarily for the use of music educators, findings might also be applicable to parents of young musicians, as well as young musicians alike. From the data collected, relevant application of the results might be utilized in three ways.

1) To develop aural perception in conjunction with music literacy. As shown in the research, all participants engaged in ear training and aural development through repetitive listening and transcription on their respective instrument. Many music education programs focus on music literacy without providing aural training it's due diligence. In order to be a well-rounded musician, one needs to have great reading skills as well as great listening skills. Teaching students the process and purpose of transcribing better musicians and other skills such

as sight singing and interval training will lead to students who are better listeners and overall, better musicians.

Taking class time or setting aside time after school to demonstrate to students the process of transcription might be helpful in improving students' development of tone, ability to improvise, and develop aural perception skills on their instrument. Coinciding with instrumental warmups, band directors or any music educator might take a few minutes every day to do interval training or sight singing exercises. With some consistency, students may begin to hear intervals in their minds before the pitches are played. This might help with common issues such as intonation, and give the overall band a much better sound while simultaneously providing students a more sensitive and musically developed ear.

Why should educators spend time on developing the skill of aural dictation and perception? All of the interviewees had taught themselves how to transcribe. Why should educators intrude on a student's musical development outside of school? By showing a personal interest in their students' musical potential outside of the classroom, an educator may be able to build a relationship with a student that is much more influential and impactful in the classroom. All musicians must find their own way of learning to some degree, but there are so many avenues one can take on the proverbial road to musical excellence. An educator's role is to show students the best path or paths for learning and at some point the student must choose the option that works best for them.

2) An important part of teaching is providing a learning environment for students that reaches beyond the classroom. In other words, the goal is to promote music habits that will reach beyond compulsory education and allow students to participate in music as an adult.

All participants in this study emphasized the importance of student-led, or, as it is

referred to in this study, a “non-traditional ensemble”. All participants agree that non-traditional ensembles shaped them as musicians and played a significant role in their lifelong involvement in music. Providing students opportunities or even advice on how to successfully engage in student-led ensembles might open up new doors that would provide them access to playing music with others outside of school. Helping students engage in a productive and effective nontraditional ensemble could be highly influential in a student’s musical involvement outside of school. The product of such efforts could lead to a better relationship with students, as well as a likelihood for student involvement in music after compulsory education.

Theme 14 suggests that students need a balance of both the traditional training and non-traditional training in regards to practice methods, leadership roles, and application. Avenues for traditional practice methods include scale exercises, technique focused etudes, tone development exercises, and opportunities for sight reading. These are great ways of developing traditional music skills and techniques that have purpose for both traditional and non-traditional application. Non-traditional practice methods could be showing students the process of transcription, how to play along with recordings by ear, and advice on starting a non-traditional ensemble which also offers benefits to students’ involvement in traditional ensembles.

Traditional leadership roles refer to the common band director-student relationship. Non-traditional leadership roles could be student led ensembles after school, or offering time in class for student led rehearsal during school. The underlying intention would be for students to take control in their learning and feel a sense of personal investment in the work created. This could be achieved by simply opening up some time in class to ask students what the biggest flaws and achievements are in the music they are playing. By doing something as simple as asking for student feedback, educators put themselves on a level playing field with students which gives

students a sense of personal investment with the common goal of improving the ensemble.

Application for traditional rehearsal skills would be achieving a high level of musicianship, understanding how discipline leads to higher achievement, and understanding traditional rehearsal skills in the professional music world. Competition focused performances can also be beneficial for students who thrive in a competitive atmosphere. Experiences such as solo and ensemble or marching band competitions offer a way for students to understand how hard work and dedication to their craft can result in achievement.

Application for non-traditional rehearsal skills would be development of student leadership, an understanding of personal responsibility for the outcome and success of the music, a deepened sense of personal involvement and investment, and a sense of pride with like-minded students who enjoy making music together. By offering a space for student-led ensembles to rehearse or perform, educators are further fostering lifelong musicianship in students. These ensembles could be in the form of student led chamber music ensembles, percussion ensembles, or even ensembles such as a rock bands. Having a non-traditional rehearsal or performance in a traditional rehearsal space such as a school band hall could be a successful blend of both the traditional and non-traditional worlds. Offering a space for students to focus and have an educator with experience and advice nearby could help lead to a more successful student-led ensemble.

3) A quality of good teaching stems from curriculum that is student-centered (Abrahams & John, 2015). In order to promote a more substantial interest and appreciation for music, educators must employ music that connects to students on a personal level.

As an example, if a teacher prompts a student with the question “What song would you like to learn?”, odds are they are not going to shout out names like Bach or Beethoven. Teaching

essential elements of music such as reading and instrumental technique can be approached with less strife if the vehicle in which the learning occurs is music the student is familiar with or even better, music the student enjoys listening to.

This is by no means to say that Bach and Beethoven should be thrown out altogether but, rather, listening should be guided in an approachable way. Vulliamy & Lee (1976) state that all students enter the classroom with previous knowledge. By tapping into a student's pre-existing knowledge, the educator can make new connections and engage interest for learning. Why can't Beethoven be listened to in the form of Heavy Metal, Hip-Hop, or Rock and Roll? Creative avenues must be utilized to get some students interested in music they are less familiar with. If Hip-Hop or other popular styles of music can be utilized as a gateway to opening students' minds and ears to new music, then the approach is worthwhile.

“No true learning takes place unless there is a desire for such learning on the part of the child. The basic objective in curriculum planning and teaching is to bring the child to the point where he (or she) will accept the learning experiences offered by the school” (Snyder, 1965, p.58).

The results from theme one suggest that educators should be applying popular music to curriculum. Students want to learn music they have a personal connection with, and an interest in. It is the researcher's opinion that educators who are looking to introduce genres such as Jazz (a typically less familiar genre) to students should do so through use of popular instruments or through connecting Jazz to popular musicians. An example of using popular instruments would be if an educator wishes to engage students with Jazz music, why not teach students how to play a swing rhythm on a drum set followed by some guided listening to the swinging style of jazz drummer, Art Blakey? As an example of connecting Jazz to popular musicians, educators could show students how someone relevant in the world of pop music such as Lady Gaga is not only an incredible pop artist but also influenced by Jazz and Classical music. Making these connections

to students, specifically younger students, can change the preconceptions of what “older” music means to them. These stepping stones can open new musical interests for students that may not have happened otherwise.

Parental involvement in a student’s life is highly influential. The majority of a student’s formative years are spent with their teachers and with their parents. Working with parents to encourage positivity towards practice and achievement in music can be highly impactful for students. Keeping an open line of communication with parents on how their child is doing in music class, what their child could be working on at home, and how parents can get their child involved in music experiences outside of school are great ways to motivate both students and parents to engage in musical experiences.

Suggestions for Future Research

The researcher’s first suggestions for further research would be a replication of this study, but with a larger and more diverse population. It would be beneficial to see if results coincide or differ with musicians in different areas of the United States and musicians from various demographics.

A second suggestions for future research would be a quantitative study of how parental music preference correlates to their child’s music preference. By researching the difference in music preference from middle school students through high school, it would be particularly interesting to see if the type of correlation between parent and child changes as the child grows older. The researcher believes this study could help further knowledge of parental influence on their child’s interests and preferences in music.

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APPENDIX A

Observations

Friday, September 16th, 2016

The trip to the venue began at 5pm. Participants A, B, & C rode to the performance location together. We rode together from Arkansas into southern Missouri where the performance was being held. The atmosphere was very casual. Everyone was ready to play music and talking about how they thought it would be a great crowd. Conversation topics included the weather, music, politics, and lots of joking and banter between everyone.

We Arrived around 6pm. I was introduced to participants D and E upon arrival to the venue. The performance venue was a pizza restaurant and bar that has weekly live music where participants A, B, C, D, & E meet regularly to play music. They are highly regarded by the people there as the best performers that play at this venue. All musicians chipped in to help setup instruments and sound system equipment.

The venue was a large cabin style bar with lots of nascar advertisements and large flat screen tvs. The structure featured a large outdoor patio where the band usually plays but due to high possibility of inclement weather the band setup inside. The inside of the restaurant was jam packed with people as well as the outdoor patio. The crowd was highly attentive the entire night. The music started at 8pm and continued until midnight with 2 breaks in between sets. The music was primarily cover songs of artist such as Tom Petty, The Band, The Beatles, John Prine, Neil Young, The Eagles, George Jones, and Lynrd Skynrd. There were also some original songs thrown into the mix later in the night. Many of the songs played resonated with members in the audience who were dancing, bobbing their heads, or even singing along. In between songs many of the members would chime in with something funny to say on the microphone which helped to keep the audience involved.

At the end of the night everyone in the audience was still very vibrant and eager to hear more music. While I knew the ability of the musicians and was familiar with the quality of their performance level; I was very surprised that the audience was so involved and attentive after four hours of music. As the band packed up they were in high spirits and buzzing from the energy in the room. They all felt that it was a very good night and that the music seemed special compared to other performances.

Friday, September 23rd, 2016

Observation of participant G began at 8pm at a small restaurant in Springdale, AR. The stage was a small space in the corner tucked in against a larger dining space. The energy level of the patrons was high and full of smiling faces. Participant G played a great deal of music from the 60's, 70's, and 80's featuring bands such as Foreigner, Thin Lizzy, Bad Company, The Beatles, and Pink Floyd. When people in the room would recognize a song they would begin to sing along as participant G encouraged their participation. He seemed very comfortable and in his element as he performed solo singing and acoustic guitar for the audience. He would tell jokes and talk with the crowd in between songs. He would even spend time explaining a little bit of background for the original music he performed. He was always smiling and joking around during his performances. He seemed to be enjoying himself and the crowd did too.

The performance was set to end around 10pm and due to the bustle of the restaurant along with many of the audience members requesting more music he played until 11pm. His energy level was high at the end of the night. He seemed relaxed and confident that both he and the listeners had a good night. At one point in the night he sang a very operatic and silly version of happy birthday to a young girl who was having a birthday dinner with her family. He had the whole restaurant singing, yelling, and clapping along. It was quite a spectacle and surely a memorable moment for the young girl. At the end of the birthday rendition he said some very kind words to her and told the audience he was there to make them smile. He definitely did so and you could tell the joy and intention was fully sincere.

Sunday, September 25th, 2016

Observation of participant H began at 3pm in Fayetteville, Arkansas at a rehearsal in participant H's studio. Participant H was rehearsing with a bassist and guitar player. Their primary purpose for gathering was to have a jam session and rehearse some original music. Before the rehearsal began participant H seemed to be working on some rudimental exercises on the hi-hat of his drum set. He then began to warm up with some different grooves. He would try some more funky backbeat driven grooves and then mix in some jazz swing pattern playing as well. Once the band began to rehearse you could see his mind turn on as he began to study the charts that were handed out. He would read through them and at certain points he would close his eyes slightly and lean his head back with a look of enjoyment. Although his facial expressions are relatively limited one could catch the glimpse of a smile out of his mouth every now and then. When the band would stop he would ask the composer of the tune if that was what they were looking for in the drum part or he would ask for more information on the form of the song and where various piece of the song would transition. As he received information he would nod slightly and write something on his chart. The band would go through this process in each song until they could successfully run through the entire song. In between tunes the members of the group would tell stories about previous gigs, make jokes about one another, and would enjoy themselves as friends who gather together do. The atmosphere of the studio was casual but very focused in terms of accomplishing the goal of learning some new music and challenging one another through the musical acrobats of the songs with complex melodies, solo sections, and meter changes. Participant H seemed to be enjoying himself and was very complimentary to the other musicians as they presented new songs to the group.

Sunday, October 2nd, 2016

Observation of participants F and I began at 10am in Rogers, AR. The performance was at a small restaurant that features jazz music every Sunday. The restaurant was very busy and the music was truly fitting for the atmosphere. The jazz trio was very tightly bunched together in a corner close to patrons. The room was bustling and full of energy. The band covered American Jazz standards that included blues, Latin, swing, and bebop. Participant F was interesting to observe because he shows little to no emotional expression in his face or body yet the music that comes out of his instrument is so full of expression. All his music is memorized and he plays most songs with his eyes closed. Occasionally during his solo, participant F would play something that would unintentionally line up perfectly with what participant I and they would exchange a smile or in some cases a laugh. Participant F plays with extreme attention to detail.

Participant I was also very interesting to observe. His posture is relaxed, slightly slouched, with a small smirk on his face at times. His body posture looks as if it has conformed to a unique shape from years of playing. His slightly slouched back, extended arms with one shoulder leaning slightly in front of the other give him the look of someone very cool, relaxed, and experienced in what one might think a great jazz drummer would look like. His ability to focus in and listen to the other players in the group was what made his playing so interesting. He would fire off a response to something one of the other members played and they would throw it right back. The exchange between musicians was highly communicative and exhilarating to witness. Audience members would come up and compliment the musicians often and tell them how much they enjoyed listening. Every time someone came to say thank you participant F and I would smile back and graciously say thank you back. When another musician stopped by or an old friend participants F and I would say hello, talk for a minute or two and then go back to playing. The music stopped at noon and the members seemed very satisfied with each other's playing. Everyone in the group was complimentary to each other and parted ways with a handshake or a hug.

Monday, October 3rd, 2016

Observation of participant J began at 7:30pm for a jazz ensemble rehearsal. One of the most memorable experiences of the observations was participant J's ability to play into stratospheric registers of his instrument without showing any strain. His ability to hit high notes with little to no visible movement was astounding. Participant J said he doesn't have much time to practice lately but it was quite impressive how flawless all of his performances are. He is an excellent sight reader. Even with his first time playing through a piece of music he was able to play with great musicality and precision. When the song would end he would occasionally make comments to the other wind players about how to better articulate or dynamically shape a phrase. His suggestions were always clear, concise, and openly accepted by the other members. After the rehearsal it was intriguing to speak with the other musicians about participant J. They all mention his flawlessness and extreme precision. All the players know that he is very stretched for time with a new job and baby in his life. They continually comment on how his ability to perform at an extremely high level never seems to be effected by his busy life style. Participant J has a very approachable personality. He is a very focused and serious musician but at the same time he is very kind and loves to joke around with the other members in the band.

APPENDIX B

Transcripts

Participant A

9/17/2016

9:21am

Key:

() = other audible noises

[] = observer comments

Bold face = interviewer speaking

Non-Bold face = interviewee speaking

Hey thank you so much for participating I'm really glad you could do this.

You bet I am happy that you ask me to be a part of your project.

Well let's start with a few basics could you please state your age.

I am 39 no... 49 years old (laughter).

And what is your primary instrument?

Guitar.

And did you or do you play multiple instruments?

No.

Did your parents play musical instruments?

No but my mother sang in a gospel quartet though...

Okay you can answer sometimes, never, or often. Were you ever taken to concerts growing up?

Well... I guess I remember some but not a lot. I guess I would say sometimes. I remember going to see Elvis when I was kid. I remember my mother dropped me and a couple of friends off to see Van Halen when I was probably 14.

Was there a lot of music in your home growing up?

Yes. I just remember when we were in the car mom was always listening to some sort of music. Anne Murrey, Alabama... and stuff like that um... I remember my sister had a little record collection as a kid. I was really into that. I remember listening to things like you know the Eagles, the Doobie Brothers and things like that. She had the KISS a live record and I remember looking at [the album cover] and thinking yeah that's what I want to do. And especially at my grandparents' house there were a lot of musicians on my father side. And I remember whenever we got together for a holiday there was always a big at the piano, playing and singing you know... mostly old gospel stuff though.

Did you ever take private lessons?

No.

Um, did you ever participate in band or choir at school?

Just very early in my junior high years. For band.

Did you continue music in college? Such as like a major?

No. I played in bands though.

Okay great I will definitely ask you some more questions about that later.

Okay so describe how music fits into your day to day routine?

I mean right now basically just playing with my band. You know at my age and with how busy I am with my business I really don't have a lot of time to do sit down type playing or just playing for fun so not a whole lot at this point in time in my life it's more just when we have gigs or when we get together to play.

And for the record could you state what your job title is?

I own a screen printing and embroidery business.

What is your earliest memory and music capturing your attention?

I guess I'm going to say writing in the vehicle with my parents and uh the Carpenters or something like that would be playing I just... I don't know... I always loved music.

Do you remember wanting in strip and not having access to one?

No not really I mean whenever I decided I was going to learn to play the guitar my parents are pretty good about you know... They bought me whatever I needed.

And you think that there was a specific... you know... your earliest memory and music was listening to it on the radio but that was there may be an experience that got you interested in playing music?

Well probably when I was listening to my sister's records. I was looking at the albums and looking at the pictures you know... listening to hotel California and seeing that kiss alive record(chuckles). Probably that would be the most influential thing that really made me want to pursue [music] in the first place.

Okay. So your primary instrument guitar. Was there defining moment when you knew that you wanted to play guitar?

Um... I'm not real sure... I don't remember... I just knew I had to play something and guitar was the go to.

Okay. So what kind of music did you play growing up?

When I learned to play the guitar it was in the early 80s. I remember Learning to play the guitar one summer and I had the Brian Adams record. I would just rewind [referring to the process of transcribing]. I didn't have anyone to show me there were no YouTube videos or anything. So you just... I don't even know who showed me some chords... in the beginning all I ever knew was barred chords. I just remember rewinding over and over for hours and hours and hours to figure out how to something was played.

Would you say you still play that kind of music?

No. Not 80s rock.

What transitioned you out of that?

When I left to go to college I went to Ole Miss. I met a guy there is a freshman pretty early on. He actually wound up playing bass in a famous band. His name was John. John and I actually started a band early on. [in college] he just had a wealth of knowledge of older music even at the age of 18. I mean... I remember listening to stuff like the doors when I was in high school... that's not when that stuff came out. You know... We were listening to some 60s music but I guess you would say... I was really ate up with it. And then I got into the underground or alternative music whatever you want to call it which was like The Replacements or Hooskerdo and things like that. [John]really turned me onto that stuff. Because I didn't even know about it at that time being from a small Southern town... You didn't have... nobody knew I mean I didn't know until I get college.

It sounds to me like he was pretty influential?

He was very influential!

What were those first interactions like with John that let you know he knew what he was talking about when he came to music?

He was on the sixth floor of the dorm and I was on the fourth floor. I don't remember how we met... maybe I was playing guitar at my room or something... he had a 1957 Tele [an electric guitar] and I remember thinking this guy knows what's up (laughter). You know... when he started showing me [his knowledge of music] I just remember thinking this [music] is great.

What was your typical practice session like growing up?

Pretty much just listening to records and learning how to play them through listening. I don't do a whole lot of practicing anymore.

Just playing gigs and stuff like that? Your band still rehearses?

Right. Mostly to learn new material...

Okay. Could you describe the music scene where you grew up? Where was it that you grew up?

Monticello Mississippi. It was high school in the 80s... We were listening to The Cars... basically what was on the radio. It was Van Halen you know just that early to mid 80s rock'n roll... you know Skynyrd heck we were all from the south so [he and his friends] were all Skynyrd fans.

What about live music? Where there places in town that bands could play?

I remember in high school there was a place called Top Cat. Think there was probably a Top Cat in the nation. I'm never going to show where these guys... It was a band called Sidewinder and they're playing all the 80s covers and they headed to the T. They were a show band. Really great musicians playing all that 80s rock. I remember seeing that growing up and thinking Man I need to play the guitar.

And this was in high school?

Yes. This was in high school. I was probably 16. I guess I had already been playing guitar but this pushed me to really want to be in a band.

Okay well let's go ahead and talk about that. What were your first experiences collaborating with other musicians?

I played with these bunch of guys in Monticello. We were just a bunch of kids playing barred chords [simple chords] and "Smoke On the Water" [a song most beginners play]. We had a little girl singer so we did some Pat Benatar... stuff like that. You know looking back on it we weren't very good (laughter) but I guess that's when I learned to play with a drummer you know.

Do you remember that being a pretty exciting time?

Oh yeah! To hear it all come together? Yeah!

Do you think that fostered your interest to continue music into get better?

Oh yeah...definitely.

What were all the other musicians like?

We were all about the same in terms of ability. We all learn to play together. I remember one of the guys father played the guitar a little bit. His father played country music... but we were more interested in 80s rock.

So how did your musical preference change in college? Did you still play in bands in college?

Yeah. John and I started a band call the hightops. We played a lot of... and John new a lot of... Well he sang... we did a lot of things like the Beatles and the Who. You now... John was pretty into the British stuff and of course we were doing a lot of REM and that sort of stuff. I remember we had a great booking agent and it got to the point where we were playing 3 to 4 times a week.

Emily are playing all the big colleges making ridiculous money. Friday night \$1500, Saturday night \$2000, pick up a gig on Sunday for \$800 you know. It was crazy and it was every weekend. We were the hot thing. I remember we had this really kick ass PA[speaker system]. The guy we had running sound was great. We had all this great sound equipment and then we had to lights (laughter). We definitely weren't a show band. I can remember... It was probably 19 seven... and I don't know if all the frat houses still have the bands but I remember at the time was a band at every house. And I can actually remember sidewinder playing at one of the houses (laughter). [Being a show band] I remember they had all the lights and all the tresses [to hold lights and speakers] but shit we smoked their asses (laughter). I thought it was... I thought it was kind of full circle you know.

Definitely! So what was your major in college?

Biology.

How did music impact your life as a biology major? Did you ever think maybe I want to just do the music thing?

Well you know I was at too young of an age to know what I wanted to do. At the time my dad is a pharmacist so I guess I was going to pursue pharmacy school hence the biology major. I can remember when we were really playing a lot of music and the dean of pharmacy called me and I remember him saying Chris you need to decide if you were going to continue playing music or if you're going to become a pharmacist.

Really?

(laughter) I said I think I'm going to play music. The school stuff is too tough for me (laughter).

So what happened at that point?

Well... I didn't end up getting my degree at Ole Miss. We are there for about five years I guess I don't know... We just kept on playing music. I was still going to school some but kind of laid off because we were making a lot of money. My wife is in school so...

So going back to your experiences in your home town. Do you remember anyone that was highly influential or encouraging about your music or was it self-driven?

It was self. I didn't really have anybody. There weren't any decent guitar players around to learn from. I guess I really didn't begin to learn until I got to college because there was nobody to learn from... I guess I could have sought out an instructor or something...

So you feel like your knowledge and ability on your estimate really excelled when you met John?

Yes.

Talk about your experiences in school band. You said you weren't there very long.

In the seventh grade. I just stayed for the year.

It is interesting to me that you've played music your whole life but only stayed in school band for one year. Why do you think that...

It wasn't rock n roll. You know... It just didn't do anything for me. I just didn't care. I think I told you the story last night that the band director would just stop rehearsal... and I was playing the timpani... he would stop and just call me out and say "what are you doing? Read the music!". You know... I just wanted to play what I thought sounded good (laughter). I didn't want to read the music. I didn't want that structure. You know it was too structured I guess...

Do you feel like that instructor had some effect on your decision to quit band?

No. Probably not. I had... I had pretty thick skin as a kid.

Did you have any teachers... Maybe someone like a music teacher that was helpful with music growing up?

No. not really because starting in high school I went to there was an academy that didn't have a band program at all. So It wasn't a big enough school so no... I never really had a teacher like that.

So have there been any moment in your life or you thought about quitting music?

No... I mean for very short periods... you know when I got married and got out of the band... but I couldn't stay away from it so instead I built a recording studio so that I was able to be a part of music and be at home.

I know there is a big background with you and music studios. How did all of that start?

Well me and a friend that I actually played in a band with...

How old were you at this time?

I was probably 30 years old. This was way after college. So we were playing in a band together and just came up with... I don't know... A harebrained idea to start a studio. In the back of his house he had a little shop and we put carpet on the walls, had a reel to reel... you know bought an eight track. You know bought a little console and that's how I learned. I didn't have anybody to teach me that either. I don't know if there were books at the time but I didn't look for them if there were. Trial and error...

And where you married at this time?

Yes.

Okay how old were you got married?

20.

Okay so the recording happened way after that. Going through the trial and error process.

I mean at some point you transitioned and started recording some pretty serious people...

Yeah. So I bought that screen printing business... It was called Special Effects at the time. Guy in town had it he was getting rid of it so I bought it. It allowed me... You know it had some income so I build a metal building out in the country in Monticello Mississippi. So I built the building and put a wall up right in the middle of it. Half of it was screen printing shop the other half was a studio. We also built the loft upstairs because I knew there wasn't going to be a way to make any kind of money Recording people from Monticello because it was a town of 700 people. There wasn't anybody to record... so I put an apartment in upstairs because I knew if I could get people in from bigger... You know from Jackson... you know we did a lot of stuff where we would run a special and the bands would come in on Friday night after they got off work and we would work Friday night, work all day Saturday, and all day Sunday and they would stay out of country. It was nice because there is nothing to do but record. It wasn't like during the city where you had half the band out getting drunk and then recording. Although... there was plenty of alcohol consumed at that building (laughter). So then... I guess I started getting pretty good at [recording]. You know I had recorded some pretty decent people and then we started the record company.

And this is all in the metal building?

Correct. Most of these people whom he first got going we're local. A lot of original music with bands from Jackson Mississippi or Baton Rouge... Just different areas.

Giving you the opportunity at first to cut your teeth.

Right. I mean there were the bands that needed a demo tape to go out and get gigs you know so we did plenty of cover bands.

So essentially the business kept going until you decided hey let's start a record company?

Yeah my cousin who played with us in the hilltops... no...the hightops [band during college years]. Well we were the hightops when we played cover songs and we were the hilltops when

we played original songs. My cousin... when he finished his degree move to Oxford and moved in with me and he started playing with the band and he is a great songwriter. He probably has I don't know... 12 albums out now. After the hilltops/ high tops broke up he started another band. That group was out playing a lot of gigs and meeting a lot of great bands while I was working in the studio. They really gained a lot of respect from other bands so is easy for them to find bands that needed to record their first record. So we would bring bands in [to the studio] because bands were starting to get leery of the big record companies. Our studio try to do more artist friendly deals. Hell we own the studio so we didn't have a lot of overhead.

So for a period of time you are recording and getting the screen printing as your sole source of income? At some point you began to transition out recording as much so what happened with all that?

Well... we had kids in south Mississippi is no place to... well I will just say that Northwest Arkansas is a great place to raise kids. [My wife] just wanted to get out and so we basically just dropped everything and moved. When we did I sold on my gear out of the studio.

So how did music fit into your life at that time?

Well... I had just moved and I was still traveling back and forth during recording for about a year. So I guess we have moved here and I had I'm back and forth for about a year before I decided to sell my gear you know. I would drive down there working everything... You know Book up like 10 days, drive down there and do it, and drive back. So I did that for about a year and meanwhile I started a screen printing business where I live now and it just got to be too much. So I guess... I voice tried to not do music and it doesn't work... you know I have to do something [related to music]. So after I moved and sold on my gear somebody kept telling me this guy where I live that was a really great singer and so after a while we got together and started playing and that leads us to the present.

Do you have any memory of someone discouraging you from being a musician?

No not really... My wife is always been really supportive.

In what ways was your wife supportive? You were married young... obviously playing all the time... so what was that like?

She never complained about it. She went to a lot of gigs you know... Um, I know it was a lot of hours. She just... never complained.

Okay. Can you describe your parents' role and your musical life?

They really didn't... you know when I was a kid they bought me guitars. I'm sure if I would've wanted to take lessons they would've done that as well. But they really weren't... especially by the time you got to college. They wanted me to get a degree and be a pharmacist or whatever so they were really too supportive of the music when I got to college because I was not making good grades.

Did anyone try to discourage you for music openly was it a situation where you just knew how they felt about you playing music?

Well... my parents are pretty hard-core Southern Baptists. They weren't ever for me playing in bars you know they didn't like the idea of that. Um, and I think that was part of it but I also think that my parents are pretty "down the line" [play it safe] as far as the living goes. And I... well we have a pretty good business going now... and I just don't think I could make it on a musician's living. I don't believe I would've been fulfilled. Is a good lifestyle if you want that lifestyle [musician's life] I had a family to support.

What do you think your greatest motivation for continuing music was? What do you think your greatest motivation is today?

I just think it's that feeling you get when you sit down with people and it happens. You know what I'm talking about?

Mhmm.

You know that feeling when it all comes together and it's like... You know last night... It's just that feeling. It's not the money.

That feeling like when you first started here band?

Yeah it is. There's no other feeling like it you know? When [playing music together] gels you feel something inside.

What do you think are the most important character trait of a musician?

I think I like musicians who are... you know... there's nothing wrong with playing someone else's song. Being creative... just to be creative. I guess that's the most important thing.

Even if you're covering someone else song?

Yeah. You don't want to play just like to record but I put your own spin on it. I would save and being creative is the main thing.

How do you know that music is important to you?

Just a feeling that you get when you play music. It's like last night... I went to bed at two in the morning and got up at eight. I don't have to have the money... I don't have to do for the money. [Music] is important. When you're playing music and it gels and you're singing harmony... it's just that feeling.

Is that how you felt about working in the studio too?

Oh yeah! I would be nothing more proud than to cut a great song. When you get a great take of something... You just know it when happens...

What do you look for a musician that tells you music is important to them?

That they don't do for the money. Well...

It's a factor but not the most important one.

Yeah... I'm not really sure. It's hard to answer that question. I guess it would be like... when I got a haircut and one of my musician friends was bursting at the seams to show me this song... you can just tell... the twinkle in their time. When you see it you see it. Guess it's just like a love for anything else. People that don't loves music... have to love something.

Feel like I probably already know answer but what do you think are the main reasons for playing music your entire life?

Yes. That feeling you get.

Do you recall a specific moment when you knew that you would be a musician for the rest of your life?

I guess probably. No I don't recall specific... I guess it was a combination of things. Mostly in college playing in that band that was successful. And learned really learning guitar from people who could really play. You know once you learn that stuff it's like riding a bike can't be taken from you. I mean I don't care if you're in a band or not if you player still musician.

How do you think traditional training benefited you compared to an non-traditional training?

I don't really have any traditional training. I'm self taught. I don't read music.

Yet you've played in bands and been successful with recording other musicians throughout entire life.

Yeah. But I've never had any real traditional training. I mean like I said the vendors would start because I didn't read music. I can say this I think... looking back I wish I would've been made to

take piano lessons and made to learn to read music. I think being able to play the piano would be an awesome thing.

Do you think it's a necessity to have that traditional background to be successful in music?

No absolutely not.

Alright man well that's it thank you so much!

Participant B
9/17/2016
10:49am

Key:

() = other audible noises

[] = observer comments

Bold face = interviewer speaking

Non-Bold face = interviewee speaking

Hey man thank you so much for letting me interview you!

Absolutely I'm happy to do it.

Well if you're ready let's go ahead and get started.

Great.

Would you please state your age.

I am 51 years old.

At what age did you start playing music?

10. I started playing a recorder it's called.

And was that in a general music class?

Yes an elementary school.

Okay.

What is your primary instrument?

My primary instrument is bass but I was a tubist as well.

What is your current occupation?

I am a musician and I also work at a shirt shop.

Do you play multiple instruments?

Yes.

Did your parents play music?

Not at all.

Um, so if you had to answer never, sometimes, or often how regularly were you taking concerts?

Sometimes.

Okay good I will ask you a little bit more about that later in the interview.

Was there a lot of music played in your home growing up?

Yes.

Was it live or recorded?

It was recorded.

Did you ever take private lessons?

Not much.

Did you participate in school band or choir?

Yes. In 7th through 12th grade.

Okay... Did you go to college? Did you continue music in college?

Now I decided against that.

Describe how music fits into your day-to-day routine.

Well I plan two bands. And um, I play every day so it... I wouldn't call it a habit it's just um, it's a labor of love it's something I love to do. It's something I will do it until I can physically not do it anymore. It's one of the most important things in my life.

So you said you play every day what is your practice routine typically involve?

Basically learning new songs. You know going back and playing things I haven't played in a long long time. Cut commands because the two bands we pretty much play the same things all the time so I don't have to rehearse it that much but you know I like to learn new stuff. I also like you know to go back and play things I played along one time ago

Is this practice primarily with bass? You said you play other instruments so how does all of that work?

I still play guitar and bass.

You mentioned during the survey playing wind instruments, specifically brass. Do you still play any of those?

Not as of recent um, a few years ago we had a... what was it... an alumni band gathering to where we played at the high school. But I kind of dropped all that right after high school. There are reasons why and I will explain that in a little bit.

Okay sounds good.

Um, describe your earliest memory and music capturing your attention.

Late 60s I was probably three or something like that. Just riding in the car with my parents and listening to the AM radio. That's all we had and I remember laying in the back dash of the car and looking out the back glass and hearing great music. Some of the best music I think ever written was probably late 60s.

Can you describe what was popular and playing on the radio at that time?

Um, what was popular was... The Rolling Stones, The Beatles, you know great stuff. Some Steppenwolfe, you know, it was a new era of music. You listen to early 60s stuff, it was more surf rock like the Beach Boys and stuff like that. Then all sudden the Beatles hit and then it changes everything. It opened a brand-new door wide open and it was incredible. Psychedelia. People were writing some really bizarre stuff. They open their minds up and I thought it was great.

So even as a child you picked up on how music was changing?

Yes. And looking back at it blows my mind. I think about it. Man! That's great stuff! And it evolved so quick. I would say from 1960 in 1970 um, it may have been technology expanding but ya know to where it offered more freedom, more tracks on tape and stuff like that. The Beatles ya know just really kind of sent me in the right direction as far as music goes.

Yeah, okay! So along with your earliest memories of music... what was your earliest memory of music where you had a musical experience or experiences that lead you to an interest in playing music?

That would be just given the opportunity in grade school. You know, just that little recorder you know, I would like take it home and learn songs that I heard on the radio by ear. That was inspiring! A simple instrument made me want to become a much more complex musician.

It sounds to me like you were handed an instrument and it could've been almost anything you know?

Right, you know I used to save coffee cans and get out pots and pans and hair brushes, my mother's hair brushes and I would build a drum set. I mean I would make anything a musical instrument.

Could you think of any reasoning behind why you were so interested in music? Was your family really supportive of you making music? Were they really interested in music?

They like listening to it but, supportive at that point... I was really really young so no. It was too early in the game you know what I mean?

Yeah Yeah. So you would say you had this innate interest from the beginning?

Yeah! I was just ate up with it ever since... ever since I can remember you know music has been one of the biggest loves of my life.

So did you go and see any concerts growing up?

Not until I was 13.

So music really captured your interest through the radio growing up?

Yeah you know this is such a rural area our radio is limited here. You only have so many stations and so many genres that you can't really have much of a choice. Listen to the country station. Listen to the rock station. Listen to grandma and grandpa's station. Which I find myself listening to the grandma and grandpa station a lot more these days (laughter).

Let's see here. So... do you remember wanting an instrument but not having access to an instrument?

Um, yes and no. it's not like that is a loaded question. I want to the guitar and when I was like... I think I was 10 and um you know I just really wanted a guitar. Fortunately for my birthday my parents bought me one. An acoustic. What brand was it... I think it was a Stella or something like that. An inexpensive guitar. Funny story about this. At the time I was also in skateboarding. And I was having the time of my life man. Was 10 years old and I had a skateboard and a guitar what more could you ask for (laughter). Sadly I had to guitar out by the driveway and I was going back-and-forth on my skateboard. And I bail off my skateboard and I land on my guitar. And I snapped the neck.

Oh no!

So I walk in crying. You know, it wrecked me. I took it in the house and I was sobbing! Anyway, the next day man my parents had a guitar for me.

So it's obvious that they could see your genuine disappointment.

Yes! And I never brought the guitar around skateboard again (laughter).

So your parents definitely saw your love for music and were supportive of that?

Oh most definitely! Yes!

And at this time how did your brother play in with your early life as a musician? Was he interested in music as well? Did he helped fuel your love for music?

Oh yeah! He was also in junior high band and high school band with me. He was a trombonist I was a tubist. Low brass rocks! He also played guitar to so us as we grew older we would acquire instruments in high school. You know I finally got a bass in lieu of a class ring I got a bass (laughter). My mom was like "Well, did you choose your class ring?". I was like no mom I want to bass. She was like okay that makes more sense (laughter). I was just ate up with it [music] I still him.

Is your brother older or younger than you?

We are actually twins.

What would you say made you pursue a music in the first place?

Just my love of it. Growing up I wanted to be a rock star. There was no ceiling I was just going to keep ongoing. As far as music goes playing music in high school was a great experience. I had a tuba solo in marching band.

Not the most common instrument to be given a solo for sure.

Absolutely it was crazy. I had purple hair and it was just crazy. As I got to my senior year and started to think about my future... it's like... I didn't want to be a band director. Because I love music so much I just want to play it and learn it. I didn't want to teach it. I didn't feel like I would be band director material. I just didn't think I could do that as a career at all. I got more into popular music... radio music... I was playing clubs before I was 18 and they can't watchful eye on me (laughter). Before I know what I'm in different bands and all and I wanted to pursue that part of the music not waving the baton. And don't get me wrong I give all the respect in the world my band directors. I mean they were wonderful and very very helpful not only when I was in band. My band director taught a music theory class. I learned stuff in that class that I still use every day. I learned so much in just one year. I mean I would pay money to earnest stuff and I got to learned in public school!

Being that your primary instrument space was a defining moment that you knew you were going to play bass as your primary instrument? Because you transition. He Started out on guitar and eventually became a bassist.

Right. Well, because there're probably 30 guitar players and I didn't know any bass players.

I see. Sort of creating a niche for yourself.

Yeah I wanted to make myself valuable per se. You know if you couldn't find a bass player. You can find drummers you can find guitar players five guys and you can find some guys you can kind of seeing the bass players... Nowhere to be found. Yes and I was like bass too. Just the sound of it the low-end. Shows two separate shows to take it's the reason I chose to. You know I decided to take band sitting in there in the band director is like what instruments do you want to play? Flute, clarinet, trombone... and I'm not hearing tuba. So I was like I want to play tuba. In the band director was like I like this guy (laughter)

Typically not someone's first choice.

Yeah exactly. (laughter)

Who are the biggest direct musical influences in your life?

Early? Like as far as people?

Yes.

Band directors definitely. My band directors were influential big-time.

How so?

Just encouraging me and keeping me going. They never discourage me. They knew my potential. And if I didn't meet their expectation they would let me know. They were relentless cracking the whip or anything like that. It was more encouraging than anything.

Can you be specific about how they were encouraging or how they guided you when they were expecting more?

Just talking to me. They would hear me practice and if I didn't sound as good as they knew I could... first of all playing in the morning five days a week. I generally tried keep first chair and if I lost it would crush me. At the time we had six to the players but... If I lost it I would do everything I could to get chair back. I didn't lose it too often. Basically, [the directors] would just talk to me and encourage me. Like telling me I need to practice more you know... Use your brain... music is kind of like golf to me. It's 80% mental and 20% physical.

What kind of music did you play growing up?

Other than school music I played Rock and... played some country. The first band I was in was called double barrel. The group back this little five-year-old girl[singer] and we were actually on TV in Springfield. I think we were 12. She saying country songs and I think we even today Molly hatchet song.

Really?

Yeah it was crazy I still have a tape of that somewhere.

So that was one of your first experience working with other musicians?

Yea yea. About the same time as school band.

So you have this traditional side of music during the band program and a more non-traditional experience with double barrel. Were you playing guitar in this band?

I was actually playing bass. Our ceramics teacher... I was playing in this band with a couple of his sons and I didn't have a bass. But he had an old hagstrom hollow body bass. With like flat round strings you know? [I found it interesting that years later he remembered the make of the bass]. And it was just "thud" it sounded like an upright bass. But he would let me use the base and borrow it and I would learn on that. As far as music outside of school that was the thing I was really into. I took a couple lessons and all he wanted to teach me was basic stuff like mary had a little lamb do you know what I mean just simple stuff. I didn't want to go buy the book. I kept on playing guitar but what I would do was turn on the radio mess around, find what key it's in... you know I'm self taught as far as guitar goes. I took three lessons and realized that lessons weren't the way I was going to learn. Because I'm not being taught what I want to learn. That's pretty important right there. That's a big one!

I absolutely agree! You have to adapt and teach what the student wants to learn.

Exactly! And it makes you both happy. You know being a guitar teacher I wouldn't want to open a Mel Bay book and have to teach something you've time I Thousand other times. It's redundant and music shouldn't be redundant ever.

Let's see... you grew up playing rock do you still play that kind of music today?

It hasn't shifted too much. One band I play in place an eclectic set. A lot of folk but also some rock tunes. The other band is primarily rock. We hit pretty hard. I like to nuance between the two bands because you know. Yeah I like the variance they are both great bands. I am blessed to be around great musicians guys I'm impressed every time it doesn't matter which band. It's like I can't wait because I know it's going to be good! I'm not trying to pat myself on the back. I'm a pretty humble guy but those guys are freaking awesome.

You just get to enjoy the ride and be a part of the music.

Yeah yeah exactly! Loving it!

I could really see the joy in your face while playing last night!

Yes last night was magical! It was just incredible!

Can you tell me anything else about those first experiences with music? Let's start with band and your experiences playing in that kind of setting. Do you feel like you excelled a lot faster than the other students?

Well... in junior high my parents actually acquired a upright piano. I would spend a lot of time in the living room just messing around. I was trying to learn as much as I could about any instrument I could. I was repairing instruments at the time that's school. There were tons of instruments I remember preparing a bassoon and just digging [instruments] out [to repair]. I'm sorry I kind of spaced a question.

That's okay I was just asking about your first experiences collaborating with other musicians. Let's talk about your first experiences with double barrel. What were those first experiences playing together like?

It was great! Just I remember it very vividly. The band was premeditated. I mean as far as non-of us really knew how to play an instrument at all. We all decided that we were going to be a band before even played instruments. Matt decided to play drums, I decided to play bass, Nell decided

to play guitar, and Jeff decided to play guitar before we even learned. We were a band before we even had instruments.

So your parents were supportive in buying instruments if you needed them?

Yes. I am very thankful to them. When I started playing tuba in school we didn't have sousaphones or uprights or anything. There would be times where I would walk from the school to home with my tuba. It was about 5 miles. That was some dedication and my parents saw that. And they got sick of it. They were like he's killing himself carrying that thing and they actually bought me a tuba [to keep at home]. It was great.

Wow that's really amazing! So what was your practice experience like at home typically?

Well most of my practicing on my guitar was basically you know in my bedroom with an album on turned down low. As far as the school band side goes I remember some really really cold nights out in the garage with a brass tuba. It takes a long time to warm to let you know what I mean (laughter). I would practice a lot! All of my non-traditional training was by ear. I think... I think I was in eighth grade... The band director pulled me up in front of the class and made an example of me in a good way. He was it like in E flat on the piano and say what's that note. And I was like that's E flat. Then he would say what's this note. And I would be like E man. And what you is trying to prove to the kids was that I had perfect pitch. It can be very punishing (laughter). Especially when something is a little out of tune you know.

I wasn't aware that you had perfect pitch!

Really? Yeah its just one of those things. I feel like it's another reason why I play music. It was one of those things the band directors pulled me up there every year. You can't stump me (laughter).

So what was your practice routine for something more traditional like school band? Did you have recordings to listen to so you can play by ear or was it reading?

Oh definitely read the music and practiced. And if I had any questions I would be the first one to ask the band director because I want to buy part solid.

So what was the music scene like around here growing up?

There really wasn't much of the music scene unfortunately. I tried to make one but you know... actually the bands that I were in... we were probably the only band.

You were the music scene...

Yeah exactly. And that's pretty small. I mean amongst peers. There were adults playing in bars and stuff but our bands we're pretty much the lone rangers in the area.

Do you remember hearing any live music in the area?

Mmmm no.

You said you were 13 when you went to your first concert what was that like?

Yes. KISS!

Where was that?

It was in Memphis at the mid south Coliseum. A band called New England open for them. My aunt Linda took us. My mom drove us to Memphis. But my aunt Linda she was younger and she was like I would kind of like to see kiss too. It was a spectacle. It was pretty much a circus. It was all the original members we are talking 1979.

You were just starting to learn the guitar this time I'm sure that was a very impactful moment for you.

Yes! That was the moment. That was the moment I knew I wanted to be a rock star. He probably took getting into my early to mid 20s... to where I got to the point where I was like... I don't know if I want to be a rock star... you know because I don't think I would be comfortable with

it. Because you know I love music so much I don't want it to become a burden. To be like a job that worries me or has any negative repercussions to the music. You know I just thought I'll play music as much as I can but I don't want it to be a bad thing.

I know what you mean. If it is your only means of income it could be a very stressful situation. Did you mean from a financial perspective or was your intentions more on the side of having to play music.

Right! Exactly!

You want to be able to pick and choose when you play music.

Mhmm. Yes.

Do you feel like the musicians you were surrounded by were supportive and encouraging?

Oh yeah. I would say for my whole musical career I have surrounded myself with very very good musicians.

People that you would say are much better than you or at your level?

Yes par with me and sometimes better... a lot better.

Can you think of anyone that you look up to that grew up around that made you want to get better music?

Umm, yes I would say Larry... a tremendous guitar player. I mean just off the charts. To this day he is the best guitar player I have ever played with and he was very inspirational. He has a brother Mike who is a drummer and I played in a band with them for several years. Yeah Larry... he would do it different every night and it would be awesome every time. Very inspirational you know.

So we have not talked about your choir experience. Do you feel like choir was more or less influential than your school band experience?

I took choir for a year. Band most definitely. Band was it. Band was it choir not so much. Choir you know... I had a pretty good pitch... At the time my voice is changing and stuff... missing very good but I didn't want to overload myself with band and choir.

Did you like the teacher? Did you have any issues with the teacher?

Actually to be honest the teacher had an issue with me. I was a trouble maker and choir.

Actually... Alright... For the record I got kicked out of choir(laughter). And he was like... He was the greatest choir director ever. I mean if you ask anybody that knows this guy... nicest guy in the world. Swear to god. I was just you know young and stupid. It was to grade I think when I was in choir and I would probably get to the office once to week. Got to the point where he was like you know what your major disruption in this class and I'm going to have to remove you. You're going to have to go take a ceramics or something (laughter).

But anyway I sing. Also my children you as well. They sing great.

Do you feel as you continue didn't band that your interested band grew?

No it waned.

At what point did it stop? What was the evolution of your interested in school band?

It started to decline in the 11th grade and the reason was because I was playing a lot more guitar. And 11th grade I made state on the tuba. I made second chair. there were six chairs in each band. And... That was kind of disappointing to me. You know because you go to region and you make first been first chair. I would do that consecutively and then you go to state and you know you get knocked down a few notches. It stings a little bit it makes you want to get better. But I realize you know that I didn't want to be a band director. You know I've taught guitar and I have taught bass. The one-on-one teaching would be a lot more fun I would think. I've never been in a band director you know so I can't really speak as far as that goes. I just knew to myself that I would

end up going to college and I would end up teaching middle school band or something and that was just something I didn't want to do. I didn't want to. I wanted to keep playing music I didn't want to teach it. I mean I figured I could teach it and play at the same time but I figured if I was a band director I wouldn't play anymore. I'm not greedy [laughter] but I know what I want.

You said that your interest in school band decline around the 11th grade. Do you think that was because non-traditional music experiences like playing in your Rock group was more focused on the aspects of music that you wanted to learn compared to school band?

Oh yeah! Well you know... I was getting girls playing guitar I wasn't getting girls playing the tuba [laughter]. You know so that was kind of a game changer. And also because I started becoming a better bass player and a better guitarist. I was just ate up with it. Loved it. And as far as the school thing goes... I didn't see myself with a future in teaching and I know that's probably what would've happened if I went to college.

So what were some of the other music things you have going on during and after high school?

Church. Yeah playing churches. Playing keyboards, playing bass, you know the leading services every once in a while with music as a music director.

Where you doing the rock stuff and the church stuff at the same time?

Yeah.

So what got you into doing the church band?

Just to serve. You know... God gave me the gift so I need to share. I am grateful every day to him for blessing me with talent.

You gotta love that perfect pitch (laughter).

Was there ever a time that you thought about quitting music?

Never ever...

Do you have any memories of someone that discouraged you from music and it impacting you in a negative way?

No. None at all.

So obviously there has been a lot of positive influence in your musical life. I mean you gave everyone a 10 on the Likert scale but can you name some direct influences other than your parents for band directors.

I was really tight with the drummers and high school band. I mean my house was kind of like a refuge they could come to. I mean we had a huge drum section and I was really really close with every one of them. And there would be times where they would come over to my house and I would have stayed at my friends in my bedroom... you know a pretty small room... you know listening to Pink Floyd... And doing things that 17 year old kids do (laughter). I would stay at the school practicing until the band director would literally have to kick me out. I was there practicing or for other students or even just learning other instruments. Yeah I was that dedicated. There is just a decline in my school band interest and incline and playing popular music. I just figured you know plain popular music... I could earn money now. I didn't want to get tied into a teaching job 10 months out of the year probably teaching music to students that I don't listen to on a daily basis.

What was your private music teacher like? Was he the reason you stopped taking lessons so quickly?

Not at all. He was actually really nice. I just wasn't learning the material I wanted to learn. I found myself learning more on my own. More of the things I wanted to know on my own then he could probably even teach me.

Where as the theory class enjoyed so much you felt was more applicable to you as a musician...

Oh yes. That was the best class ever took in school. You know you can take algebra but how often do you use algebra everyday? More music classes less math classes (laughter). That's what we need!

So what do you think is your greatest motivation for continuing music?

I like to play out in front of people. You know it's not like an exhibitionist type of thing. You know a person wanting attention kind of thing but my motivation is for a group of people to enjoy one thing together it's like last night you know people ate it up. They were going nuts! They were clapping before the song would even end. That feeling you get when you are appreciated. And that's it you know. Plus I love playing music. Great part about playing music is good to hear it and you get to play it too. It's a great bonus.

In another interview we kept talking about that feeling that you get from playing music.

It's a weird thing.

This is a tough question for probably anyone that how can you describe that feeling?

I think it's just the feeling of you know you are on your game and people... it's kind of like your feed off them... I mean it's the reason you're playing. It's for them. And when they give you that response that's when you get the feeling. And of course when it sounds great like last night when we were dialed in. Everything felt perfect. There is really something magical in the air. It really was. It's a great feeling. But it's a feeling that's really hard to describe.

So that your motivation now do you feel like that's what it always was?

I just really enjoy playing music. It's just the self-satisfaction. I tried to learn as many instruments as I possibly can. You now a pretty good keyboard player. I'm a decent drummer and it's because I spent a lot of time practicing. A lot of time. You know kids were outside playing football and baseball and I was stuck in the house rehearsing.

How do you know that music is important to you?

Because I go to bed with a song in my head every night and I wake up with a song my head every morning. It's one of my favorite things in life.

What do you look for or what do you see musicians that tells you music is important to them?

There's a vibe musician gives off when they're on their game. They're basically spreading the love of music to their audience and the audience receives it. They know you know? Man there are some great players out there that are just sterile. Just You know emotionless. Music... is a feeling... it's not supposed to be mechanical and it's not supposed to be perfect. You know I've seen some great players that just did not move me at all. I've seen some mediocre players bring me to tears.

Can you recall a specific moment that you knew you wanted to be a musician for the rest of your life?

Just as soon as possible teaching myself how to play the guitar I knew that I would never put it down. As far as my future goes. I will not stop playing music until I physically or mentally am not capable. One of my biggest fears is declining as a musician [silence] yeah I don't want that to happen [interviewee tears up].

What do you think is the main reason kept playing music your whole life?

Just because it's enjoyable. It's a very very fun thing to do. And I mean the more you do it the better you get, the better you get the better you sound, and the more fun it is.

How do you continue to use your musical talents? How do you continue to grow as an artist?

Learn your stuff and practice and play weekly live. You know being in two bands I'm pretty active so...

For my last question, how do you think traditional training benefited you in comparison to an non-traditional music training?

Well theory. Theory was a huge huge thing for me. Much larger than going to band practice in school you know. I looked forward to that class because I knew I would learn something every day and even at a young age before I was out of high school I was applying it. If I would not have taken that class I would not be the musician, I am today. It was very important. With the non-traditional stuff I mostly learned by ear. Having perfect pitch... It was probably a lot easier for me than others.

So obviously both non-traditional and traditional learning have played an important role in your life as a musician. Do you feel like one was more beneficial than the other?

I would consider it 50-50. You're not taught a whole bunch in school band but as far as music theory goes and by non-traditional learning you know learning things on my own I would say that each one... Each one helped each other you know. Theory helped me learn on my own. So I would have to say that that's pretty equal right there.

Man thank you so much that's a wrap.

That's a wrap?

That's a wrap (laughter).

Participant C
9/20/2016
1:30pm

Key:

() = other audible noises

[] = observer comments

Bold face = interviewer speaking

Non-Bold face = interviewee speaking

Hey man thank you so much for doing this interview I really appreciate it! If you are ready let's go ahead and get started.

Alright buddy sounds good!

What is your age?

60.

What is your job title?

Well right now I'm retired. But for 35 years I worked as a chemist and a quality manager at a laboratory.

Okay. At what age did you start playing music?

About 11 or 12.

What is your primary instrument?

Guitar.

Do you play multiple instruments?

Currently I would have to say no. I played the saxophone for about six years in and that was it.

Did either of your parents play musical instruments?

Yes. They both did. They both played the piano and my dad also play harmonica.

Tell me a little bit about how that worked? Did they just play around the house or Church or did they play gigs?

My mother played in church and also played around house. She sang and also played piano at church and especially at home. My dad was self taught and played by ear. He never took a lesson in anything and he played the hell out of the piano. It would just blow your mind.

And did he ever play outside at home?

His harmonica playing is what got him on the road a little bit in a minstrel show in Mississippi when he was growing up. One of his uncles was running a minstrel show and got my dad down there to help him keep the books but also let him play his harmonica. He played a chromatic harmonica.

Wow that is neat! Is this something he did for a living or was this just growing up?

It was a pastime for him. He grew up on a farm. He went to the university of Arkansas and eventually became a pharmacist.

Okay. What did your mother do?

For years she was a homemaker. She worked in flower shop. Her claim to fame is when she got into food service. She was a food service director at two schools.

Are you taken to concerts growing up?

Sometimes. Maybe once or twice a year growing up. After high school I went to more. On my own I would go to six or eight concerts every year.

Was there a lot of music played where you grew up?

Yes. I played in bands growing up. And one I played saxophone and the other I played guitar.

Okay. You also sing harmony as well as play guitar and your current band correct?

Correct.

Did you ever take private lessons?

Other than a structured school environment? No. Nothing beyond that.

How long were you involved in band?

I started in the seventh and the last two years [of high school] I actually didn't play in band. I stopped in the 11th grade. I actually have an interesting story about that too...

Yeah. Go ahead.

Okay. So... a lot of my buddies played in the band and played football. You know... Athletes were in football, basketball, baseball... all that. When I was in the 11th grade and our coach and band director had serious confrontations. Eventually all this came to a head and all of the athletes that were also in band were called to be super intendent's office. I think there were eight of us. They pulled us in there one by one and asked do you want to play football or do you want to play in the band? Looking back... it was probably one of the saddest days of my life. Because I chose football because... well... peer pressure. So I had to give the band in the fall of my 11th grade year. I called that the day the music died... you know I like the song.

Yeah yeah.

I always feel like the decision was made for me. Even though I chose I should've been able to get both. It was always an endless struggle. I played college football. I got a scholarship to play football but there was always this musician in me that wanted to come out. You know I played guitar around the dorm but it was all in a casual setting... it was nothing serious. I just didn't have time for it. It wasn't until after college that I started playing a band. You know the happiness [of music] came back.

So... I'm kind of jumping around but that was there ever a time where are you completely quit playing music?

There were about two years where I didn't play shit. Guitar or saxophone or anything.

Was that in college?

That was... That was in college. I'll tell you what happen. I was home one working on the farm. And I took my saxophone for Memphis and sold it and bought a Stratocaster. So I put the old kiss of death on the saxophone because I wanted a electric guitar. I went for two years without an amplifier. That was just something you didn't buy back then. It was a lot of money. My amp was like \$450 dollars back then which was a lot of money to save up. Anyway I would say that is the only period that was significant that I did not play.

So what were your experiences playing with other musicians?

In high school I played in two bands besides the school band. The first band was sax, two trumpets, guitar, bass, drums and a keyboard player. There were like seven or eight of us. We were playing things like blood sweat and tears or... Otis Redding... things like that.

Let's... I'll ask you things a little later about that. I definitely want to hear about those experiences I just want to keep this on track ask if any questions.

Okay.

Describe how music fits into your day-to-day routine?

I would call it fully integrated. There are many days ago by that I don't play for at least an hour. Mostly I play some in the morning and then a little more in the afternoon. On average I practice maybe 3 to 3 ½ hours.

Wow that's great! What about gigs? How often do you play out?

Probably twice a month.

Describe your earliest memories of music capturing your attention?

I went to a Beatles concert in 1966. I was 11 years old. It was in Memphis at the mid-south Coliseum. August 19, 1966.

Described that moment. What was that like for you at 11 years old?

It was like winning the lottery just without the money (laughter). Not many people got to do that. Unbeknownst to me my mother bought my brother and I tickets... and also my two cousins. I remember my aunt took us to the concert. My brother and I set up almost as high as you can go on the coliseum. I had binoculars. This is also back in the day when sound systems weren't worth a shit. If you ever saw the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan show... You remember all the girls screaming? That's a perfect example of what it was like. Because in the concert what happened was if you could hear the music... that would make the girls start to scream... and when the girls screamed it would drown out the music. You could barely hear the music up where I was. Then it would start to come down and you could hear the music again and that would make the girls begin to scream more again (laughter).

Oh my goodness!

It was an unbelievable experience!

Would you say that was the beginning of when you were interested in playing music or would it have been before that?

I can't remember if it was before that or not but I can definitely say that concert was the catalyst that made me in lots of other folks want to play. It definitely peaked my interest for sure.

I can imagine that would be an amazing experience.

It was.

Well let's see do you ever wanting an instrument but not having access to it?

Yes. The very first guitar that I got... I still got it hanging in my man cave. It's called a prestige. It's a little Spanish looking guitar. It was in the Sears catalog for like \$29. I remember looking at that guitar in that catalog for so long... it's embarrassing how long (laughter). I wanted that son of a bitch so bad. And I finally got for Christmas I think about the second year I was wanting it.

Wow! You were asking for a guitar for a long time before it ever really happened.

Meanwhile... your parents were musicians... did you ever try to play piano or harmonica before you got your guitar?

We had a piano at the house and I play the harmonica a bit. I learned a few songs on that. It just wasn't anything I was passionate about.

Guitar music what do you think made you passionate about the guitar? Was that the music you listen to?

I just love the way it sounded. I know that sounds pretty weak but I just loved the tone of the guitar and I wanted to make it sound like that.

Do any moments stand out where you remember hearing the guitar and thinking, "I love the way that sounds"?

Let me think. I can't think of a specific moment. I will tell you this... ice to watch the show with Roy Clark called Hee-Haw out of Nashville. I was probably in the eighth or ninth grade. I loved to listen to him play guitar. It's not the kind of music I listen to today but he was an impressive guitarist. Also listening to George Harrison [of the Beatles] play. It was a song called "I saw her standing there".

And how old were you at that time?

I was probably 10 or 11.

Okay. What made you pursue music in the first place?

I know it sounds cliché but it soothes my soul. It really does. It just hit me up inside.

I talked about this with others in previous interviews. It's just this feeling that happens when the music clicks. It's hard to describe but I think every musician has the feeling.

Exactly! So I think it's probably something in common. Yes. I mean... I'm in my happy place when I'm playing music.

So... would you say there is a defining moment that you knew you wanted to play guitar? Or since you started playing saxophone at the same time when you say your interests were split?

It was split somewhat. When we were told we could not be in the[school] band... I had no use... I had no use from alto saxophone. Here is something I did not tell you. Back when I played in the dance band as a horn player. I needed a tenor sax. The band I was in was kind of an interesting dynamic. We had a freshman in college, about three seniors [in high school], about three juniors [in high school], and I was a freshman [in high school]. I was the youngest player. The bass player came to be and asked if I knew someone I could borrow a tenor sax from. It was a girl that played in the high school band with me. She let me borrow her tenor sax every... damn... gig I played for like three years.

Wow!

Yeah she just played it during the marching season. Just so I would borrow it on the weekends and say I'll bring it back on Monday. Even back then those tenor sax is we're like \$700. My alto sax was like 300 bucks. Sorry... I'm getting off topic. The question was winded I wanted to play guitar... probably sometime in college. I haven't been playing saxophone because I didn't have one. Tell you it there was another time in life when I was practicing a lot more and that's when I bought my Martin [acoustic guitar].

Okay. Well let's talk about that.

Well... I bought my Martin in 2008. I went from playing 30 minutes today 3 three days a week to where I am now [3 hours per day]. And often times I remember my fingers being so damn sore I couldn't even play. And what it is... And you know this too... is that [the instrument] just sounds better. It sounds a hell of a lot better and it makes you just want to get better.

Okay. So how did you get started playing guitar? Like... once you got your guitar what was the process to learn?

I bought a book that showed the chords. Back then that's about what you would do. Just buy a book that shows the chords. In The next book I bought was a Beatles song book. And that was followed by an Eagles songbook where it showed all the chords. And that's kind of where I got started. I taught myself. That's probably one of my biggest regrets... That I didn't take lessons... because I would be so much better than I am now. I just didn't learn [technique] the right way.

Who were the biggest direct musical influences in your life?

I would have to say my dad mostly.

In what way was he influential?

Just by example. I remember thinking if you can learn how to play piano solo by ear surely I can learn to play the guitar that way. Yeah mostly [my dad]. His level of musicianship was unbelievable for someone who had never taken a lesson.

What were your interactions like with your father and music? How did he support you?

He was very supportive. He was always going to dish out the compliments. Looking back... he would give compliments probably even if I didn't deserve them. He would overdo it with the complement sometimes you know because he was trying to encourage me. And it worked... And it worked.

Did he take you to gigs or have you play with him on gigs ever?

No not really... I remember my mom taking me to see the sound of music when I was a kid. The play... that was probably your before I saw the Beatles. [The Sound of Music] was the shit back then. Yeah that's probably another [influence] looking back. As corny as those songs were... The stories in the struggle told him that play probably had some effect on me as well.

How old are you at this point?

Is the use of your earliest memory of music is your parents playing?

Yeah when I was a little bitty kid in church watching my mom and acquire and my dedication my singing in the choir.

How old think you were this point?

5 or 6. Looking back church is probably the common denominator setting for a lot of this. Because you sing a lot. You know... in Sunday school and listening to my parents sing in church.

What Do you like was there a lot music played in your home such as live or recorded?

Yeah. It peaked around Christmas time but it was all year long.

Using did you have other family members that would come over and play music?

Probably not. My brother plays a little bit but not very much. My sister plays the piano... still does. My brother also played in high school band. I guess as far as family sitting around and play music together it was mostly my brother and I. We both played guitar. On a lot of the songs we would both play and I would play the guitar part and he would play the banjo part on guitar.

What kind of music were you interested in playing growing up?

Before I discovered Lynyrd Skynyrd. I listen to a lot of blood, sweat, and tears, Chicago, Sly the family Stone, Otis Redding, Ace Cannon was my hero on the sax. Ace had a song called tuff sax that I really liked. I remember playing that a lot in the dance band I played in. To focus more on the question I would say when I stopped playing sax and focus more on guitar my interests in music also changed.

And what kind of music they did change you as you focus more on guitar?

The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, that kind of stuff... what we would call classic rock today. That's probably the key type of music I still play today.

When I was a kid we had a band called A/C and the spark plugs. We mostly play baseball bats (laughter) that's just how badly wanted to play but I didn't have a guitar at the time.

How old were you at this point?

I was probably 10.

Did the band ever come to fruition?

No. Once I got a guitar I spent a lot of time practicing at home. I didn't have a band I played guitar in until my freshman year of college.

Okay. Well let's talk about your first band your freshman year of high school. You were just playing sax in this band. What were your experiences like with this group?

We mostly played out in places like community centers and private parties. My mom... She agreed to let me do this because the bass player's dad went to all our gigs. I wrote to the gigs with them and his dad would watch over us.

So I'm assuming you played in that band all through high school?

Yes. It fizzled out when I went to college.

So now you are a freshman in college. You have started a new band playing guitar. What was this experience like for you?

It only lasted about six months before I moved. I remember wanting to play because it attracted all the good-looking girls. Have you ever noticed that music does that? (laughter) I would say that's definitely another influence for continuing to play was the attention.

What was the music scene like where you grew up?

I grew up in a small town close to Memphis. I can probably describe it in two words. Elvis Presley. We were 35 miles from Memphis, where Elvis lived. So everything around that area at the time we're bands trying to sound like Elvis. You know... that makes between Delta blues and Rock. There were lots of street dances in my town that I remember going to almost every Saturday night. I remember feeling mesmerized as a kid by a live band. I remember just standing right in front of them... It's probably why I can hear shit now.

Okay so let's shift gears to your school band experiences. Let's start off with just your overall impression. I am assuming it's positive because you regret leaving in the 11th grade, but go ahead and tell me a little bit about your overall experiences.

It was a lot of fun. It really was. When I was in junior high we play all the football games and marched. I remember playing different events. I remember going to contest in Hot Springs and Little Rock and whatnot. For small band it was a really good program. Out of all the small-town bands in the state we were definitely one of the better ones. I really enjoy going to those competitions. We had a sax quartet that won several medals. You get a medal if you score a one or a two. I had mostly ones but a couple of two's.

And so what did you think about the music for school band? At the time you're listening to rock outside of school but I am assuming you weren't playing that kind of music in school band.

We had one band director that did an adaptation of a Beatles song for our school band. It just sounded so sterile that he eventually decided against it.

So would you like the music selection as long as the band was sounding good?

I really didn't care too much for the music we were playing.

What about your band directors? Do you feel like they were very influential and your music?

Not really. I feel like they spent more time working on competitions than working with individuals. They were just that kind of bunch... not really a huge influence in my life.

Well on the flipside of that you were a college football player. What were your coaches like in terms of influence? I'm just trying to piece this together. I'm wondering if maybe you chose football because you had coaches who are more invested in you as an individual.

Yes I had two or three coaches that were pretty influential.

Okay. So we've talked through all of your bands up until the one you are in presently. Were there any other groups that you played in?

In 2001 a lot of the administrative employees where I worked... There were several decent musicians. Actually, there were a couple of really good musicians that work there. We played in a group together for a while. We played at the county fair and several events around the area. It didn't last too long. It was just something to do on the side. I played another band before that that for several years until I got married. My marriage squelched a lot of my playing out.

How old are you during this time?

I graduated from college at 23. I started playing in the earlier band until I got married at 25. I stopped playing music for the public until that band in 2001. After that fizzled out it wasn't until about five years ago that I started playing with the group I am in now.

Work and things now with my dad so after you got married and you're playing out slowed down what were you doing to continue music? Did you stop completely?

No just basically playing at home. Sometimes on the weekends I would have friends over and we would have jam sessions but nothing professionally or semi-professionally that I could make money at

What was practicing like for you? How did you improve as a musician during this time?

I would just go off into one of the bedrooms or go outside... You know just get some seclusion in practice by myself. Sometimes I play music with my kids a little bit. My daughter especially... She would like to sing while I played. We would sing together and play Christmas songs. Sometimes we would play together during the holidays. Most of the time I would play 3 to 4 days a week on a good week. And sometimes I wouldn't play for a week at all. I rarely went to a month without playing.

Were your practice sessions similar to you when you were first learning to play the guitar? Doing things like using a book and your memory of the song to play by ear?

I did it by ear. At that point in time I was good enough to where I Didn't need a book. ParI would just listen to the song play it. Most times it took about one try. Some songs would take more it just depends on the complexity.

Right... do you have any memories of someone discouraging you from music?

I guess... The one individual... Would have been my head football coach. He basically did everything he could to discourage me from music. Basically... he thought you got your whole life to play music and you're only going to play high school football during high school. He thought you can go off and play music but you're definitely not going to do it while you're playing football for me. That was some of the harshest discouragement I think someone could give.

Do you think that really affected you in a negative way about music?

I think it did but I overcame it. His discouragement... mostly... was making you think that music was for pussies. So that was kind of the mindset that he portrayed. You know... do you want to be in the band and be a sissy or do you want to play football with the men.

Hmm...

And that is so sad. You know... he won a state championship his first year coaching but people still hate his ass. He was such a jerk. It's amazing how much a negative person can influence kids.

Yeah that is sad. It makes me wonder how many other kids he affected in that way. You know... turned away from music.

And Countless people I would imagine... I don't think he probably ever changed. I know that he had a negative impact on several people that I went to high school with. I'm just glad I was strong enough to overcome that type of shit. Looking back I really had an inner struggle with that for a long time. You know... I love music so much and I remember feeling squelched or condemned for even considering staying in band during school or even just playing an instrument or singing.

Okay well let's go ahead and look at the flipside of this... what do you think your greatest motivation for playing music was growing up?

Probably the love of it. I always had a passion. You know... The way it makes me feel. Now I have to be honest. Girls flock towards musicians and I wanted some of that attention. I love that immediate response. I couldn't say it's the main reason... You know there's something about

when harmony comes together and you're part of the harmony. That's sort of the challenge I put out to myself is how can I make the group I'm in sound better.

So what do you think the greatest motivation for playing music is today?

You know in addition to the previous stuff a lot of my time practicing now is spent on song writing. Half the songs I have written I don't have half of the words or any words to some of them but I enjoy composing. It's a challenge for me. It pushes me to a new level. I've been writing for 25 years but I have been writing more than ever within the last year or so because I have more time.

What do you think are the most important character traits of a musician?

As in what makes a good musician? I would say how well they play with others. Just like kids on a playground. Can they mix well in the group even if they don't get their way. Do they love music as much as I do. I want them to love music as much as I do. I want them to get that same feeling I get.

That leads well into my next question which is how do you know that music is important to you?

I believe that I would have had a heart attack by now if I hadn't had music in my career. Because music is a really blood pressure lowering activity. I mean I would come home some days from a very stressful situation and pick up that guitar and I'm in another world. I am on blood pressure medication and when I was monitoring it closely there was a difference after I got home and started playing the guitar. So music to me is just soothing and a stress relief.

That is great! What can you see in a musician that tells you music is important to them?

If they walk the walk not just talk the talk. I call them like I see them. I can tell they are serious if they come in prepared and I can tell they have been practicing. I can tell if they come to a gig and we haven't played for a while... you know if they have taken a step backwards in their proficiency... that something to me... I don't really like that. If they are not doing their homework then it effects the way the group sounds and our level of enjoyment is going to go down.

Can you recall a moment in time where you knew that you would be a musician for the rest of your life?

I can't recall a specific moment in time but I definitely knew I would be a musician for the rest of my life from an early age. It was just to ingrained from an early age. I mean I walk around with a song in my head every day. To the point sometimes where it's pretty damn annoying. If it is a song I am wanting to learn or a song I have just learned that song will be in my head the whole day (laughter). I've been doing that since I was a child.

What do you think are the main reasons you can't playing music your whole life?

I think the main reason is I love the way it sounds and I love the way music makes me feel. I think some of these other reasons like getting attention and it's cool don't have the staying power that the one answer I gave you does...Just the feeling I have when I'm listening or playing to music. When the attention fades the one remaining elements is a love for music. Sheer enjoyment.

So I just had two more questions. How do you think traditional training like school band benefited you compared to in traditional training?

Although I don't know the scales on the guitar... I feel like my traditional training on saxophone was very very helpful in teaching me how to reach a high level of proficiency. Not that I am extremely proficient but whatever level I am at was afforded to me by having participated in high school band. You know having that structured environment for work ethic and practice routine in

music. You know I have a lot of positive things to say about school music programs in terms of them pointing kids in the right direction. It gives a lot of students the opportunity to experience music and at least see if they like it. Band gives them the opportunity to see if music could be a part of their life whether it's just listening to music or playing music or both.

I totally agree. You have to give kids not only the opportunity but a positive atmosphere where they feel appreciated and where they feel like what they are doing is both relevant and worthwhile.

And I think parents are a key part of that too. Because when a kid brings home a set of drums a lot of families aren't going to put up with that constant noise for very long before they start passively or directly discouraging it. My parents understood this. There was a time or two where my mom would come into my room on a school night at one in the morning and catch me playing guitar. I thought I was playing the guitar real low and then she would storm in and tell me to put that damn thing away (laughter).

That's a really good point though. I feel like a lot of kids in band to play wind instruments probably experienced this on a much more frequent basis.

So do you feel like traditional training was more beneficial or non-traditional training?

For me they kind of go hand-in-hand however if I had to pick one I would say non-traditional training. Because that's what most of my music life has been. The traditional training was a snapshot in comparison to the rest my life.

So for my final question... I kind of came up with this during the first interview and have continued it through the others because I think it is an interesting question. Many musicians describe this magical feeling that occurs at certain moments while playing music. I think this feeling is something everyone experienced when I was observing you the other night... me, the band, and the audience. So how would you describe that feeling in your own words.

Now... Not always do you have that feeling when playing music but the other night when you were there we were really gelling and it is magical! You look out in and you can see that every single table is paying attention and if you just stop and listen the music is really sounding great. There were some times where I thought that we sounded actually very very good. From the dynamics of all the way to the accuracy of the performance. I don't get me wrong there were some moments where things like the tempo dragging would happen but there were some really good moments that night. I'll always tell the guys this... we really feed off of that audience. I've seen as go from mediocre to awesome just on audience response. It's a great feeling. You don't get that all the time. I feel like I'm no different than anybody else that when you see somebody positively respond to what you're doing it puts energy back into you immediately.

Participant D
9/20/2016
6:38pm

Key:

() = other audible noises

[] = observer comments

Bold face = interviewer speaking

Non-Bold face = interviewee speaking

Alright let's get started thank you very much for letting me interview you if you wouldn't mind let's start by stating your age please.

52.

And what is your job title?

I am a hairstylist and a musician.

And at what age did you start playing music?

I started singing when I was really... I was probably five or six. I started playing guitar when I was 13.

Do you play multiple instruments?

Not really. I play guitar but I'm a primarily a singer.

Did either of your parents play guitar?

Yes my father played bass and sang.

Do you have memory of being taken to concerts growing up?

You know more of my memories are... you know he played music so I really remembered 45s to learn songs. All you had was a turntable back then. So my brother and I would sing them and try to learn the words before my dad. That's one of my first memories of music. My brother and I would just play records play records play records...

That definitely answers my next question which was there a lot of music played in home?

Yes totally all the time.

What about jam sessions? Do you remember attending any live music at home?

Yes I would go to rehearsals with my dad and he would go over to his buddies and play music. I remember going to his concerts on the weekend. You know church had a lot music back then. Gospel you know. Especially on my mom side they would get together and do all that church gospel stuff.

What about big concerts? Did your parents ever take you to any?

Yeah some. When I was a teenager I want to see the Doobie Brothers. The first concert I ever went to you was a Black Oak concert and they were playing in my old neighborhood. I remember they sent all the neighbors free tickets because they were playing in the neighborhood. I went to that and I remember seeing Jim dandy come in on a helicopter playing with a guitar player that was 13. That really impressed me you know. He was a 13-year-old kid and you know... Well he was guitar player of the year and guitar player magazine.

Wow! So how old were you at this time?

I was probably 16. I've probably seen AC/DC like 10 times. They are probably the ones I've seen the most. Probably from like age twenty to thirty.

Did you ever take private lessons?

No.

Did you ever participate in school band or choir?

Not really. I mean we had some vocal choirs a couple times... I mean I remember some in seventh grade but not really... I just remember always being able to sing.

Would you say your parents were big musical influence in your life?

I guess my dad more than anything. It was because of him I knew it could be done.

What about your brother?

Well we were the same age... About your part... so we were in a lot of bands together growing up. He was the better [instrumentalist] and I was the better singer. So I always ended up being a singer and bands which he didn't like. I think we fought as much as we played.

Were there other musicians around you growing up that you found to be influential?

As you're going along in the music you see musicians you are better than you and you gravitate to that and that's how you get better you know.

Describe how music fits into your day-to-day today routine.

Umm... every minute that I'm not working, I'm listening to a new song or I'm playing at night. I play about two or three nights a week. Usually on the weekends. That's what I do... So I'm usually learning new songs to do one man shows or when I'm playing with the big group. I learn different songs depending on what band I'm playing. But I'm always listening to music.

Describe your earliest memory of music capturing your attention.

Probably like I was saying earlier just listening to 45s with my brother. I just remember listening to so many songs. But yeah that was the earliest memory have music for me.

What's your earliest memory of being attracted to the guitar?

Probably living out in the country when I was about 13. We didn't have nothing to do. We didn't have nothing to do so we played the guitar, howling at the moon (a reference to one of his songs), (laughter). That's it that's what happened.

Do you ever remember wanting an instrument but not having access to it?

Yeah probably... it wasn't that I didn't have an instrument I guess maybe I wanted one that was better than the one I had.

What made you want to pursue music in the first place?

Just the love of it. I never was a very smart. I was more creative. I was creatively smart. Not a book guy... I'm all feel.

was there any type of encouragement early on? Did anybody recognize the fact that you could sing well?

Well I remember my brother, even as a kid, could pick stuff out really well on the piano. So my parents never really said anything to me because they thought that my brother was the talented one. And he is very talented, truly. But I'm just saying nobody really gave me any attention about it early on... you know I can tell you when my brother started a little band when he was 15 and I went over there. He didn't want his little brother over there. But I wound up seeing a few songs with them and the other guys want to meet in the band. That some of my first memories of getting attention from music and liking it. It's a good feeling but I really liked the creativity part, recording things...

Yes I was going to say you're a songwriter so that sounds more up your alley.

Yeah that's more me. I mean I like to play live but I want to write and record stuff. Something that's going to be around forever.

Being that your primary instrument is voice was there a defining moment when you knew that you wanted to be a singer?

I just got really good at emulating other singers. I got started realizing that I could sing pretty close to other peoples' voices. You now... eventually figure out which one is your voice... but... I just knew... I mean I could always sing. I don't remember a time when I could not sing. It's just my thing. I don't really know how I learned it's just something I've always done.

Well it sounds to me like you just grew up with it. It is almost like speaking a second language. So a quick follow-up to your experience with your brother's band. Was that your first time singing in a band and how old were you?

I was probably 13... well me and my brother sat around the house and played songs before that.

When did you start playing the guitar and when did you to start playing music together?

Well I was 13 and my brother was a little older probably 15. When we started playing together I was probably 14 so he probably would've been 16. And we would just start playing these bands. Like I said it's hard because my brother is trying to be separate from me. It was real hard for him when his friends told him that they wanted me in the band (laughter).

So who is your biggest musical influence before you started that first band and who is your biggest musical influence after?

You know really... Me and my brother... That was all we had. We just had all these records and we would learn to play all the songs on them together. Once we got good enough we would have all these parties... our parents would have these big parties down on the river at the farm. All these people would come over and we would have big guitar parties. That's when I started to realize you can get attention for this and I started playing all the time. When I was a kid you would go to all these parties. There would be like keg parties out in the woods and we would I'll bring our guitars and play music you know... it was a big deal.

Wow okay so you were how old at this time?

You know 15/16. There were a lot of guys around town that you know... drove for rock groups like Ted Nugent, Super Tramp, Black Oak... all those bands stayed in town all the time. So we knew [the drivers] and they always have parties and my brother and I were pretty good [at music]... better than a lot of the adults that were playing music so they would invite us over even as kids. We could always get in. That's kind how it started right there. all those little river parties. We would play for hours.

So overall and your musical experiences who would you say were the biggest musical influences in your life?

I would say the Beatles.

Well... I mean it direct influence such as a parent or friend.

Oh I see... probably my brother we were always trying to... well we only had one guitar. But you know he would learn something then, I would learn something, he knew more than I knew so then I would want to know that to. I would say going to concerts and stuff like that really had an impact on me. You know as far as the person goes...I...I don't know.

It sounds to me like there was a competition... not that that is why you got into music but like... something about that competition between you and your brother kept you going.

Yeah. That's what made me get really good.

Would you describe the music they played growing up?

When we were young. We played Skynrd man. We played Leonard Skynyrd, Marshall Tucker, thirty-eight special, ya know foreigner probably, and David Bowie. We were like Skynrd freaks thought. That was our shit.

How old were you?

We are probably 15 or 16. We used to go to place called the Cedar tap and Missouri. It was a dry county so we can always play Missouri.

Do you feel like the music you play now is different?

Well I play American roots. That's what I like.

So do you feel like the music you listen to now is music that you would've listened to as a kid?

Oh yeah definitely. I was and am really into John Prine and The Beatles.

Well my next question is asking you to talk about your first experiences as a collaborator.

But I was wondering if you could touch on... you know for me I remember that first experience playing in a band playing with other musicians and the way that feels when you hear the music fit together for the first time. Do you remember that feeling and first experience pretty vividly?

Oh yeah. That's the only reason you do it isn't it? I don't think I'm like everybody else. I don't think I'm crazy but I don't think I'm like everybody else. Music is a language you know what I mean... to me. That's why I do it. Some of those kids I used to play with growing up they would learn [Lynrd Skynrd songs] exactly like the record and that is hard to do. Some of those guitar parts were very difficult. We were good. We were going some of the older bands away.

So you had this really great guitar player and your bands. Was he inspiring to you or did you look at him as more of a member and you were just glad he was there?

You know what... I always just memorized guitar stuff you know what I mean. I never learned scales or anything like that. I just play guitar to facilitate myself where I can sing. I still can't tell you notes or what fret I'm at... I memorize it... I'm a singer.

What were the other musicians like in the band? Were they encouraging?

Oh yeah. Usually nobody wants a singer... They are ready got one. So you have to be good for people to want you, but I always have that situation. I don't know how to say stuff like that I'm not bragging it's just out of all of [my friends] I was the best singer and all of us noon.

What was your practicing like growing up?

I just got one of those brains that goes over and over and over and over and over songs in my head. If I learn something I can get out of my brain.

So if you were learning a brand new song would you do?

I would drive down the road with it playing in my car in listen to it over and over and over.

So never in your life have you learned a song by reading music or anything like that?

No. I mean I write a lot of songs [lyrics and chords] but I don't want her reading music. I listen to recordings.

Describe the music scene where you grew up.

I would say kind as Ozark Mountain daredevils. Kind of hippie country. Black Oak Arkansas...I mean they all lived right here.

Do you remember at the parties you went to hearing that kind of music?

Oh yeah I remember the black oak kids had a band and we had a band. We would get a few generators and party in the barn.

Was the music pretty much out and the country or do you remember hearing music in town? Was there any place to do that at the time?

Know. Where I grew up... They didn't allow anything like that. Where I grew up they only had two types of music... Country and Western[laughter].

So tell me about the musicians in the Black Oak kids' band. Where are they encouraging or was it more of a competitive atmosphere?

We never did interact a whole lot until my 20s when they came to me wanting me to sing a band. But we didn't have a lot to do with each other. They were kind of like the rich kids and we were more... talented[laughter].

So when you say the Black Oak kids you mean the children of the band members of Black Oak Arkansas?

Yea yea yea. They went to school with us.

What do you remember about your elementary general music class?

Our music didn't really go to school with us. Music was after school [playing at home].

But you had music class right?

Yes the only thing I remember is singing a Paul McCartney song. I had choral music once but I didn't stay in it. It wasn't a big influence for me.

Why do you think that was? Being a singer what blocked your interest?

I'm just a little more free flow then all that. You know even if I'm singing somebody else's stuff I always do it my own way. I don't need somebody to teach me parts and keep me hemmed in.

So essentially you know what you do whether somebody likes it or not you just have to do it in the way that you do it.

It's like the other night after we finished playing I did karaoke. I did an Otis Redding song. I didn't even look at the screen because I wasn't following the words. That's just the way I sing it I don't the [rhythmic flow] on my screen to screw me up. Have always been that way. Don't tell me how to do it just let me do it.

As far as the music goes in your general music classes... would you say that you enjoyed the music?

I don't think so. Not much. That's why it bored me. I think that's why I quit.

Have there been any moments where you thought about quitting music or you did great music?

Yeah. I had a couple of record deal things go sour. People being greedy. I kind of quit for a while. I was probably about 30. I got back into it about two or three years after that and then I just quit for a long time. Maybe four or five years that I just stopped.

So you say you got your first record deal that fell through. You got another band got another record deal and that also fell through. So you didn't sing or write or play guitar or anything while you quit?

Yeah there for a time. I came back home. I was recently divorced and just trying to make a living. I had to raise my son. I just had to get out of it. But now I play music more than I ever did.

Do you have any memory of somebody discouraging you from music?

Not really it would not have mattered.

Do you have a memory of anybody pushing you harder to get better?

Just people in the band. I think that's what you do to get better. That's kind of game.

So did anybody ever have to come down on you and press you to learn your parts?

Ain't nobody ever got to wait on me.

What was your parents' role like in your musical life?

They were kind of hippie-ish. They're kind of liberal about music and art. Not real straight and uptight so it gave me the ability to listen to whatever kind of music I liked. If it was the Beatles they weren't like oh my god you can't listen to that. It was a big musical era there weren't video games and things like that. It was all music.

So... Since you weren't in activities like school bands I'm curious to know the evolution of your bands outside of school. Can you go into some detail about that?

You know I just walked in right door one day. And all those years of seeing to records and playing guitar and playing at parties came to use. Once I walk through that door and sang for my brother's friends... that was the first band. That was the first time ever started playing a band and it was just because I walked in the right door. My older brother was and playing music with his friends and I just happen to go over there to get him one day and they were all jamming.

Got you. How long did you play in the band?

Let me think here. I was probably 14 or 15. That band ended when I was 18 or 19 but some of us still play together after that... just different permutations of the band. When we got our first offer for a record deal I was probably 25. We had a lot of interest from major companies but I think we showcased too quick and it wasn't a strong band. We had a really good recording but that was it. They actually signed us about six months later but they started stealing the money. It was just a big long deal and I quit for a while. For us either people are being greedy or the timing was wrong. We got signed, we had a pretty good band, played some big shows, and did some cool things... so I was about 24 and then after a bit of time... I was probably 29 or 30 when we started the second band.

So you play with this band for time and it eventually fell through. You had some time away from music he said about four or five years. And then you started playing with musicians again eventually ending up where you are now playing with your current group. So these next questions are a little more to the point.

Was there defining moment when you knew you would be a musician for the rest of your life?

Oh yeah a long time ago. You know the only thing I've ever been professionally good at... the only thing I've ever been really good at in my whole life is playing music. That's all. So I knew it. I was always better than everybody else. I guess that's my ego but we just always got all the attention so that was kind of telling.

What do you think is your greatest motivation for continuing music?

It's just what makes me happy. It's one of the important things in my life. I would be crazy if I didn't play music. I don't know what I would do.

What do you think are the most important qualities of a musician?

Someone who is on time. Someone who has the technique and ability. I want to play with people who are good. I want to play with the best guys. And I can always pick them out.

How do you know the music is important to you?

I honestly get depressed if I don't do it. It's kind of like medication.

What do you look for any musician that tells you music is important to them?

I guess it depends on preference and what you're looking for. I mean Eddie Van Halen is a great guitar player but he's not for me. You have to get on the same wavelength with the right people. You have to be able to know what the other musician is thinking. That's what I think. The ability to look across the stage and think I know he's fixing to do. It's like my brother. Even if were mad at each other I know what he's going to do. If we sing harmony I know which parts he's going to go high on or low on... every time. Brains become intertwined when you play.

What do you think of the main reasons he kept playing music your whole life?

Because it's the only thing I think I do really really good. I was never really get anything but playing music. It's the only thing. I don't know why. A lot of people are good at a lot of things but I'm just not. Okay

How do you continue to grow as a musician?

Writing songs. Playing live. I play out a lot so I can look out and see when I'm striking a nerve. You know like when I'm playing the right songs. I can tell. That something that takes practice. I really like to write and I like to interact with people.

How do you think traditional training benefited you to non-traditional training?

Well I guess I don't have any traditional training.

So you were able to have a lifelong career and passion for music without ever having any traditional training?

Yeah. That's correct. I'm 100% feel.

Far so everyone that I've interviewed describes this feeling that you get when you play music. It's like a sort of magic. Do you experience this and if so how would you describe it?

Everything you're asking me about why I play music that's why I do right there. That's what you want. That's what everybody wants. That euphoria. Your endorphins are going crazy. That moment before it happens everybody that is in the room... It's like all their brains have to connect 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, you gotta make it rain you know what I mean. Once everybody's connected it's like man isn't that sweet. That's why you do that.

Participant E
9/28/2016
6:30 pm

Key:

() = other audible noises

[] = observer comments

Bold face = interviewer speaking

Non-Bold face = interviewee speaking

Hey man thanks so much for your time and participating in this interview.

No problem! You bet!

Okay so let's get started could you state your age?

51

What is your job title?

Job title... I am a radiologist, a physician.

What age did you start playing music?

Let's see... say 13.

Okay, what is your primary instrument?

Drums.

Do you play multiple instruments?

Just percussion instruments.

Do you play anything like marimbas, xylophone, anything like that?

No.

Did your parents play musical instruments?

No... well no I take that back, I'm sorry. My dad, he through high school played the clarinet.

Okay but he didn't into adulthood or anything like that?

No.

Did you have any siblings that played musical instruments?

Yes, my older brother played drums and my younger brother played drums...

Were you ever taken concerts growing up?

No. I wasn't taken to concerts like big venues at all, like main acts or anything like that. No. I went to maybe 1 or 2 concerts when I was in high school.

Okay, like bigger concerts?

Sorry

Like bigger concert, bigger production?

Yeah, yes.

Okay. What were those?

Kiss was the first concert I went to when I was in 10th grade I believe. I think I went to another one when I was a senior in high school but I can't remember what it was.

Rock concert?

Mhmm. Yes.

Do you remember a lot of music being played in your house growing up? this could have been either recordings or it could've been live music.

yeah, my older brother, who's 4 years older than I was, he had a lot of records and he was really into music. He played music and we had a drum set in the house. that's when I first started

playing drums was about 8th grade on that. and he would play drums in the house in the living room and he would put his music. my parents, they did not really play, you know, records or were into music nearly as much.

Okay, but your brother did a lot, your older brother?

Yes.

Did you ever take private lessons?

Private lessons...I never took like drums, private lessons and I was in band in junior high and high school and I just got instruction from that. I never really took any private lessons. No.

so you were in band in junior high and high school. were you in choir?

I did some choir in church. Not a lot, probably a total of a year or two or something like that. I did some hand bells in church with the youth group for a few years in junior high and high school. and those were my other outlets for music.

Did you major... well I know you're obviously a doctor but did you ever major in music?

No.

Okay, did you continue playing music through college?

In college I did not. I did afterwards in medical school I had a band for about a year and a half.

I'll ask you a few more questions about that later. This portion was just a survey. the last thing I have for you... a level of influence for musicianship so in other words, on a scale from 1 to 10, who inspired you to be a musician, or to be a lifelong musician? so on a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 meaning not very influential and 10 meaning very influential. How would you rate your parents in terms of influencing you to be a musician?

well I would rate them probably... you said inspiration or, or influence or what?

It could be, I wrote it as influence. but really I guess inspiration, like who played a major role in your musical life.

My parents, I would rate actually kind of low. they were supportive of me doing what I was doing but their influence I would give them like a 4.

Okay, what about other family members?

My older brother was a big influence; I'd give that a 9.

Friends that were not musicians?

Friends who were not musicians? yeah, no. 2.

Other musicians? this could be peers or older or younger.

Yeah, I'd give that a higher rating like 8

Could you repeat that?

8.

An 8? Okay. These are more open ended so you can answer more detailed as you feel necessary. So describe how music fits into your day today or weekly routine.

I would say that it is a very important part of my routine. I try to have music during the day. I like to have music in my work area. I frequently listen to music when I'm not working like driving or when I'm working or mowing which I do quite a bit.

What about playing music?

Playing music?

How does that fit into your routine?

I for sure play music at least 2 or 3 times a week. vast majority of the time is on my own, by myself playing the drums. I like to play with other people I just don't have the opportunity to do it. but in my routine, I view it as a release or reward to be able to play. so I do it 2,3,4 times a week.

okay describe your earliest memory of music capturing your attention.

One that comes to mind is when I was probably about 6 or 7th grade and I saw my older brother playing in the high school band and he was in the drum corps. he had a drum, percussion solo during halftime at a big football game and I thought that was very awesome.

Do you remember ever wanting an instrument but not having access to an instrument?

No.

What made you pursue music in the first place?

I would say that the 2 influences were, 1, I was inspired by my brother, he did drums. I signed up for it and then I made friends with people who were in the band and particularly drummers. they influenced me to continue doing that.

So your primary instrument is drums, percussion. was there a defining moment when you knew that you wanted to play drums?

Pretty much when I saw my older brother do it.

How did you go about getting started with playing drums?

Well as far as playing drums, I was fortunate in that my older brother got a drum set that my parents bought him and they were a nice set up in the living room of the house so when I was in 7th and 8th grade it was there and available to use it.

When you first started did your brother teach you how to play basic stuff or were you self taught completely?

I don't remember anybody showing me what to do. I probably watched him do it and the way I learned predominately was by putting on headphones and putting on music and playing along.

Who would you say were the biggest, and this can be 2 or 3 or just one person, but who were the biggest direct musical influences in your life? as far as people that you know, who was the biggest influence?

Older brother, my band director, and my best friend in high school.

What about your and director was so influential to you?

He was a very successful band director. our band did very well and he respect for hard work and discipline and excellence.

You said hard work and discipline and he demands that respect. would you say he was incredibly, and I kind of know a little bit about this guy, would you say he was incredibly nice and friendly... like if things were going well...

No, no, no. he was kind of your typical football coach. to be honest with you. he, you know, could get irritated if people were not performing up to par. he did have a sense of humor and I didn't have problems with him. some people had some issues with you know his sternness but overall, in my opinion, to keep control and make progress with derivatives of 100 or more high school kids there needs to be a strong figure, and he was. and he also I think a love for the music as well as trying to produce as good of product as possible.

So very passionate that came through in a very stern way sometimes but very passionate about quality?

Yep.

Do you feel like that pushed you to be better and that's why you have respect and feel influenced by him?

I think so, yes.

What about your best friend?

My best friend was also a drummer and we go out and enjoy what we were doing. spent quite a lot of time doing it because we were in band all the way through junior high and high school

together and working on percussion ensembles together. he loved music as well and so we liked to talk about music so it was just a natural fit. we liked to hang out and we both liked music and it was like inspiration to do it.

So when you did hang out were you practicing together at all outside of school or just listening to music?

No. more just listening to music and talking about music.

Outside of school band, this is high school and before, outside of school band were you in any other music ensembles?

yes. I had a rock and roll band I was in with my best friend and a couple of other friends starting in junior high all the way through high school.

oh wow same band. so how old were you when you first started playing with that group?

13.

Like right at the beginning of junior high? okay.

Can you kind of describe maybe how that got started?

I think probably when I started in band we met, my buddy and I met another guy, another friend, who played guitar and there was another guy we met in the band who had a bass and my friend, his father was big into music and he sang, played the harp, piano, and he already knew how to do that and had the equipment and we tried to get together at his house and try to play some songs.

what was that feeling that first, do you remember the first time you played in a band and what that experience was like for you?

First time we played music, it was special. like that feeling of making something together with other people that was recognizable that was enjoyable for us. I think that was very rewarding.

did you start this band before school band or after you started school band?

after, after school started.

Do you feel like you had that same experience the first time you played in a band like school band?

to some degree, yeah but not as much because it was the school band it was more regimented and the songs were picked by a director whereas when we got together we got to have more fun.

What might be an example of a song you played in that band growing up?

oh yeah. I think the first song we tried to play was taking care of business and years afterward we made jokes about how the first several times we got together we couldn't get to the end of the song because we started and didn't know how to do the middle, and when we finally learned how to finish the song that was a big accomplishment. so I'm sure taking care of business was one of those songs. other rock and roll songs were like cat scratch fever, we somehow, we were in junior high and there was this little girl who was like 8 years old whose father got her signed up to be on this midnight local acts tv show in Springfield. and arranged for us to be her back up band and that was probably the first time we got a couple of songs rehearsed from beginning to end with her on the tv show. which was the first time I played live anywhere so we played a couple songs with her which were Jet Airliner by Steve Miller and with my band we got to play a song or two we played Molly Hatchet's Whiskey Man and the commentator of the tv show made a comment about how that's a pretty tough song for some junior high guys to be singing.

Do you still, when you play in bands now, do you still play that kind of music or has it changed?

No, it's changed somewhat. although there's still a kind of bit of overlap. I don't play 80's rock and roll anymore. I like music that's got a little bit more soul or rhythm and blues, jazz to it. but

straight rock and roll I don't prefer as much anymore. we don't really play that as much anymore. and also southern rock I don't really like that as much anymore.

So let's skip to practicing, I don't know if you want to call it practice or just playing, but like when you are making music at home, what is your typical practice session like? what do you do?

a lot of times its after I've done some yard work and I go in my barn where my drums are and I will put on a pair of ear muffs like you wear for shooting a gun. I found that I prefer the sound to be muffled so that the symbols are not quite as sharp and the drums are not quite as loud and I'll put that on and a lot of times ill find that even as I'm walking into the barn ill have a tune that I'll be humming in my head it may be because I know I'm getting ready to play drums but I know I frequently throughout the day have songs that are just going through my head because I play drums on the steering wheel when I'm driving and maybe it's a song that I'm listening to or something like that but anyway, I will go back there and I'll just sit on the drums and just play whatever is in my head at the time and I do that about 2/3s of the time but 1/3 of the time I'll put on a pair of headphones and ill plug in and listen to music and play along to that music. but a lot of times even if I play along to music the songs end before the next song starts I'll play whatever and start ignoring whatever music is that's playing and playing whatever I want. I really like playing what comes naturally to me. and also this is a little off topic and something you're going to ask about but probably not but I find that I kind of have a fall back pattern that I go through when I'm just playing and sometimes I'll be thinking about things in my life and won't be thinking about what I'm playing, I'll just be thinking of something else but I'm continuing to play and when I do that its almost always this basic 8 measure pattern that I kind of have in my head, an 8 to 9 differs. I can play the rhythm fast or slow and combinations drums but its similar now, it has evolved over the years. it used to be something different

That's interesting, it's almost like a meditative sort of state.

Yeah (laughter)

Is there any way that your practice scene was different when you were first learning the drums?

When I was first learning I did not freestyle nearly as much as I do now but I remember even in high school I enjoyed a lot just freestyle and not playing along to a particular song. So I've been doing that for a long time. and of course as far as percussion that I learned in band there were a lot more recommended, certain music pieces I had to learn from written music. I was taught rhythms to practice on to learn stick skills and that was much more (something).

You obviously spent a lot of time during school doing that, do you still do any of that? After high school do you still work on rudiments?

No.

I assume you don't, on your own, listen to band and orchestra music either?

No.

That's the vibe I get, not from you but from everyone. I don't either. (laughter)

I'll tell you what though, a few years ago I had some sort of a small epiphany when I realized, ya know what, it was a pretty amazing thing to be in a group of 100 people and produce music that sounded as good as what we made and for as complicated as it was, I should have appreciated it more at the time but in general the drum section did not appreciate the concerts as much.

I get that, I mean I had those feelings too in high school and now I go to the football games or something and listen to a marching band and it's like wow what a sound, it's kind of amazing to hear. What would you describe the music scene where you grew up?

I was in high school band, that was a constant daily thing at school and we would travel, and play all the sporting events then we had competitions and so there was quite a bit of that but as far as playing out live with my band, there was not a lot of opportunity to do that but we did play a number of different outings in school dances and we did some concerts at the high school and the junior high. it was probably about 2 to 3 times a year or something like that.

Do you remember other bands or other musicians out playing in town or was there not a lot of that going on in Mountain Home at the time?

I think there were some, I was underage so I couldn't go to bars. but it was a small town and there wasn't a lot of it. my older brother, for instance, was in band as well and a few times I helped him move his equipment around town so I know there were a few things here and there but there were a couple bars across the state line that he played at over the years so there was a little bit of that but it certainly was not a vibrant live music scene.

Just talk a little bit about your school band experience. Do you feel like as you went through in high school your interest continually grew or did it start to decrease as you were beginning to graduate?

No, I was pretty constant the whole way through, I was happy to be in the situation I was being in band. My friends were in band and I did not have any real loss of enthusiasm at all.

After that, you obviously went on to undergrad, what was your major in college?

Biology

During those 4 years were you playing music at all?

No.

So what do you think caused, obviously it's a busy lifestyle, but what do you think made you just sort of do away with music?

It wasn't something that was part of the culture I was in in college. I had friends in college and we had classes to go to and none of them were musicians and I didn't know anybody really, I knew somebody in music, and I had an interaction with somebody who was involved in music that I think was also somewhat inspirational for me in college. which was a girl that was in my art class? who I asked to traditional who I liked and we went. then I went out with her for a couple of times and she told me that at one point she had been out and met up with some guys at a bar who were a band and she got up on stage and started singing with them. that's when I was a sophomore in college and it turns out she stayed with that band and they got pretty famous in the city I was in college which was Dallas, TX and then I was in a fraternity, my fraternity brothers would go out and say we got to go out and see this really awesome band and it was that girl that I knew from going out a couple of times. she was actually getting pretty famous in town and then when I graduated from college, not long after she had a big hit song and was famous. that kind of showed me that sort of thing could be done. that was kind of neat. that was my sort of brush with greatness. that girls name was Edie Brickell. and she was Edie Brickell & New Bohemians. a lot of people I knew were big fans of that and I thought that was pretty cool that somebody who was initially a nobody made it pretty big in the business.

That name sounds very familiar; I'll have to look her up.

After you finished undergrad, you're going off to med school and you have 2 years there and then you said once you started residency you started a band for a year and a half, is that right?

Nah, I was in medical school which was 4 years and I think I started in a band in my 2nd year in medical school. which lasted about a year to a year and a half. I think that was because there was as guy in my medical school class was a guitar player and a singer and he wanted to have a band.

at some point he found out that I played drums and he kind of got people together and we got started playing.

Was that like rock, like the sort of music you did in junior high and high school?

it was not as much southern rock; it was more like fraternity party music I would say. a little more modern music. maybe some avant-garde music to some degree. we would travel out of town a few times. we played at fraternity parties up in Fayetteville and at private parties. it was still kind of rock and roll and blues based music.

That lasted from your second year to what? The beginning of your fourth year, I guess, and then it just sort of fizzled out?

Yeah, that fizzled out.

After that, how long was it until you picked music back up and started playing? or practicing...just playing in general.

the fourth year of medical school I don't think I played in any bands. then I went out of town for my first year of internship and I took my drums with me to the apartment I was at and I played them a little bit during that time then I came back to Arkansas and about a year after that I somehow got into another band. This was more of a rhythm and blues band and we had a black female singer who was really good so we did a lot of R&B and I don't remember how that band got started either but we played similar sorts of things like private parties and stuff like that.

Where was this in Arkansas?

That was in Little Rock

Little Rock, okay. Okay so you went to medical school, you did undergrad and medical school in Dallas?

I did undergrad in Dallas for 4 years then medical school in Little Rock for 4 years then I did one year in Connecticut and then I came back to Little Rock and I did another year of surgery which is when I got into that R&B band and then I set out a year to do research then I was in radiology residency so another 4 years but I think that R&B band only lasted about a year and a half or something like that. The 4 years of residency, I was not in any bands.

My God, that's so much school! I thought a masters was long. (laughter)

Well the good thing about it is during residency you get paid...

That's true, yeah. Not as much...

Not a lot but you get enough to have an apartment or make a small house payment and have food and beer money so people say that but it's just like having a job.

Sure.

Wow, that's cool. I'm trying to do the math in my head so after radiology, was this in Little Rock when you were specializing?

Yeah, that was in Little Rock.

Okay so after you graduate, where are you then?

I came back to Mountain Home where I grew up.

Then after that, how old were you at that time?

I was 33

So how long until you started playing music again?

probably about a year.

Have there been any other like lulls in music since then?

Yeah, I was in a band again when I came back and that lasted about 10 years and that was also with Joe, the same guy that started my first band I was with and now as well as my best buddy from high school, the drummer who was also in the first band I was with. So him and another

guy and his brother, there's 4 of us were in the band for 10 years then that band fizzled out and I wasn't in any other bands for about another 5 or 6 years until just this past year.

Wow, okay.

So throughout your life you've had years where you're not playing but you always seem to come back to it, why?

Why is it important enough to where you keep coming back?

I think there's a couple of different things, it's a good way to have comradery with some guys that have similar interests. it's a fun social thing to do. Primarily for me, I enjoy the act of making a piece of art live with other people. I enjoy the act of making music.

Gotcha, is it a feeling you get or is it, I don't mean this like in a way to make you sound vain or anything but is it the attention of an audience or...

that's some of it, I like to have people say " oh that sounded great!" I like that. so that is some of it but for me the most part I like to lose myself in the act of making music especially if it's not that much of a hassle to go through it. that's kind of the reason the band was in when I came here stopped because it just became a hassle to load the drums from here to there. It lost the magic and kept playing the same songs over and over again and nobody could agree on new songs to do and it just got old. I enjoy making music. I enjoy learning new songs, I think that's neat to put something together and make something new with people. the current band I'm in, I really like the songs we play and I like making music and I like the instrument I play now which is a new thing for me, the cajon, and when I get together with friends and other people I like to talk about music. it's one of my passions and I think it always will be.

All this time of course you're listening to new music and getting inspired by listening to new stuff...

Right.

Do you have any memories of anybody ever discouraging you from playing music?

When I was at my job at the hospital, I could remember one orthopedic surgeon asking me if I was still playing with that band. I told him that I was and he kind of laughed and chuckled and said he thought I should continue to do that but he's also a real sarcastic smart ass so I didn't know if he was making fun of me or if he was being serious. I took that as a discouragement from him. but other than that I can't think of any.

Do you feel like that had any sort of effect on you or was it just somebody that you were just like, " he's being an asshole"?

It kind of did make me wonder if someone my age should still be going out and playing. If it was perhaps not a serious endeavor that a middle aged person should be doing. It made me wonder about that but not enough to really be a discouragement.

He probably wasn't a musician... (laughter)

(laughter) no, I don't think so.

I've got a few more questions and they're more deep thought questions.

How do you know that music is important to you?

Because I desire it to be in my life and I enjoy discussing it with others that like music.

What do you look for in a musician or what do you see in a musician that tells you that music is important to them?

Just the fact that someone is a musician is a sign that music is important to them. But I think the thing that I have noticed in myself and I appreciate in other musicians is something that people that play music know have especially and that's the desire and ability to listen well to what the overall sound is and listen to the other musicians playing with. the ability and respect to be able

to step back and let other people lead the way sometimes and then also the ability and the desire to take over and lead the way when it comes to spontaneous music.

Someone that's adaptable, I feel like that's the definition to musicianship right there. Like somebody that can adapt to the situation, somebody that can listen and play well with others (laughter)

Right, and you know one of the things that comes to mind is that you can have a technician that plays the notes but doesn't have creativity but to be a musician you have to have some creativity.

Absolutely

Can you recall a moment in time when you knew music would be a part of you for the rest of your life?

When I was young I think I had fantasies about music in the future but I never thought whether or not it would be a part of my life for forever but one time when the band I was in for 10 years fizzled out. A couple of my buddies that are still good friends of mine, we still get together and listen to music all the time and they've made it clear that they have no desire to play out live or really with other people much again. I realized that was different than me because I still have a desire to play music with other people. that's a moment that I realized that it would be part of my life for the rest of my life, playing music.

What do you think are the main reasons that you have kept playing your whole life?

I think that I get something out of it. I think that most people find if they have something in their life where they can be creative and can produce something that they enjoy it. For some people it's woodwork or something else but I think there's a real reward that many humans get from doing something like that.

Yeah it's that feeling. That feeling you get when you first play with a band, it's that magic. This might be the hardest question, that magical feeling when you play with someone for the first time or you're playing music with a group and you find yourself in a magical moment, like there were some times I observed you guys the other night in Missouri and there was something really special going on in the air and I think you guys felt that and so did the audience.

How would you describe that feeling?

Yeah you're right. I'll tell you what, there's one way that I like to feel it, when you listen to a particular musician playing music and you kind of step into their thoughts because music is the purest form of emotion expression or thought. You get to experience emotion and thought of somebody whose brain and thoughts you admire then you are grateful for that. if a whole group of people can do that simultaneously it's like a connection in emotion and thought that's in real time. sometimes music can be off a little bit because it seems like maybe not everyone is on the same page but when everyone is thinking about what the music is and you are expressing that raw emotion, you get to experience expertise that is beautiful then it's like a gift that you're giving to yourself and everyone else at the same time in that room.

That's a great way to say it.

This is my last question for you, you've had traditional training, which is band. you've had non-traditional training which is listening to recordings and playing in rock bands throughout your life, traditional training or non-traditional training, which do you think was more beneficial?

Well, I wouldn't want to do without either one but as far as bang for your buck, as far as what you can accomplish, I think that traditional training is probably much more beneficial. I feel like I could be a much better drummer if I had drum lessons from a professional drummer but I'm

somewhat reluctant to do that because I like the fact that I for the most part get to do it on my own as well as listening to other people. I don't want someone to beat the creativity out of me somehow which is kind of what I think happens to a lot of people that focus too much on taking lessons.

Why do you think then that you as an adult participate in non-traditional, I mean obviously you can't go back to high school band but like why did you steer away from a community band or playing percussion and stick with rock bands and drum kits and that sort of thing?

I just enjoy that music better. I enjoy the freedom to be the boss of percussion rather than have someone tell me what to do.

That's great. It's interesting to me the way that your answers coincide with my others in so many ways. From a teaching perspective I think it's really telling me that I need to find music that's relevant to my students when I teach them.

Mhmm.

And I think that's going to be good that's all I've got for you.

Participant F
9/28/2016
7:31 pm

Key:

() = other audible noises

[] = observer comments

Bold face = interviewer speaking

Non-Bold face = interviewee speaking

How old are you?

I am 40 years old

What is your job title?

My job title, that's a good question... I am the lesson coordinator and I am the venue manager. I am also the director of operations and production manager. I'm also a booking agent, and I'm also a freelance musician.

At what age did you start playing music?

Music or the guitar?

Playing music.

Well I was involved in music with my school choirs pretty much all my life because my parents refused to buy me an instrument until I was 13. So I didn't start playing the guitar until I was 13 but I was always around music.

Do you play multiple instruments?

I do. I primarily am a guitar player, also play bass guitar. I can double on mandolin, banjo, and ukulele. I can play what you may call a ranger's piano. So I know how to do basics and shit like that.

Did either of your parents ever play musical instruments?

Yeah, on my mother's side. Let's see my mother played the flute in high school and was in the band. Her brother, my Uncle Jim is kind of an amateur musician who plays guitar, mandolin, banjo, and things like that and was kind of an early influence on me as a guitar player, stuff like finger picking and slides on the guitar. My dad's side, my dad was a trumpet player in school and played in the band. My grandfather who was Chief Justice at the Arkansas Supreme Court for many years was also a piano player and when he had to write opinions on a case he would sit at his piano and work it all out in his head while he was playing the piano. So when he would stop playing, my grandmother used to tell me when he stopped playing the piano he would pull out a piece of paper and just write it all down because he had worked it all out in his head

Wow. The ultimate multitasker.

Yeah, so there's some musical stuff in my family. but most of it was at the amateur level.

Do any of your siblings play any musical instruments

My older brother Bruce he plays a little bit of guitar hasn't had any traditional training

Okay, what's a like at what age did your older brother start playing guitar?

My older brother kind of dabbled with things he actually just got kind of serious about the guitar about 2 years ago and he's 47 now.

So you didn't grow up playing music together or anything like that?

No. Not at all.

Were you taken to concerts growing up?

Yes

Would you say never, sometimes, or often?

I would say often.

Were they big concerts or local stuff?

I saw a lot of things. Stuff my dad took me to were things like I saw Ray Charles when I was about 10 years old at the pine bluff convention center. I saw Dave Brubeck a couple times when I was a kid. there was is a big bash for guitar competition called the GFA, the guitar foundation of America that hosts an international competition and the winner the part of the prize is they get to do this world tour and the tour always came thru UALR in little rock and my dad every year would take me up to see the GFA winners perform at ULAR

then you know when I was I guess about 12 or 13 started going to rock concerts. I think my first concert was KISS. so I saw a lot of rock bands. Always had to go to little rock to see those.

So you're my first interviewee that mentions going to jazz or classical music concerts. Is that the kind of music your parents were interested in?

Yea my dad was kind of a classical music guru that dabbles a little bit in jazz and um but he also is really into like 70s like Simon and Garfunkel and Jim Croce. he was kind of all over the place and he also liked like Earth wind and fire. my mom was real into opera and classical music. kind of the same stuff. she was more versed in early rock and roll. she was into Roy Orbison and she knew all of jerry lee Lewis, Elvis, she was you know between the two of them there was always a lot of music playing at the house growing up

Growing up did you have a lot of the recordings playing in the house? With your musical family was there a lot of music played?

No. there was a piano in the house. I don't know where it came from but it was always there... my dad still has it in little rock... no one really played it was always there. I was always kind of indifferent to it, I wasn't really drawn to it. I was drawn to music it was very much a guitar thing for me I wasn't really interested in the piano at all. that's why it took my them so long to buy me an instrument because they thought I wasn't really that into it they thought that "well there's an instrument here and he doesn't pay any attention to it. he never plays it so why are we going to go out and buy him a damn guitar when he won't even play what's here". The thing was I didn't give a shit about the piano because you can't throw a piano up in the air and do the spins and kicks and things like that. (laughter). In the early days it was all about the guitar for me.

Why do you think that was? Your parents don't really seem like rock and rollers but one of your first concerts was KISS so why did that happen?

I was always drawn to music my earliest memories are of music. One of the very first thing I can remember is my dad playing the opening movement from Beethoven's 5th on the stereo and it just scaring the shit out of me. That Simon and Garfunkel song the boxer. There's a part on that song on the chorus when there's a big loud like a cannon fire. That's like literally the earliest memory I have is that song and that sound. Then super tramp. My dad was a super tramp fan and he liked the song take the long way home. all of my very early childhood memories are centered around some sort of music playing in my house. I was always drawn to it but it never occurred to me to actually get paid for music until I saw Eddie van Halen on tv. If you see Eddie van Halen standing around hanging out he looked like the unhappiest person in the world. he was quiet. Yet any time you see him doing anything with the guitar he has a huge grin on his face. I used to see him on tv all the time. So when they were really hitting big I was around that age when I was starting to understand who people were. Who celebrities were. That's who I kind of locked on

because he always looked so happy when he was playing. He was having more fun than anybody I knew and anybody I was seeing on tv. I just thought if that's what it's like to play music then I want to do that cause that guys having more fun everybody is kind of drawn to the guitar at that age. That's why I think it's truly a guitar thing. For me it was all about the fact that that dude seemed like he was having the time of his life and I wanted to have as much fun as him.

How old were you when you first saw this?

I was probably maybe 6 years old when I kind of became aware who Eddie van Halen was and why he was someone that everyone knew.

So you went 7 years before you finally got a guitar, what was that like for you?

That was huge. That was life changing. Because the other reason that my parents didn't want to buy me an instrument they thought that my interest in music wasn't serious and I never stuck with anything. I was not interested in sports. I just sat around and watched tv and listened to music all day. They thought I was a lazy person and this instrument would be a waste of money. I spent years trying to convince them that it wasn't. That it was something they needed to do for me. When they finally gave in it was like my whole life changed. I was 13 years old and it was like all of a sudden I had a direction for my life. I had something to focus on. I used to just that's all I did. Once I got the guitar that was it for me. I was locked in my room practicing, learning things. I used to tell my mother that I was sick so I could stay home and practice the guitar. I was crazy with it. Really kind of still am. Fascinated with the guitar and all the stunts and stuff you can do with it.

Did you ever take private lessons as a kid?

Yes. my first teacher was a guy named John. He was great. He grew up in Pine Bluff playing rock and roll and blues. At one point he got into classical guitar. He auditioned and got a spot at the Royal Conservatory in Spain. he went to Spain to study classical guitar. a five-year program, he finished in 3 years. At the time this was a big thing for an American to even be accepted. The fact that he got in and plowed thru that program as quick as he could. really unheard of at that time. he came back to pine bluff and taught lesson at a local music store. He had such a diverse background. He was really good for me because I learned everything from Bach to Lynyrd Skynyrd. Eric Clapton, and Metallica. It was like he was fascinated with the guitar in the same way I was, in the sense that he didn't give a shit what the music was as long as it had some good guitar playing in it he thought it was cool. That was really good for me because he was highly educated musician who was not snobby about any kind of music in the least he just thought it was great and as long as I was excited and practicing it made no difference at all what we worked on.

Did you participate in school band?

No. No I was in choir all through school

Even through high school?

Yeah yeah even through high school at one point before they bought the guitar I tried to get them to get me a saxophone so I could play in the band. I thought that because my dad had been a trumpet player I thought well if I pick up a band instrument they will buy that because that was easiest because he always talked about it too fondly but he said the sax was too expensive. that came back to haunt me years later when I got into college and I started music programs and I couldn't read music at all. It was hard. I realized on the first day of college my very first class was music theory 1 at 8 am on Monday morning. the first thing they did and they asked everyone what their musical background was. Everyone in there were all educated musicians. Band or orchestra. We went around the room and talked about our experience so and then he said ok just

to get an idea of where everybody is of their knowledge of theory. They were actually going to take the final exam of the course on day one. At the end of the semester we will look back and see how much we learned. He handed me the final. I literally wrote my name on it and gave it back to him. I seriously knew nothing. had to bust my ass that first semester just to get the knowledge that everyone else came in with

How did you do on the final?

I got an A.

I bet he was impressed.

My thing was I was in college and I was getting to do music. In my mind I was doing music full time. I hated high school and I hated studying science and history and math. The fact that I was actually able to study some aspect of music in school, I just thought it was awesome. I loved going to theory class I loved music history. I just ate that shit up. So I went from when I was in high school, I wasn't even sure what my GPA was. it was so ridiculously low. I had to do summer school every year just to keep from flunking out. My best grade I ever had in high school was probably C-. and yet when I got to college because it was mostly music I was on the honor roll every semester I was in college

Wow.

it was like finally getting to do that one thing I knew I was supposed to be doing.

That's really special. On a scale from 1 to 10 how influential were the following people in your musical life? Whether that means inspiring you to be a musician inspiring you to continue music or whatever.

On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being the lowest, 10 being the highest how would you rate your parents?

maybe about a 6

What about other family members? Siblings, aunts, uncles, whatever.

maybe the same probably 5 I guess

Friends who were not musicians?

probably bout the same maybe 5

Then other musicians? Younger, older, it doesn't matter.

yeah probably bout 8 there

What about teachers?

like music teacher?

Yeah.

yeah probably 9

These questions are kind of the bulk of the interview questions. You can answer however you feel necessary. They are open ended so whatever you think.

How does music fit into your day to day routine?

music fits into my day to day. well now days when I get up in the morning I eat breakfast and coffee before anything. while I'm drinking coffee I like it to be quiet. but I'm reading about music stuff. I'm usually looking at an iPad and reading about guitar stuff. new equipment, researching players or recordings. pretty mush first thing in the morning. from there anytime I'm in the car there's music playing. I got water proof speaker in my shower. a lot of the times when I'm getting ready to leave the house for the day I have music playing on my phone. My current job I teach a few lessons throughout the day. it's really hard for me to hang out in a guitar store all day and not be just playing all the time instead of like having to work. It's kind of like torture really, throughout the day while I'm doing all these other things about every hour ill steal about 5

or 10 minutes ill grab a guitar to move my fingers around just to do it. Kind of like a nervous habit. At the end of the day I spent a couple hours in the evening practicing just playing along with records. There are occasional rehearsals that pop up through the week and gigs and recording sessions on the weekend.

So every day, all the time?

Well not all the time like it was when I was teaching full time. It's all kind of like all music related. I'm doing music when I'm not playing. Whether I'm working on stage plots or booking concerts or gigs for people. It's all centered around music. yeah.

So your parents got you your first guitar, how did you get started playing? Did you immediately go to lessons or were you self-taught to some degree?

I fiddled around by myself for about maybe 3 weeks when I got it and I didn't actually try to teach myself anything I just played with it and wrote songs and stuff. Tried to just like be creative with the thing and figure it out on my own and then after those 3 weeks I had a sense of this is going to take a long time to figure it out so I better get some lessons.

Who were your biggest direct musical influences in your life? By direct I mean like in person, people you knew.

John, my first guitar teacher and then Mark. He was the Pine Bluff equivalent of Eddie van Halen. Mark Stewart is like a musical genius savant. He hears something one time on the radio and can play it back for ya note for note. He can play any instrument. Just an absolutely brilliant and totally natural musician. He was a couple years older than me. He was friends with one of my older brothers. Mark was like my local hero. He was the guy in town that I looked up to. That guy really knew how to work the guitar. He knew all these things that I don't know how he knew but he knew things like how to be a professional musician. When we were still in high school he would tell me if I ever got a gig I needed to do this act this way and don't say this to people and that kind of stuff. And still to this day I don't know how he knew all of that shit because he wasn't gigging. He played bass in the school orchestra he was doing those kind of things. He was playing garage band type gigs. He just knew things. That was bizarre. Those two guys are my biggest direct musical influences.

Obviously his playing and ability inspired you. What about him as like a person? How did he interact with you? Was he nice and positive or was he mean and grouchy? Was he encouraging towards you're playing?

Absolutely. Mark was a big brother to me. He taught me so much about how to be a musician. he knew he was teaching me things. He was very deliberate. He took me under his wing. He took me on like a little brother. He's still one of my best friends to this day.

Your guitar teacher for private lessons, what was he like personality wise?

He was a strange guy. He was always very nice to me. He'd get onto me and stuff if I didn't practice enough. Which didn't happen very often but a couple of times. He was like a typical stereotypical musician. Never went anywhere unless he was playing a gig. Never really had much money. He was kind of a free spirited super laid back. He just wanted to play you know. Mark was also a student of his. Mark was like his prize student. Mark was the only student he had that he actually said he couldn't really teach him much he just needed to go out into the world and play.

What does he do now? Just curious on a personal level.

I saw him about 15 yrs ago he played a classical guitar concert in el dorado of all places. I went and saw him and we talked a little bit and he said he's had been hearing about me. he had heard I

was playing and doing well which made him happy. That's the last time I saw him. I don't know what happened to him or where he is.

What about Mark?

Mark is an interesting guy. Mark moved. Mark has this thing for Memphis. When we were kids he loved Memphis and anything that came from Memphis he was crazy about it. When he finished high school he moved to Memphis to go to college and never came back. he's a Memphis guy. when he got to Memphis, I never really got the story on what happened, he kind of abandoned the guitar for a while and just started playing bass. maybe too many guitar players there and he knew he could get a gig playing bass he played with mid-level blues guys he did several tours with Alvin Youngblood heart. So over the year's mark became like the bass player in Memphis. Mark got lymphoma and his dad died within a couple of weeks of one another. His dad was his best friend and hero and mentor. He was really close to his dad. his dad died, he's got lymphoma he thinks that he's going to die. He's going thru chemo and all this horrible shit. He decides the way to cope with it is he's going to start writing song. Mark goes back to the guitar and starts writing songs and records a bunch of them and starts sending them to people just as a goof. Now all of a sudden he gets all these calls to play gigs as a singer songwriter. Now Mark Stewart is touring the country as a singer songwriter. He's playing. He's blowing up right now.

Really?

It's pretty awesome to see in the acoustic folk world mark Stewart is a big deal. It's funny to meet people sometimes and drop his name and they're like "holy shit you know that guy?" I'm like yeah

That's crazy.

We get to play together occasionally. He'll come thru Little Rock or something. I went to Memphis and played a festival gig with him one time. It's a pretty big deal for me to get to play with mark Stewart now. After growing up with him and him being like a big brother and all that.

That's cool! You took lessons growing up so everything I'm asking now is high school and before.

Did you play in any bands or anything like that?

In high school?

Yeah or junior high or whatever...

Yeah a little. Just garage bands type stuff. I didn't really play in a professional band til I was about 21 lived in little rock

So what was the garage band like? Did you guys ever perform anywhere?

Yeah we did like a couple of church talent night kind of things. But nothing like a whole set. It was always like one or 2 songs here and there

What kind of music was it?

I don't know what you call it. Just teenage perverted pseudo rock and roll bullshit.

Give me an example of those songs.

We wrote all of our own songs so they were all about getting laid and stuff like that even though none of us had ever gotten laid at that point. It was typical high school nonsense

And you played these at a church thing?

Actually on the church gigs we had a Richard Marx song call Now and Forever that we would play it was a big hit the girls loved it.

What was that experience like for you playing in a band for the first time? Do you remember the first time you guys played together?

Like garage bands and stuff?

Yeah, basically you've been taking lessons doing this guitar thing on your own as a soloist and you finally get a band together and you play, what was that experience like?

It was fun. It was frustrating because it was never what I heard in my head it was never good. I was so totally committed to making this thing get good. nobody else really gave a shit. I would call rehearsals on Saturday mornings and no one would come. I would try to get together every Saturday and maybe once every 4 to 5 weeks I got everyone over there. it went on like that for probably 3 years in high school

With the same guys?

It was a revolving cast of people. probably 6 or 7 people in all. I was never anything of any significance like I really wanted it to be. I kept trying to get everybody to come over to do this. It was lame and everybody knew it was lame and so nobody really wanted to fuck with it.

Man so like you wanted a guitar for 7 years, you finally get one and learn how to play some. It's like damn I'm getting a band then you got to wait until college to fucking do it.

Yeah yeah it sucked

It was frustrating. I remember thinking when is it ever going to finally fucking happen.?

Yeah, this kind of leads to logical mixed question.

Describe a typical practice session for you growing up. What did you do? As a guitar player in junior high, what were you doing?

Oh god I have no idea. I wasn't really practice session. There was a lot of trying to learn song from and trying to pick things out off of records and there was a lot of just creative time. Just kind of playing around with it. Trying to write things trying to figure out how to make different sounds with it and all that. there was no structure to it. Been when I was in lessons I would have to get the music to learn I was trying to play it til I got it. I wasn't really structured at all. it wasn't organized at all. I would make these riffs for some things I was working on. I guess it was kind of structured. I'd make a list and I'd work on it a little while and I would get involved and try to write songs. So it was just there wasn't always a lot of follow thru just basically years and years of just wax away of trying to do something with it

What was the music scene like where you grew up?

There was none. in Pine Bluff, Arkansas there was no music scene there were no places to play. There's a country club there that would occasionally hire a band but they would all come down from little rock but in pine bluff there was nothing.

Describe your choir experience in school.

The choir thing was good. I got into the choir because I liked singing and all the girls were in choir. so if ya wanted to be around the girls you had to be in the choir. The choir director in high school was a guy named Martin Seawall who lives up here now. I ran into him a few years ago. And after running into him and thinking back on my high school choir experience I realize that a lot of the way that I teach comes from that dude. Even though I thought he was a dick at the time. He was ok. I wasn't one of his favorite people he was not one of mine. I look back on it now but I adopted a lot of his teaching techniques he was a really good teacher. He was one of those teachers that I realized years later I was learning a lot when I thought I was just showing up for the singing. But I was actually learning a lot about music I just did realize it at the time

In what way?

I was learning about the use of dynamics in music. The power of loud versus soft. He was really big on that. He used to really push the choir to be as big and loud as they could and as quiet as they possibly could and still make some sound and everything in between. One of those things

that at the time I didn't think that anyone else would do it any differently cause that was my only experience. He used to always tell us the whole thing like how the pitch has to be in your head before it can be in your throat. Just stuff like that you wouldn't think to do unless someone said it. But once you do it it's like oh wow yeah. He just happened to be the guy there at that time of my life to say those things and I learned a lot from it.

Have there ever been any moments in your life you thought about quitting music or you did quit?

No. no. no.

How did you continue music after, I'm trying to think of how to ask this question?

How did you continue music after high school? I know you went to college but like in terms of when you were in college, what kind of groups were you playing in?

In college I started out in playing in school ensemble jazz ensemble classical guitar stuff like that. I started playing in bar bands when I was about 21 and that kind of set my life on this whole course that's it's taken. I think I've learned most of what I know about being a musician and most about what I about being a human being I've learned by playing in bar gigs. I can't explain what that means. I guess I'd call it my significant social experiences have been with gigs and how to relate.

That's really cool to hear. I wouldn't have expected it at all...

Why?

I mean it makes sense, reflecting on it and all. I would definitely say something similar to that. Everyone I've interviewed so far they've said like they've enjoyed the experiences and they've been really influential in their lives but they weren't music majors in college. I would think being a music major in college would be the most significant thing for a musician who continues.

Fuck no

It always seems to be these after, more non-traditional sort of settings that more learning occurs.

For me teaching music was actually way more instructive than being a student. When you teach something you have to know it inside and out the way you can't when you're a student. For me yeah teaching was way more enriching experience than actually being a student. Most of what I know. I shouldn't say it that way. I should say that the things that I know best. The things I know thoroughly about music I think I learned on the gigs.

That's just broad spectrum. Whether it be musicianship or how to play?

Musicianship is how to listen it's how to play with other people. But it's also like the real practical nuts and bolts of what works and what doesn't. It's what works in the practice room does not always work on gigs, they are really 2 different worlds. The practice room is alienated and introspective. The gig has just totally got its own thing. Whether you're playing orchestra where you're playing a part or jazz where everybody is just playing off each other. They are just such different worlds the practice room versus gigs... on gigs you learn how to listen and to play with other people. You learn that some things just don't really work in context. Sometimes you hear another musician play something and it affects you differently than it will than if your listening to a record somewhere. It'll grab you more when you're there in the moment and you're playing with them. It affects me more and I remember it better. I usually leave every gig thinking of something I heard someone else play and I'm thinking I have to figure that out.

You chose to be a college music major. What event led you to that decision? Sounds like you already answered by saying you just have to do music all the time. That was your thing

and that sounded really appealing. Is that pretty accurate?

Say the first part of that again

What made you want to be a music major in college?

I thought if I could do music full time I could actually make it through college. I thought it would it would make my parents happy. I also just thought well fuck if I can study. If I have a choice between studying music and studying anything else and I've got to be here anyway then I'm definitely going to study music. It was like no other way

Do you have any memories of anyone discouraging you from music?

Yes.

(laughter)

Do you have several? Maybe like the first one that comes to mind...

Yeah. When I was at UALR the head of the guitar program there told me he didn't think I was really cut out to be a musician. He and I didn't get along well. Very different personalities. You would have to understand this about me. I can't get along with anyone that think doesn't have a good sense of humor. This guy didn't have a sense of humor at all. At least I couldn't get it out of him. We didn't laugh or say a thing. he didn't think I was funny at all so fuck him. Doesn't know I had a hard time with him. He was the guy who also had a degree in mathematics and he looked at everything in music with some form of math deal. I don't get that whole music is math bullshit nonsense. If you want to look at it that way everything is math. Exercising cooking is math. Driving is math. To try to understand music mathematically just did not make any sense to me and we clashed over that. And he told me I was probably not cut out to be a musician

How did that effect you?

It kind of didn't affect me because I got to the point when he said that to me I decided that he and I were not anything alike musically or personally so I didn't give a shit what he thought input anything. It didn't really bother me as much as would have coming from a fellow musician that I respected.

Have you ever been discouraged by anybody that it has affected you?

No there was one time when I was looking at graduate schools and I went and met with the guy that teaches composition and I showed him some music that I had written and he kind of laughed at me and he said if this was all I had to offer he didn't know if I should be doing a composition grade. So I said well ok. Thanks for taking the time to meet with me I guess I'll be going then. Then he kind of freaked out. I don't know what he thought he was doing. I think he thought I would be like " Oh well you teach me? Can you help me?" I was like fuck you man. somebody else will take my money

I have a friend your age and he went to that school for a year for music focus actually wound up quitting because there were teachers that did shit like that. It was disheartening and discouraging. I wonder if it was the same teacher.

It could have been. The funny thing is. I'll pass other teachers like that. I always thought when I was a student I thought I'm not going to be that guy. I'm going to be the teacher that listens to his students and tries to help them and tries to figure out how to get through to everybody. but I know I have been that guy I know I have been that teacher. I know I have been the reason some people have dropped out. It's funny you get a little bit older and think maybe it says more about me than it does about them the other way around. Fuck I don't know. Maybe just sometimes you get paired up with the wrong person and it just doesn't work.

Obviously it didn't keep you from continuing.

Yeah it worked out ok

What was your greatest motivation for continuing music growing up and what is your greatest motivation today?

Greatest motivation growing up just that it never occurred to me to not do that. I never had to think about it. I honestly never thought about that at all.

What about now?

Now what makes me keep going with it?

I guess, yeah. What motivates you to work at it and get better?

I think I'm getting pretty good at this thing so I'm going to keep doing it. I'm going to keep doing it because I like it. I've been doing it way too long to fucking stop. Most musicians say they can't do anything else. That's not true I can do a lot of things. I'm doing a lot of things now. they're not nearly as much fun and not as rewarding. I'm going to keep doing it no matter what

Kind of in the last leg of questions. These are a little deeper thought, your personal thoughts of view on music things I guess.

Sure you want to hear that?

What do you think are the most important characteristics of a musician?

I think listening. The ability to listen. That's kind of true with every aspect of life. To be a good musician you have to be able to put your own ego out of the way. Just listen just shut up and fucking listen. Whether it's you playing or your part of a group playing no matter what part of the music it is you have to be able to tell yourself to shut up and listen... I think also not being a total asshole is important for a musician. I feel like who you are as a musician is an extension of who you are as a person. So if you're just a total self-possessed dickhead then that's probably not going to work out well for you musically.

How do you know that music is important to you?

Just because it is. I don't know I'm not sure how to answer that. I know it's important to me because I can't go too long without just hearing in my head all day long. I think about music when I'm walking. I hear a beat in my head. It's important because it's always in there and because I like it.

That's the answer I've been getting. It's crazy to me how different all of the musicians I've interviewed are and how similar a lot of their answers are. Seems like there's definitely a connective factor for it. its kind of neat.

What do you look for in a musician that tells you music is important to them?

Sorry I'm brushing my teeth.

I'm not sure what I'm looking for in a musician that tells me music is important to them?

Yeah, like you look at Claudia, what tells you that music is important to her?

Just the fact that the way she reacts to stuff. She'll hear somebody play something she'll smile and she'll look up.. or she will play something that ill make her smile and look up.. I don't know.. you meet Claudia and you talk to her a minute and you think she's cool nice older lady. and you play with her and its like holy Christ I didn't see that coming. It's like a whole other person in there. That's true with all of us. even though you know you know who you are as a player but you don't get the total picture of us without hearing us play or playing with us.

Can you recall a specific moment in time when you knew you would be a musician for the rest of your life?

Nope..

Okay...

I really don't. When did I know I was going to be a musician for the rest of my life? I guess

majoring in music in college and finishing that first semester and realizing how much I had learned and how far I had come in one semester and realizing that I could do this. I could do this music thing. I could do it for real. that was a big moment. I remember a moment I was living in little rock I was playing gigs and teaching a lot. this would have been about 16 or 17 years ago. doing my taxes at the end of the year and realizing I had made like \$40,000 that year just me and the guitar. teaching playing, that was a big thing, realizing I could make a living off of it and I mean a decent living and not have to struggle

How do you think traditional training benefitted you in comparison to non-traditional training?

What's the difference?

Traditional training being college theory class for a lot of people school bands, private lessons. How do you think that benefitted you as opposed to non-traditional training being like playing in garage bands, bar bands, that sort of stuff.

It was all good. The traditional training taught me the nuts and bolts of music. That's the biggest thing I got out of it. The basics. Like here's how this shit works. Here's how it has historically worked. Here why things are as they say are. That's what traditional training was good for me. non-traditional stuff is where I really learned how to be a musician.

You say they are both good and I agree but do you think one was more beneficial than the other?

Nope no I think that they're both really essential. I wouldn't replace either one honestly. The non-traditional thing did kind of give me a good sense of what training I could tune out from. that's just wasn't all that useful. I'd say they are equally important.

Okay, this is my last question.

Thank god

Thanks for hanging in there.

There's a magical feeling you occasionally get when you are playing music. You're playing with a group of people and it just connects and things really gel. There's just sort of this moment where the band is tuned in and the audience is really tuned in and receptive.

There's this feeling that emerges. Would you agree that you've had that feeling or have experienced that?

Oh yeah sure

How do you describe that and how do you think it happens?

It's like I was saying about how. It's especially true in jazz because you're improvising. You're listening in a different way than you do when you're playing a part... as you know playing parts with other people requires pretty big listening to do it well. I think that that happens... for me what's nice about it is that you do get these deeper understanding who these other people are. When you're playing with them and you have a good experience playing with them. You learn about who these people are and you see vibes from them that you don't see in any other interaction that you might have with them. For example, I don't know. I don't know if I can give you a for example... playing music is the best way to get to know somebody. I don't know if that makes sense at all. for me it is very much. all this stuff sounds obvious when I say it. It's very much a communal thing. You just see different sides of people that you don't see normally and you get to know them on a much deeper level when you're playing with them. What I love is when you're playing with somebody and you're listening real intently and one person plays something you couldn't ever explain. You know what I mean it just happens sometimes. It happens with me and Claudia all the time. Most of my really good friends are people that I play

gigs with. It's not because those are the people I see most. It's because when you play with someone there's just a deeper level of communication that goes on, than when you're just standing around shooting the shit. that's true of every musician in every style of music type of group. It's just the closeness that develops through playing music with people. I see it at the end of these symphony concerts. At the end of these things these people are hugging and kissing and taking photos together and they are crying. It's like this emotional experience when they haven't said a word to each other they've just been up there playing. I don't know what that is I don't know what that is I don't begin to understand it. I'm just happy. I'm satisfied to look at it and go you know what it's just a deeper level of communication. Playing with other people is a deeper level of communication you can't get through and other activity other than screwing.

Hah! Alright then. Well that is all I have for you. Thank you!

Participant G
10/2/2015
7:29 pm

Key:

() = other audible noises

[] = observer comments

Bold face = interviewer speaking

Non-Bold face = interviewee speaking

Ok so here is the first portion. Would you please state your age?

I am 56 years' old

And what is your job title?

Hmm that's a good one. I uhh I really can't answer that unless it's in long form. Would you like that?

Yeah I mean however you need to answer, however you need to answer that.

Ohh pretty much jack of all trades and as I coin the phrase...a "mugician". So constituting music and many other things from construction to ohh management to I don't know way too many things. Not what you would call your normal uhh person who just does one thing so....

Ok and at what age did you start playing music?

I started singing probably when I was 4 or 5 years old.

Ok and what is your primary instrument?

My primary instrument hmm guitar and bass. That's now. In school, in school that was different.

Ok and we'll talk about that. Uhh do you play multiple instruments?

Excuse me?

Do you play multiple instruments other than guitar, well do you play other instruments besides guitar and bass?

I do.

And what are those?

Uhh for different purposes, some keyboards, I play drums, I play trumpet, I play some trombone, tuba if I can build, Let's see, I can play clarinet, a flute...not well umm you know...

Ok well a lot of instruments!

An orutu

An orutu? Yeah!

Yeah

Some African instruments cool. Umm ok.

And a hulusi. Hulusi. That's a Chinese instrument.

Ok I'm not familiar with that one. Umm let's see did your parents play a musical instrument?

You know neither one of my parents played a musical instrument. My mother was an excellent singer.

Ok and did she perform outside of the home?

No, but my grandparents were musicians.

Ok. So tell me about your grandparents.

My grandmother was a pianist.

And did she play out?

No she didn't. She got too caught up in life you know with kids and that sort of thing but my grandfather he was an accomplished vocalist and drummer and played out quite a bit.

He did it for a living right?

Yes, at one point and it subsidized as a living as well when he had corporate jobs.

Yeah...ok. Umm what about siblings? Did any of your siblings play a musical instrument?

Yeah my brother Michael the youngest was a trumpet player, my sister Jean was a clarinet and pianist umm my brother Joe learned how to play guitar and my brother Richard, my eldest brother, he was a trumpet player.

Wow. So did you find all of them highly influential musically like did they inspire you to continue, to start music, or to play music?

My grandfather. Yeah.

Do you feel like he was the biggest influence for all of you as siblings?

Yes, definitely. Yeah he's the reason. He uhh there's a cool story I don't know if you have time for...

Yeah yeah please tell.

Uhh my grandfather was a very sought after vocalist and jazz drummer during the Great Depression throughout the Midwest, well-known and then that spread and they moved to New York and they were they lived on Long Island and he was doing a corporate thing but he ended up uhh he's play with notables such as Duke Ellington and some other guys. And I didn't have a clue about the singing part, I knew about the drums, and I'll tell you why in a second. The singing part, my Aunt Lucy she died a couple months ago. She was 97 years old. My brother Joe and I had been going up and visiting her and uhh she told me when I asked her about my grandpa about his drumming and she said "Oh yes yes, he was extremely sought after and even more so for his vocals" and I was like "What?" I didn't have a clue that he was a singer. He was a real humble guy and real quiet unless there was something important to be said you know. But one day when I was 4 or 5 he uhh you know all the kids were running around grandma and grandpas house and he came to me and he said "Hey, meet me in the basement in five minutes." And I was like "Ok grandpa!" Well I went down there and he pulled, he pulled a blanket off what would be now a priceless museum piece, a set of Slingerlands from the 20's and 30's with hand-hammered Zildjian cymbals. And he said, "You see that?" And I go, "Wow grandpa yeah that's cool! Look at that drum set!" He goes, "I'll tell you what that did for your grandmother and I. That got us through the Great Depression." He said, "I used to play in places called speakeasy's have you ever heard of that?" You know and I'd watched tv you know and you would always see, and especially when I was a kid you know the gangster movies and all that. "Yeah yeah grandpa!" He goes, "Well I used to play in speakeasy's and that, that drum set right there got your grandmother and I through the Great Depression." And then he asked me if I knew what the great Depression was. And I was like, "Wow I go how's that?" And he goes, "Well, I play these places and I would uhh I would get paid to play." "Oh ok cool" you know and we also would get fed. Well at the end of the night, all the help in the band they would cut up all the food that was made and take it home with them and then your grandmother and I would take what we needed and then give the rest to our neighbors. He said "That fed families, that set of drums there." And I'm like "Wow."

Wow.

So anyway uhh and he said and he made this statement and I'll never forget it. He said, of course money was a little bit different then but he said, "A man will spend his last nickel on happiness, and that's what we were providing." And I just thought that was so cool.

Yeah that's amazing! I mean how old were you when that happened?

4 or 5. My grandfather was and he was you know and I look back on it and he was just, I didn't get to see him a lot you know because we were up in Illinois and he was in St. Louis or New York. So when it was it was real special for me and later on in life I saw him quite a bit but uhh you know, I'm a vocalist as well as you know umm and my grandfather was an incredible vocalist and I didn't know and now I get it. I get it you know years, and decades after his death I get it talking to Aunt Lucy and finding that out. He bought me when I was, ohh right just maybe the next year after that, 5 and 6, he bought me a kit, they used to have these kits. And it was a crystal dialed radio you know. It had a crystal that you had to hook up and wire it up to this and there were a couple uhh resistors that you would wire up you know it was electronics. He handed me the box and I go, "Well what, oh wow a radio!" And I go, "Well, what am I supposed to do with this grandpa?" And he said, "You'll figure it out." So at that age, this man saw you know whatever he saw in me and he gave me that radio but I had to figure out how to assemble it. You know, read the directions, which they were very simple. But for a 5 or 6-year-old it was quite a task. And I got that radio up and running and it had a single earpiece and I remember tuning in WLS in Chicago and WBDM you know and depending upon what time I was listening, it was usually really late at night because I'd get yelled at "Turn that thing off!" you know because I would start stinging and most of the stuff I was listening to was old soul and Motown. Every night, every night, drilling it in my head you know the temptations of Smoky Robinson, you know I just for me that was it as a kid and it was for quite a long time growing up I remember really enjoying that style of music. Still love it. Was just talking to somebody about it not a half hour ago. A song called What You See is What You Get.

So were you taken to any concerts? Like did you see any live music growing up?

When I was a kid?

Yeah

You know at that early age I really don't recall, other than singing in church you know. Which was for me was pretty stodgy because it wasn't, uhh it was you know Catholic hymns and things like that.

Just wasn't your type of music?

Yeah the Catholic hymns on Sunday and then uhh The Jackson Five, Smoky Robinson, the Temptations at night in the earpiece so...

Yeah. Ok. Umm did you let's see was there a lot of other than well my next question is, was there a lot of music played in the home growing up? Uhh and this could have been like live music or recorded music.

Absolutely! Absolutely.

So more than just you listening to, more than just you listening to your radio that you constructed?

Oh yeah yeah yeah yeah classical you know running the gamut at the time classical to what was considered rock you know...

And is that what your parents were into?

Even music soundtracks I can just start singing these music soundtracks out of nowhere, people look at me like "Oh my God, what's wrong with this dude?" You know like the South Pacific you know or West Side Story. Things like that.

Where did that come from?

Uhh we had what today these kids call a kick ass stereo. We had actually had a stereo you know in the 60's. In a big big console, you know had a record player that played both 78, 33, and 45

rpm records and stacks and stacks and books of them. Most of which I have and you're gonna inherit. You know and there's some things in there that uhh ohh there's some you know like first run Elvis recordings on 45's. Things like that. So yeah.

So did this come from your parents?

Yeah that was my parents. You know it was a huge console and then it had another big piece wired with, across the room so we actually had true stereo sound yeah in our household when most people didn't. And then we had a flip down GE in our room you know record player. It played only 33's and 45's but it was of the day it was a cool rig. It had a handle on top so you could actually move it. And then uhh my mother in the kitchen had a had her Magnavox. Wonderful sounding piece of furniture you know but small. Went under the counters, but stretched out for a ways.

So you had a...your parents were really into music every, you know all over the place?

Oh yeah, oh yeah. A lot of music.

And so you feel like that resonated with you and your brothers and your sisters?

Oh absolutely because you were I mean I was singing with my mom at an early age, you know harmonizing. How cool is that? She was singing all the time with the radio on. She loved it.

Did you participate in school band and choir?

You know I was interested in band. Not so much choir. I was doing a lot of singing and the things they were doing that I saw the choir doing and they asked me at church and they asked me at school I just it wasn't what I wanted to do. It didn't interest me vocally. Now the band interested me because it was competition you know and the choir was usually once a year you know you might get to go to a competition at the school I was at and plus the material I didn't enjoy. Where in band I was getting to play classical music, I was getting to play jazz music, I was getting to play you know Big Dan music. All kinds of genres.

So the music that your parents...

And and there was competition. Lots of it. And that interested me.

Ok why do you think competition interested you so much?

Because I'm very competitive.

Ok and do you think the reason that you were drawn towards band is because the music that they were playing was related to the music that you grew up listening to?

You know it, not really. Some of it I was familiar with but I then we got into the classics you know and all the classical music just you know things a lot of it I didn't like some of it just lots of it I did and I got to play in this massive band you know and that was just like "Yeah, this is cool!"

But you said that your parents listened to a lot of classical music growing up did you find that interesting as they were sort of exposing you to that music?

Yeah! Yeah it was real good. You know I know it definitely probably peaked my interest in the fan side of it yeah

So from an early age I mean even 5 and 6 I mean you were interested in classical music and jazz and that's primarily, is that primarily what your parents listened to?

No, they listened to the crooners of the day too. I have a favorite one of those. You know there's Sinatra albums there's of course early on young Streisand stuff just all kinds of stuff. Perry Como, uhh and then instrumental stuff, Boots Randolph you know whole albums, not just Yakety Sax. The hits of the day but yeah I was exposed to a lot but I ended up having a favorite crooner and it was a guy named Frankie Lane. And uhh he had I just thought, "What an incredible voice and a great orchestral behind it"

Hmm ok well I, did you umm let's see my next question for the survey was did you continue music in college or did you attend college?

Well that's a story, I fresh out of high school I went to work for General Motors because it was a choice, you would have to hear the whole checkered story of how that ended up you know. It actually came about because of the move to Arkansas. You know I was wrestling in high school at the time and I was the number one ranked wrestler in Illinois at 119 pounds as a junior and got injured and I was coming back as a senior, well my senior year my dad moved us. So I finished school down here so all my wrestling scholarships were out the door and it was a kind of a choice I had to make in life. Do I go and step on somewhere you know and wrestle and get accepted into college or do I go to work at this job where they're offering me really good money for the time and play music and that's pretty much when I stepped over.

So you decided against going to college so that you could have a way to support yourself and support your family and then also it offers you an opportunity to still play music. So obviously music is a

Well it wasn't to support the family. It was supporting, the job was to support the music habit further. I always had that in mind yeah. I also I was torn because I loved grabbling, I loved wrestling you know.

Well we'll come back to that I wanna talk a little bit more about your musical experiences in high school. But for right now let's bump up to the present. So what umm describe how music fits into your day to day routine or your weekly routine.

Ohhhhh let's see. Do we wanna go through the calendar and just see how messed up it is or do we wanna...

Well you can answer it as simply as how often are you engaging in music per week?

Every day.

And in what form?

Every day of my life.

In what form?

Uhh form performance to production to recording to umm writing you know to recording to teaching and...

In terms of odd jobs, umm you know doing construction or things like that you're juggling that along with teaching umm and playing music and writing and production almost every day.

Oh yeah.

Ok.

Well well it's allotted to different days I mean and not specific

But per week, per week you are engaging very regularly in musical activity?

Well of course. Everyone should!

So describe your earliest memory of music capturing your attention.

Say that again.

Describe your earliest memory of music capturing your attention.

Oh it was with that oh boy, I mean the one that was most monumental for me?

Mhmm.

It had to be that drum set and then the crystal dial radio, my grandfather. That was it.

I was gonna mention earlier that it seems like he was obviously a very huge inspiration. Do you remember ever wanting an instrument but not having access to it?

Yeah, yeah I do.

And what were the restrictions on that? Was it a financial thing?

No. No I think it was a more “Hey we don’t want that kind of noise” thing. And then I got my revenge from the school with the tuba in the house. No it was definitely a drum set the thing about it was I was playing on a drum set once a week because I was taking private lessons. I started private lessons right at the end of the my 6th year and into my 7th year you know I would walk well let’s see, 1, 2, 3, or run, not walk because I wanted to get on that kit. 4 to 5 blocks you know, suburban blocks to get to Scott’s house who was teaching me drums. That’s what he did. He was a drum teacher.

How old were you when you started these private lessons?

Uhh at the end of my 6th year...yeah

Ok so you were 6. Umm and then you were taking these lessons for how long?

Umm I probably took lessons off Scott two or three years.

So what made you pursue...was it your grandpa that made you pursue your interest in drums?

That and rhythm. Just percussion in general man.

Listening to all the R&B and soul and stuff probably was a big influence.

Yeah yeah with the grooves and the funk of it.

Yeah absolutely. So you were taking lessons starting at 6 and how long did you say you were with Scott?

I was with him two or three years. I don’t recall how long.

Do you find him to be pretty influential in your life growing up?

No. Nope.

Ok umm yet you were very excited to go to lessons. Why was that?

Oh yeah it was great I got to play on a full Ludwig kit you know the day and you’re talking he was obviously into rock and roll and I was like ok this is cool.

So he was teaching you how did he go about teaching you?

He started out with rudiments you know he was a sight reading, the whole nine yards. The right way it was gonna be the right way you know starting off on a snare drum that’s it until I got better and better and better and then I ended up on his kit.

Now how did, I mean did that keep your interest? How did doing something like rudiments keep your interest as a kid?

I was pretty driven even as a kid. It was uhh the thrill of the chase you know what I mean?

Did you know it was leading up to playing a full kit?

Oh yeah absolutely

So you were working, even as a six-year-old you were working on technique just so you can get to that full kit.

Oh I was gonna get on that kit. There was nothing stopping me.

So he made that clear that you know that was sort of the end game and also you knew that you were gonna get to play rock and roll on drums and that’s what you were interested in?

Well that was...more interested than Motown and funk.

Ok.

But then it was morphing into rock and roll is getting in there some too of course.

Ok umm do you remember...let’s see. Let me back up. Umm let’s see here...so your primary instrument well now being guitar and bass but at the time drums, uhh was there a defining moment when you knew you wanted to play drums? Was that just from the rhythm and groove? Was that from your grandpa? What would you say?

I would say when I saw grandpa's drums. Absolutely. I thought about that the strange thing is now I can look back, and I've always been able to look back now and see this stuff as an adult, that the nickel statement interest me.

The nickel statement?

The fact, yeah the nickel statement, the fact that my grandpa did have the kindness to take the food during the depression that he had collected and just get enough for what he and grandma needed and then gave it to the neighbors. Fed them too. You know just that whole thing was just very endearing and it just touched your heart you know?

So tell me about this...

Why don't you get a nickel!

Tell me about Scott. You told me he wasn't very influential to you as a person but musically you were very invested in drums. What was he like as a person?

He was a good guy. He was a good guy. He was happy that he had a student that did his lesson.

Yet you weren't very influenced by him? That's interesting to me.

No he was a really good drummer. But you know I don't recall, he'd get on the kit you know I, it was a limited time one kid in, next kid out you know? You know the scenario.

Yeah sure.

And uhh sure I wanted to stay and play on the kit and I'd see him. He'd get on it and give you incentive. He was a good guy yeah.

Ok. Umm so you grew up listening to Motown and funk and that sort of thing but do you still play that sort of music out live?

You know, do a little bit of heavy funk but not enough. It's difficult to find the players. Let's put it that way.

So primarily what, what is the music that you play now?

What people would consider classic hard rock

And what transitioned you to that sort of style?

Ohh I think the primal call of the day you know and also the uhh the career thing. You know these guys were making money. "Hey I'm that good I can get better and I can do the same thing" you know?

So you knew from...

Not necessarily like everybody else would crave it from a rock star thing. For me again it was a challenge. It was more like uhh it was almost I loved the music but it was more like a business thing for me. To accomplish that.

That's interesting. So it wasn't my question was going to be, well how about this, at what age did you know that you wanted to be a musician for the rest of your life?

Oh from the get go with the uhh with the crystal radio.

So from 5 or 6 but do you remember a specific age where maybe you told yourself like "Ohh I have to play music for the rest of my life. This is what I have to do!"?

Well exactly, exactly what I did was my reaction was, "I wanna do that!" That's my reaction. That's what I wanna do. Early. Early on.

Ok. Umm let's see, uhh let's talk about uhh what was your first what I would like for you to go through and maybe within a maybe within a 5-minute time frame, can you talk about your very first experience playing in a band? This could be a garage band or school band. Let's, let's keep it to the nontraditional. Let's avoid school band right now and I just want you to talk about your experiences playing in funk bands or rock bands anything outside of school from the very beginning to the present.

From the very beginning, the first time, let's see, it was probably with a buddy of mine named Dave. He had a drum kit. They had a breezeway in their house and he had a drum kit and another guy, an older guy who was friends of his brother was a guy named Rick Poola and uhh he had a guitar and an amp you know a nice one because Rick's parents were well off. And I just happened to get a well this is I guess when I was twelve...I got a Fender jazz bass for uhh a birthday and on this little bitty basement 10 amplifier and man that was it. Drug it over there to Dave's you know. Two trips. He lived about a block and half away and Rick Poola came over there with his, and we just made a bunch of noise you know.

What kind of music were you playing?

It was rock and roll. At least I thought it was noise. I was already to the point of when I came in there I had my part down.

How old were you?

Twelve. Something like that.

Describe that first feeling. What was that like when you were playing in a group for the first time?

The very first feeling I had was more of a thought. I gotta get a bigger amp.

But I mean in terms of the emotion of like I, I'm I've been interested in music since I'm 6 years old, I'm twelve years old. I've been, you know obviously you're not thinking all these thoughts but like you finally get together with a group of other players, kids your age, what's that feeling like when you play music for the first time?

Oh it was just great. I mean, it was garbage but it was great.

Yeah I hear that a lot you know it's the music, the quality of the music wasn't great but the experience was very memorable. Everybody seems to vividly remember their first experience.

Oh yeah!

Umm so

I knew that I was gonna hone my chops and learn a bunch more tunes and get with some other guys at that point you know

So you're twelve at this point uhh kinda you know just briefly walk me through like what kind of bands through high school and you know after high school into adulthood. What was that like?

In high school I uhh I would say in high school I was honing my bass and vocals and I really wasn't, I really wasn't concerned so much as being in a band as I was being the best possible player in the band. You know you're thinking the front man thing right but uhh lets see

Were you playing in high school though like were you playing out performing?

Oh yeah. Yeah, yeah, my first gig was a dance at a junior high. It was Ludwig High School. That was the name of it. Or Ludwig Junior High. Yeah. Yeah oh yeah that was a big thing. Yeah I know it was a Halloween dance. And Mike was the lead singer and he dressed up like Alice Cooper.

Ok so how long at what age did you start playing with this band?

With good bands?

No this current band that you're describing. You're in high school at this time?

Yeah yeah that was just a bunch of guys got together and put a band together and went and did a couple of gigs you know?

Ok and did you play with this group pretty, you just did that a couple time, you didn't play with them very often?

Yeah just a couple times.

So would you...

At that age it's like a revolving door.

Ok would you describe you high school experience as sort of that? Just playing with different musicians in these different groups that didn't last very long? Is that correct?

That is correct.

Ok but all the while you know at all times you're pretty much playing music with someone or would you say there were off periods?

There were off periods as far as playing with people yeah because I had so much going on with the sports with the high school band, with the school, with you know just everything else I had going on. And, and honing my chops just incessantly was driving my siblings insane. Just practicing. Practice, practice, practice, practice.

Ok so let's talk about, let's sort of back up again to the beginning of your band, your school band experience. What did you play? What was that experience like for you?

Well that was an interesting experience. They had, I don't if when you were there did they have the musical aptitude test?

Uhh they didn't but I have taken that.

Ok well that's the first thing they did you know if you wanted to be in band then you had to take the musical aptitude test. So we all got in and huddled into the room you know everybody that wanted to be in band and I took the test. Well then the band director and his he had his little bitty office for his meetings and he would see every kid and ask them what they wanted to play and tell them what they scored on the test and then pretty much would tell them what they were going to play.

So what did you want to play and what did you play?

Well I walked in that little room and I told Robert. Mr. Robert, the Hitler of music, that I, he said "Well what do you wanna play?" and I looked down and I said "Well I'm a drummer" and he said to me, "There will never be anyone who scores a "perfect" on the musical aptitude test in my band be a drummer." I was like "What?" You know I didn't say that you're what I don't even know how old we were we started in probably band in 5th or 6th grade.

So did you find that discouraging to hear something like that?

Yeah I did, well it's disturbing now that I look back at it. But it was also ok I wanna be in the band.

Yeah so what instrument did you wind up playing?

I ended up being a tubist. I played the tuba.

So you were playing the tuba. Did you play the tuba all the way from middle school through high school?

I didn't make it all through high school there was a big, my junior year there was a big to do in my family because he told my brother Richard and I was next in line that he had to quit sports and concentrate on band or he didn't need to be in his band. And he brought that home with him. And you know 4 out of 5 kids were in band and two of em first chair at their instruments.

So your band director came and was the one that initiated that?

Yes, he initiated that. He said that to my brother Richard so when my brother Richard came home he told it to my dad and my dad said, "Well it's up to you. Do you want to do the sports or do you want to do the band it looks like?" And my brother said, "Well I'm doing the sports because you know he was wrestling and playing baseball."

And you did sports as well?

Yes, yes I was wrestling playing baseball you know uhh played on the basketball team but gave that up for wrestling.

So how do you feel about that decision? Are you glad you made that decision?

Yeah. I really am. I really am. Because that was the first time that I really, it was up to me. I mean to make this life decision. Which, do you stay under the totalitarianism rule of Mr. Smeltzer or do you have other things in your life because I was already playing the bass and playing out so...

So you were playing in groups outside of band so band wasn't your only way of making music?

Oh no absolutely not.

And so it seems like you kinda, you described him as the Hitler of music so I have a feeling you don't have a very fond impression on uhh of him.

Well I do I have that and because of what I achieved in band I was one of his favorites. And he considered me one of his stars and I do I have another affection because of how hard he was probably made me even more driven as a musician because you now you want to please. You aim to please and I didn't like taking second place.

Right. You're a very competitive person as you described. So that makes sense. Yeah ok. So you feel like he wasn't an incredible encouraging person in terms of positivity but he was encouraging you or influencing you to work harder because he was pushing you.

He was just ultra-strict.

Did the band, was the band very successful?

The bands were phenomenal.

Yeah.

Yeah uhh w would play, our high school band would play on at the gazebo on Nantucket island every summer for like two weeks during the peak. You know they would put us up, pay for us to go out there.

So even though you had this very strict band director did you have, did your interest in band decrease through high and school and that's why you chose sports eventually?

No not at all. Not at all.

What caused that transition?

Well, as far as, as far as getting out of the music it was a choice it was more driven by uhh you know I'm not gonna be under this guy's rule. He's not gonna rule my life because I'm a free man. That's really really what it was about. I don't want anybody telling me I can and can't do this. I can do both of them. I had proved it up until that point.

So were there kids...

And excel at both.

Were there other kids that did band and sports at the same time through junior and senior year?

Oh I'm not certain, I'm sure yeah there definitely were. There definitely were.

But because you were an upper level player he asked you to commit to one or the other?

You know I don't really know what it was. My brother Richard didn't practice much. He was a mid-level player. He was real talented. He would have been great if he would have really applied it, but uhh no my youngest brother, he was first chair in the grade school trumpet player. But then of course I was first chair tubist out of three guys.

So what was a typical, let's split this into your bass and drum playing umm sort of the, I'm gonna call that your bass and drums and singing and guitar, let's call that the

nontraditional side of playing and then let's call the school side your traditional training or your traditional musical experience. So what was a typical practice session for you like growing up for the traditional and for the nontraditional? What did you do?

Umm the traditional? Depending on whether, see this is a big thing with Smeltzer too as far as practice so, depending on what time I got home from some kind of practice I had as far as sports because you had to adhere to that right after school. Boom you're on that, ok. Depending on what sport it was or what I was doing at the time umm when I got home, I would directly get into the room and start practicing while the other kids might go and watch something on the tv you know I would get in there because I knew dinner was coming up and I had to get some practice in before dinner. I would play for a while. Of course the door shut and a towel underneath the door and everything from both side because they were just hating it, my siblings. And then I'd take a little break before dinner and I'd go watch some tv or listen to some more music, whatever. Go outside for a while and then eat dinner and then it was time, it was time to either, I had a, actually had a tuba in the house on a stand, you know a sousaphone actually. An old brass sousaphone in my bedroom that I shared and it was not uhh it wasn't happy. The others were like "Mom make him stop!"

So you uhh...

I'm glad you understand that!

Yeah so you were practicing tuba most of the time. What about your nontraditional side?

What was that like?

Well later on in the evening you know it was time to break out the Deep Purple albums, the early Kansas stuff, oh gosh Steppenwolf, Jimi Hendrix, I was like yeah I had to learn all that of course I have to practice it.

So when you were practicing tuba were you mainly doing things by ear?

On tuba? No no no. Sight reading. All sight reading.

Sight reading...

You know I mean I did stuff all you know by scales and A tunes all of course by memory, all my warm ups.

So what about your nontraditional? Was that more ear based?

Oh yeah put on a record and learn the part.

Yeah so why

Now remember we had a really nice record player in the bedroom.

Sure! So why did you...why do you think you stopped playing tuba and just stuck with the more nontraditional instruments that you were playing?

Well it was because of the sport thing. I wasn't gonna quit grappling.

Sure. But I mean you had a tuba at home correct? Like it was your tuba?

No no, it was the school's tuba.

It was the school's tuba; so is that why do you think if you would have owned your own tuba that you would have continued to learn tuba?

No.

How come?

Uhh because you know I was I didn't have time for it once I got out of band the times just shifted strictly to just playing bass and singing.

Do you think your interests are more based in that though?

In playing bass and singing?

Yeah

Oh yeah definitely! In the tuba? (sarcastically)

So why I mean you were practicing bass and singing, were you playing in a band at this time as well?

Well here and there like I said. Nothing steady. Not a group of guys I stuck with no.

Do you feel like that...

Hey I was playin in Deep Purple! What do you mean? (laughter) That blasted on the stereo man you know was never a fan of Smoke on the Water like the second incarnation of Deep Purple burn you know?

So you know you spent a lot of time playing to records and things like that more so obviously than playing out because playing records is how you practiced right?

Yeah. Oh yeah.

So high school is over with. Umm what happens then for music? What do you do?

Well it's a choice between going to college you know, an uncertain college career. Uhh...

So you choose to do General Motors...

I was offered a job with General Motors makin a bunch of money, makin a bunch of money as a young punk right out of high school.

And you chose that over music?

And I can continue to play music.

Right. And I mean you've had some success with bands. How did all that come about?

What was that like for you?

Which band?

How man major bands like things that are worth noting. Was it two bands?

Yes.

Ok so let's start with the first one. What was that like?

I was 24 years old. Well actually no I'm sorry. There's three bands. There's one before that.

Ok.

Yeah there was one before that.

Were all three of these rock?

Yes, all three rock bands

And with all three of these did you have record deals of some sort?

The first one uhh folded right before and they did make it in the studio. In Ray Clark's studio, but it folded I just I wasn't involved in that when they made it. That was folding after I was gone.

But the other...

Ummm and then the second yeah we were signed originally to Rhino Rampage and Distributors by Capital on a compilation album, a CD. And then we got signed by Dreamland RCA records uhh which was owned by Mike Chapman. The other label mates were Lita Ford, Pat Benatar, Exile and...

So what things caused these to fall through for the band?

Well, how do I put this nice?

You don't have to be; you don't have to be nice.

Well they're near-sighted musicians, how about that?

So it was more the musicians than the people that were above that? You know the corporate people I guess you would say?

Well, it was kind of a combination actually. It was a combination actually. What it came down to was a lot of business and a lot of monkey business.

So ultimately those things that with the second band that you had, you got this record deal for the group, things didn't work out, you started a third band uhh got another record deal umm and...

No now the first band didn't get it. They got a recording contract.

Ok.

Not a...I guess that's a record deal yeah ok right!

And so they said....

I had been removed from the situation and they replaced me and then it fell apart?

And that was the first band right?

Yes.

And then the second band is somewhat similar situation happened. You had a record deal that fell through.

No, totally different situation. Uhh we were a band who was playing in the St. Louis area and over into Illinois you know stuff down there in Arkansas and we actually talked about coming to Mountain Home and we uh we went out to Los Angeles. We moved the band out to Los Angeles. We could get the band more material and it was just we took it as far as we could go in the Midwest and we went out there, made some connections, and ended up doing uhh doing a Showcase for Dreamland RCA, well first for Ted Goldstein and we got the compilation deal and then doing a show for Dreamland RCA and getting signed to them.

So this was the second band. Once these things, I guess what I'm trying to get at is what is you know, you put so much time and effort and work and practice into these things and when things don't pan out you know how was that for you? Did you quit music for a period of time?

Were you never you know bothered by something like that.

No you know I didn't. I uhh took my licks and regrouped and got smart you know?

Yeah. Why do you think you...I mean I know what like how much time you put into a group, how much time you can put into that and for it to fall through to just regroup, why do you keep playing music? What's the point?

Well I love music! I love music there's no doubt about it. I enjoy people enjoying themselves you know?

Yeah! Would you say?

And I don't mind getting paid for it either.

Yeah the money doesn't hurt. But I mean honestly more than the money

I feel like even if money wasn't the issue like if you had all the money in the world and you didn't need to make another dime for the rest of your life you would still play music wouldn't you?

Absolutely.

Why do you think, I know I'm pressing you but like why? What's the point?

Well I think it's innate. I think I was, my mother said that I was, I came out of the womb tapping my foot. She told me and I was like "What?" She said, "Yep" and I said, "Well I don't know!"

Ok.

I don't know if that was just her, I don't know if that was reality or if that was just her way of, you know that would drive her nuts, even as a small child I remember just sitting at the table. You know what I mean?

So do you have any memory of anybody discouraging you from participating in music, or quitting you, any spots where you might quit music.

As far as parental or...

Just anybody. Parents, brother's, family members.

Oh there's, no no one in the family. No. Not one person.

Ok. And obviously your brothers, you said your r brothers and sisters, they were kind of like "Oh my gosh stop practicing so much." Do you kind of feel like they were genuinely discouraging for your musical life or do you feel like they were encouraging?

Oh they were very encouraging. They just wished I would have practiced somewhere else.

Yeah sure.

I mean come on a tube in the house. Really? Ouch.

Umm let's see what about as far as parents or really anybody, do you have a memory of anyone pushing you to practice or encouraging you to keep improving?

I think it was more the uhh the musicians I was leaning towards or the singer I was really liking, or even the composition. I think that was the drive. You know, to be able to do that. You know for me it really wasn't, I didn't have to be told to go practice. You know I'm sure my mom did it on a few occasions, "Did you practice?" But you knew I was practicing man there was no doubt. So and I was driven. I was driven, yeah.

So you said mostly the musicians you were around do you feel like they were, how did they inspire you to want to practice more?

Well on the tuba side of it there was a guy who ended up being the first chair in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in high school when I started and the guy above me was headed there too. He ended up in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Uh Charles Hunter. He was incredible. You know I knew when I got to high school for the first time in my life I was gonna be second and there's just no way this guy the tone he was just an incredible musician. Wow. He was one of those you know.

So feeling defeated like that did you feel like ohh maybe I'll just do sports or did you feel like...

No oh no not at all I took private lessons from Charles. He was like, "You're gonna be the best!" You know he was good. He was cool. He was just an awesome guy. No not at all no I was, it was a great uhh it was great for me to play with him.

That's great.

Yeah he was just a phenomenal player and I was stealing everything he had.

So who do you think were your greatest direct influences for music?

Direct influences as far as uhh...

Like people physically in your life who were the hands down the absolute influences in your life for music.

Oh the main one that just started the spark was my grandfather. And then here I am at 56 years old and I talked to my Aunt that just passed at 97. A year before she passed and she tells me about the singing and I had no idea which is so weird because that's what I do I sing. But it was those drums that got me on the instrumental side of it you know.

Yeah

Interested in that.

So that sparked it, who...

But he didn't have anything to do with the singing part. I had no idea.

Yeah, so who sparked the singing I mean do you think it was your mother because she was a singer?

Yeah I do. She sang all the time. I was around it all the time. My Aunt Mary is a great singer you know, she'll played her acoustic guitar, had a beautiful voice. My grand, other grandmother had, Grandmother Bryant had a great voice. She played, just it was there. There was a piano in the house you know uhh there was a stereo, numerous stereos and radios. So when you go into your buddies houses back then they might have one small stereo, not even a stereo. Just a single speaker radio and of course everybody had their big box tv you know, big console tv. That was the center of the home back then. But for us the tv was not, not the center. It was secondary.

So what, how do you know, this is kind of a deep question I guess you could say. But, how do you know that music is important to you?

Because it's like breathing. Does that make any sense? If I stopped, I've tried to stop doing it it's just a miserable life for me without it.

You've tried to stop doing it?

Sure, numerous times.

Why's that?

Ohh 90% of the time I was say it's caused by business set up of the business side and some maybe personal once in a while too.

Ok, but you always...

When you've had enough, you've had enough.

You always kind of come back to it?

Yes.

Ok.

And I vowed never to stop again.

Why do you think you always come back to it though?

Well it's pretty personal. You know. Even if you're just behind the recording desk you know. I can just go somewhere else. I'm not on this plane. This isn't where I'm existing. I'm not working a job, I'm not...no I'm somewhere else.

Yeah it's an escape. It's relaxation.

And it's that multifold. It's not just the playing and the singing, it's even the writing, the recording, you know just every little detail. Changing a set of strings. The mechanical parts.

Umm what do you look for in a musician that tells you music is important to them? Or what do you see in a musician...

What was the first part of that?

When you look at another musician, let's say when you look at me, what tells you that music is important to me?

What tells me that?

Yeah how do you know?

How do I know that music is important to you?

Yeah.

Because I witnessed it. I witness the importance of it. I've seen where it's taken you, I've seen the smile on your face, I've seen the smile you've put on other people's faces so you know I can be a pretty good judge of it. I think because of the way it makes me feel personally. But you know it's much larger than that. There's a lot of facets to it. You know, of course I know you but...

Well that's why I used that example. You know, what tells you how do you know that? I know what you've witnessed, I just wanna know why...

I see you go somewhere else; I don't know how else to put it. That's the best, and it's where you're going to it's not where you're at, who you're playing in front of...you know it's the soul thing. Some people say the mind thing. But you lose it, you lose whatever is going on around you and you're in your own little area. But you're still taking in these other guy's parts and absorbing them at the same time. It's just amazing how the brain works with it.

Yeah that connection between musicians, or between the musicians and the audience.

It's amazing. It can't be found in anything else. Nothing. Nothing is even close.

Yeah. Yeah it's a pretty magical thing. I know, I mean obviously I know what you mean.

Um how do you and I have another question for you about that as well, how do you continue to grow as an artist today?

You know, I...writing, experiences, that's how I grow. That's how I've always grown musically is sort of experience pretty much and that gives you, that gives me fodder to write with you know. Umm yeah it's just...

Ok...what about uhh so we talked about the traditional training which is like high school band, or sorry school band in general, and then the nontraditional training which is more like the rock bands and that sort of thing.

Oh private lessons on the bass guitar for rock and roll. Oh yeah.

Private lessons would account for traditional training and that sort of thing. Do you feel like one was more beneficial than the other?

No I feel like they were all beneficial. Equally they make you know just like anything, a combination of things makes you who you are so music is no different.

But...

Nobody who has really worked in this for a good amount of time isn't the same. Not even close. It's a I don't mean to; this is not condescending. It's the novices who are the same. It's the ones, it's just the same as any training under any vocation. You pick. If you put your all into it, chances are you're going to be pretty good at it.

Yeah I guess, if I were put into the same situation I would think that I would, I would want both the traditional and the nontraditional training just because they are beneficial in different ways but I'm gonna be mean and put you in a corner and ask you if you had to choose traditional training meaning band or nontraditional training meaning the rock bands, which one would you choose? And why?

Yeah that isn't fair.

I know.

Umm I have to say uhh the rock and roll the nontraditional you know.

Yeah. Why do you think that is?

Well there's numerous reasons. It's probably what I like to perform more than anything. Although I can't say because no that's not necessarily true. Singing the national anthem is just much of a you know in front of a crowd. I like to please people. That's probably a good reason why and most of the time if you're playing in a rock band, if it's a good rock band, you're pleasing the people. They're singing, that's exactly it, because they're there to see you.

Sure. Ok.

I'd have to say that.

Well for somebody like yourself who has played for you know crowds of, huge crowds of people, I mean what, this is my last question, umm there's a magical...

Yeahhh.

Haha yes. Thank you for sticking it out. Umm there's a magical feeling that happens, not all the time, but when you play music sometimes there's this feeling that happens. This sort of magic that's created. This energy. How do you describe that and where do you think it comes from?

Well it comes from with the big crowds, it comes from the anticipation and then it comes from everybody else just blasting right at you. They know how many eyelashes you got. You know.

What do you mean by that?

Well their energy, they're there to see you. It's your living room. You're there to please them and everyone's feeling good and everybody's happy and everybody's looking for a good, for the show. They're just, it's all the anticipation. It's just awesome. And then stepping out into it. For me, you know, WOW, it just is like, "Alright, it's time to turn it on!"

So that performance element is where you feel music is the most supreme?

There's no doubt about it. There's no doubt about it. Yeah. I mean I'm just when that was going on, uhh you know and a lot of times it could be a little private party you know. But everybody is just so into it and so it just and you're feeling good because everybody else is feeling good. It's a joint thing. You know to me, listening to music is just as important as playing music so all the people that listen to music, as far as I'm concerned, they're musicians too.

Hmm yeah I mean I think everybody has a musical aptitude obviously so,

Yeah.

To some degree everybody knows something about music.

Yep!

I love it! I love that answer. Umm well, here I'm gonna stop the recording...

Participant H
10/4/2015
8:57 am

Key:

() = other audible noises

[] = observer comments

Bold face = interviewer speaking

Non-Bold face = interviewee speaking

How old are you?

55

And what is your job title?

An acoustics engineer

Ok and at what age did you start playing music?

Oh I was about 6, 6 or 7 when I started taking drum lessons

Ok and what is your primary instrument?

Drums

Do you play multiple instruments?

Uhh yeah I mean I'm not at the performance level, but I play some keyboards.

Ok, uhh let's see did any...either of your parents play musical instruments?

My father did when he was a kid. He never kept it up and uhh my mother doesn't play anything.

Ok. So while you were growing up neither of your parents were playing anything?

Correct

Ok. Uhh were you taken to concerts growing up?

Umm some yeah

Anything of note? You know something that was really memorable to you, influential to you?

Well I remember seeing Buddy Rich...of course and uhh then I remember seeing Chet Atkins with Floyd Cramer and Boots Randolph. Believe it or not that was kind of the memorial...but that's it.

So when you saw these acts, how old were you?

Oh gosh I was probably about 12 when I saw Buddy Rich and uhh I was probably about I don't know 10 or so when I saw Floyd you know Floyd Cramer and those were the earlier concerts when I was a kid that my folks took me to...so...

Ok uhh did you...let's see was there a lot of music played around your house growing up?

Yes

Uhh mostly like your parent's records? Or your stuff? What...what would you say?

Yeah my mom she had a record player in the living room that she played uhh mostly her records

And what kind of music was that?

Uhh kinda not just country but I mean she really loved Floyd Cramer and that stuff...so I remember she had a uhh umm And the Beat Goes On it was a... what was the name of the drummer? Umm I'll think of it in a second. Some Tijuana Brass you know Herb Alpert and Tijuana Brass that kind of stuff.

Mkay and you said you took private lessons growing up how long did you take private lessons?

How long?

Yeah

Until we moved to umm Arkansas so I had private instruction from the time I was 7 until I was 15

Ok umm let's see...did you participate in school band or choir?

Yes

Both?

Just band

Just band? Ok and which grade levels were you in band?

Uhh 7th through high school and you might add in Wichita too I was in a drum bugle course

Ok did you continue music into college?

Yes

As a music major?

No

Ok but you were playing in bands while going to college?

I played in the jazz band at U of A and I was playing but you know when I was but at that point I started playing in local bands too around the area

Ok umm so this next one on a scale of 1 to 10 how influential were your parents on your musical life? 1 being not very influential and 10 being highly influential.

Well I would have to give them a 9 or a 10 because of their support. Yeah although they weren't musical they were very supportive of me and took me to lessons and you know,

How were they supportive you know other than buying instruments and taking you to lessons were they like verbally supportive did they really encourage you?

Yeah they uhh you know it was obvious that was what I wanted to do and they were supportive of it and uhh yeah and encouraging you know of uhh you know taking me to drum corp practice twice a week and private lessons and all that stuff.

Ok what about other family members? Anybody else of note?

Well I didn't have any brothers or sisters but I do have cousins on my dad's side that were of the four cousins over there two of them are very musical so uhh and my dad's sister was a concert pianist uhh she didn't perform professionally but she was classically trained and so my cousin Shelly is a great piano player so yeah there is some musical cousins I guess you'd say

So how do you feel like they influenced you? Did you play music with them? Did you hear them play music growing up?

Umm well yeah I don't know how much they influenced me but uhh when we would go to their house they had a little grand piano and that was fascinating to me that they actually had a grand piano in the house you know so uhh so you know and my grandmother she had a piano in the basement and she would play on that thing whenever we'd have family get together and I loved to hear her play so...

Ok what about friends who were not musicians? How would you rate them?

What did you say again?

Uhh on a uhh on a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate friends who were not musicians? As far as influence.

Friends who are not musicians in terms of being an influence?

Uhh yeah

When I was a kid?

Uhh yeah

Or now?

Kinda just growing up uhh you know in your earlier years like high school and earlier.

Umm well I would say very little I mean because I mean I had a lot of friends and most of the time when we were out playing it wasn't anything about music and I did have some of the kids in the neighborhood that were kinda wannabe guitar players so we would try to get together and have little backyard garage band jam things occasionally so I'd say there was some level of influence from some kids but for the most part no

What about other musicians? This could be your friends. Somebody older? Younger?

Well my mentor when I was a kid was uhh I'm talking about when I was little when I very first started out was a kid he was a high school kid at the time he lived two doors down and he was a drummer he had a drum set and uhh I was 6 or 7 and I used to go down and sit on the front porch and listen to him play and he would invite me in and he would let me play on his drums and he was the one that started giving me my first lessons and when he first recognized I had some aptitude and some serious drive he recommended my parents that I go take lessons with him from his instructor which I did so yeah he was my uhh I just thought he was uhh god you know when I was 7 years old he was probably 15 you know but he had a whole drum set you know

So would you say that's the first time the drums really captured your attention and you sort of knew that's what you wanted to play?

Umm well I don't particularly remember...well I kinda do...I remember seeing the going to a Christmas parade when I was a little kid and when the marching band came by the drumline that's what really captivated me first time I saw a marching band and the drums I just remember that experience which was loud and uhh that was my awakening per say but you know then [my first teacher] you know actually he was the one that first time I actually got to hold sticks and play on drums you know so yeah that would have been.

Ok great so this is uhh this kinda this next question sort of starts the interview process and I mean we've kind of already started with some open ended you know question and answers sort of things but uhh this first one is describe how music fits into your day to day or weekly routine?

Well it's a big part. Of course I I...I don't practice every day but I...I try to practice as many mornings at least for 15 or 20 minutes before I leave the house in the mornings just to start the day so that's...(mumbling) the days that I start the day with practicing usually go pretty smooth umm but then from there on its you know it's a pretty big part of most every week. There's hardly a week I don't have some type of musical activity whether it's at least 1 or 2 rehearsals or a gig or something. And I'm always listening to stuff so...

Yeah...do you ever remember wanting an instrument but not having access to an instrument?

Yeah when I was a kid I wanted a banjo. Believe it or not. So uhh I never got a banjo though I don't know why. Didn't want it bad enough to beg my parents for one but I always thought banjo was really cool. I wanted to learn how to play the banjo.

So what about...how did drums work? How long were you asking for drums before finally got your first kit or your first snare drum?

Well you know like I said I was 7 when I started taking lessons with Dean. He fairly quickly uhh got me enrolled with his instructor who his name was Chuck I believe. He was actually the drum instructor for the drum corp. But yeah his recommendation it was old school I...I my first year of lessons I had a practice pad and drumsticks. Then after that after my first year I got a snare drum and I had the snare drum for a couple years before I ever got a drum set.

And what kind of things were you practicing with the snare drum?

Ohh all the rudiments and all the basic stuff. Like I said my first teachers were drum corp guys and I was fortunate I believe to have that as my first exposure and you know educational experience to get a really strong rudimental background and just snare drumming you know **Do you feel like you were really umm like invested at that point or did the rudiment thing sort of bore you at times? How did you feel about all that?**

No I it never bored me I was dedicated and motivated and I practiced. And uhh of course I wanted a drum set but you know my teacher at that time there you know he wouldn't even let me start playing on a drum set yet. It was like that old school way of approaches you don't move to the drum set until you get your rudiments down. You get your snare drum technique solid then we'll go to the drum set so I knew I had to do that first.

Ok when...at what age did you get your first drum set? And tell me about that experience.

Oh I remember it. I was in the 5th grade I believe or 6th grade. But anyway I got them for Christmas. It was 1969 Blue Sparkle Ludwig kit that my folks got. It was used but it wasn't very old. Umm it was a lot of money for them at the time. I think they paid 500 bucks for it which you know it would be worth quite a bit more today. That was a lot of money for that back then and uhh I just remember I don't...I forget exactly how the folks framed it but on Christmas Eve they had it out of the back of dad's truck and they did some little trickery to get me outside and then I went out there and there was the truck backed up to the front door with those drums in it and I just I was uhh mesmerized so yeah I remember that.

Yeah umm who would you say starting from early life you said that that first uhh high school kid was really sort of a big deal in your life for music who would you say are the biggest direct musical influences in your life

Gosh I don't know. You mean the people that I've worked with or studied with or listened to?

Not listening to but somebody that you physically have worked with in music or have learned from in music, who do you think are the biggest influences?

Well obviously my personal instructors that I had. There was Chuck and the other guy was Barry. I can't remember his last name but you know he was kind of the guy in Wichita that taught at one of the stores so I studied with him for a while after doing the drum corp thing or in conjunction with and then there was another woman after we moved to Arkansas her name was Pat. Good keyboard teacher and I was taking organ lessons from her. She was a really neat lady uhh and she was kind of out of the Stan Kenton/ Jamey Aebersold camp there of jazz educators. She died. She got diabetes and had to have her legs amputated and all kind of a tragic death. Real sweet lady. She was a good influence. Taught me a lot about umm chord voicings and music theory. Jazz harmony theory.

Ok and what do you think...I mean they were teaching you information...musical information that you wanted and it was helping you improve but what was it about their personalities that made them attractive to you?

I think you know all good teachers are encouraging and uhh you know you get that support and affirmation and you know when you need someone to kind of correct you you get it but uhh I remember umm yeah just Chuck he was almost a drill sergeant instructor. I mean he was a really nice guy but you know but everything has to be very precise so he was all about precision and he drilled that into me.

Do you feel like as teachers...did they model for you and did you find that to be really inspiring? Like were they good players?

Yeah you know I never really got to hear uhh Barry play. But yeah Chuck Reese he was really good I mean he was he came from the Chicago Cavaliers. Uhh he was yeah... of course I was young too and impressionable but any of those guys were good influences.

Ok umm what kind of music did you play? So you started doing...all of that stuff was from lessons then obviously you know you went into school band and that's a different thing from playing your drum set but once you got your drum set umm kind of talking about the non-traditional side of music for you what kind of music did you like to play?

Well see I grew up in Wichita and we had jazz bands in the junior high and high school so I was playing drum set in school umm from 7th grade on. So yeah I was in marching band, concert band, and jazz band.

Wow! Were you in any other types of groups outside of school?

Yeah I played bass in a bluegrass band. Umm there uhh in fact the Duncan family, Carl Duncan, who was the president of the Kansas Bluegrass Association, his sons Tim and John. Tim played bass in our junior high jazz band and uhh but he played mandolin in the family bluegrass band so mom and dad and the two brothers Tim and John uhh Tim played mandolin and John played banjo. They needed a bass player and they had a bass so they recruited me and taught me how to play you know upright bass bluegrass style you know and so we were the flatland express and we travelled around. In fact, we played in Winfield before when it was just in its infant stages of you've heard of the Winfield Festival? Which is not far from Wichita so yeah that was kind of cool too.

Wow huh so describe for me do you have any vivid memories of like sort of that first time that you ever really played music with other musicians and it started you were like wow you know were really making music here. What was that experience like for you?

Well that, that's, that's the drug isn't it. That's what you live for and you wait for but yeah I can remember it in all those contexts you know whether its marching band, drum corp, school jazz band, or even the bluegrass band. It's all exhilarating.

Do you feel like it was the performance ensembles that really inspired you to be a better musician or do you think it was more like the practice and private lessons?

Probably the practice and private lessons that I had. Of course the ensemble stuff was great. I don't know I was just driven and I spent a lot of time practicing when I was a kid.

Ok, do you...I mean it's hard to explain it you know because it's like yeah some people are just self self-motivated but do you think there were any, any reasons in your life why you think you kind of became that way. Were your parents very much that way or can you think of an explanation?

Why I was so driven?

Yeah

I don't know I just knew that's what I wanted to do. It wasn't like my parents said you have to practice. In fact, the agreement was when they agreed to sign me up for lessons it was like if we have to tell you, you know if you're not gonna practice then we're not gonna keep these up and it turned out to be, course this is before the days of practice pad drum sets and stuff they would kind of politely ask me if ok you've practiced enough this evening. Time for bed.

Ok describe umm describe a typical practice session for you. What would you do? This is like high school and before.

Ok well you know I had weekly lessons with my instructor so I'd work on the weekly lesson which was usually some book we were working out of and you know all the books I worked out of then are still some of the staples today. There's you know there's George Lawrence stick

control, Podemski's modern snare drum method, Jim Chapin advanced studies for the modern drummer you know and most of those books were old back then you know they'd been around since the 40's and 50's so umm... what else?

So that was for school essentially or private lessons I guess?

Private lessons yeah

Did you do anything else like on your own like uhh any other types of practicing?

Well I was playing with, I would play a lot with records. I did a lot of that. I would put on the headphones, put on a record which was back in the days of a record player and then I think at one point I finally, I had an eight track player but no I would put on a record and play along. Try to so...

Describe your band, your school band experience...was that from 7th grade through high school was that like your full focus and motivation?

Pretty much you know but we moved to Arkansas the summer before my junior year ok so that was kind of an odd time to transfer on a lot of levels because it's all my friends I grew up with in Wichita all of a sudden I move to a new place I spend my junior and senior year not only with a fresh set of trying to make new friends and everything but the Wichita public school system had a very good music program. Like I said we had jazz band in junior high and high school. Clark Terry came to our high school my sophomore year. No excuse me it was my freshman year because I actually went to the high school. So you know I got to have a clinic with Clark Terry and uhh and all that stuff and then we moved to Springdale, Arkansas in 1976 and I remember going in to sign up you know you went in to see the school counselor and get enrolled in school and he went well what extracurricular activities? I said well in Wichita I did gymnastics and swimming and jazz band and he said we have football basketball and marching band. I said alright I guess I'll be in the marching band then you know. So all that all the school programs just came to a screeching halt when we moved here 40 years ago. It was really like going back in time coming from Wichita to Arkansas in the 1970's.

Sure. So what was the...

At that point I was on my own...

Yeah. Did you do any private lessons or anything in Springdale?

No. There was nobody to study with here.

Ok. And so you were just doing marching band...school band?

Yeah for my junior year I didn't even participate in school music my senior year.

Oh wow ok. Do you think a lot of that well obviously just the move and adjusting would be a huge factor in that I would think but why...was there anything else?

Well I would say...I can say this. It's not incriminating in any way, but I felt a certain resentment because the band director my junior year put me in charge of he kind of wanted me to be the head of the drumline because I came in with drum corp experience and that was not very well received by the seniors. So there was some resentment and you know that was obvious. So I just didn't feel comfortable and I just I did start in my senior year started playing you know with some bands and some kids trying to do rock band stuff.

So you have this big influence in jazz and you know drum corps music uhh where does the rock and roll thing come from?

Well it's just you know playing with kids doing bands you know we get together and have a not well especially the kids who grew up here none of them were jazz influenced at all so we would just umm I remember my first club gig was playing in a country band you know

Hmm ok and so I mean they were just opportunities essentially for you to play a kit and you know play with other musicians and...

Yeah I started playing with other musicians and so that's you know people at that point in time people either had a rock band or a country band you know the opportunities to play jazz...well I'm not mentioning the woman Pat who lived in Springdale she was the keyboard instructor I had because all along you know I had, I had an organ... I was into the style, you know the organs that had the built in rhythm section and all that. I loved those things as a kid. Had one of those forever and uhh Pat was actually a really good keyboard player and instructor. Like I said she understood jazz real well and we actually did some little gigs together and stuff.

Would you say that's like uhh the first times that you actually started playing out was in your junior and senior year?

Yeah

And so what was the music scene like around here?

Well a buddy of mine that was a bass player, and I did play with one of the school choral groups that was kind of like a little group so uhh and the local bass player to hit Springdale high at the time, his dad uhh had a country band that played they were the house band that played at one of the clubs here in town. Forget the name of it. Anyway uhh their drummer got sick or something so I remember going out there my senior year and of course I was underage but they let us in. Rick and I we played uhh played a couple of nights there. That's how it all started...that was my first experience playing in a nightclub. Umm and then you know there was a little Dixieland band that Pat had together. I was a senior or fresh out of high school when we played that on Dickson street at a club called the Speak Easy which is where Jose's is now. But it was a little pizza parlor back then and they had a little jazz Dixieland band in there. Those were my first gigging experiences that I remember.

Ok umm and then this sort of continued into college you were playing in these different types of groups? Country, rock, jazz?

Yeah

And then you played in the jazz band in school as well.

I did. Yeah.

Ok. Umm were there any points in college or after college where you had stopped playing music or you had thought about quitting music?

No.

You've always been involved in some kind of group?

Always yeah.

Ok. Umm do you have memories of anybody uhh discouraging you from music that had some sort of strong impact?

Discouraging me? Uhh I've had some negative experiences with certain musicians I think it was just a matter of inflated egos or whatever and you know but no not really. There's nobody that's discouraged me to the point where I thought well I'm just gonna quit.

Well something I've been curious about with all the interviews I've had umm a lot of people participated in school band and then they wind up playing things they were listening to as a kid. It might have been rock or jazz or country or something umm why do you think you don't participate in like a community band or something like that as opposed to the groups that you're in currently?

Well I think I do participate in community bands. I mean like currently I play with the Bella Vista Big Band which I guess you could say that's a community band. Umm and in some aspect the jazz collective is a community band or at least the big band portion of it kind of was.

I guess what I meant by community band was like a like a concert band like a classical percussion...

Ohh I see I see...well there really isn't one here that I'm aware of. I mean I wouldn't be opposed to it if there was a community concert band. That would be fun.

Ok umm a lot of people mentioned not being interested in the music that was being played in marching band. Do you agree? Do you find that the music is intriguing to you?

Well I love drum and bugle corps because it was like, it was like an athletic event. If you've seen DCI. Of course it wasn't nearly as intense when I was a kid as it is now but it was the same sort of you know we had it was serious... a lot of precision. So marching band to me was like I don't know seemed elementary in comparison I guess if that makes any sense.

Mhmm right yeah that does make sense.

But I still enjoyed it I guess you know it didn't have the same level of it wasn't nearly as challenging I guess I would say.

Ok what do you think your greatest motivation for continuing music was growing up and then what do you think it is today?

Just the desire to be as good as I can and to keep I don't know it's how you explain it when you got bitten by the bug or whatever that you know you need to be playing music. That's just what you do.

Yeah.

It's part of me.

Umm that expression of getting bitten by the bug umm where do you, and you may not have an answer for this, I don't think I have an answer for this, umm but where do you think that comes from? Where do you think that stems from initially?

Well I think it's in all of us to a certain degree. I don't think there's a human being on the planet who isn't musical. I think music is part of God's creation and if you want to get into the whole harmonic structure of the universe and all that, you could spend three weeks on that. I just think it's part of our DNA. There is a spiritual component. Umm and then some people are motivated and some aren't. My son doesn't play an instrument. Never really gravitated towards it. He's more into sports, athletics, and outdoor stuff. So not everybody is going to be driven to play an instrument but umm I don't know. Probably didn't really answer your question did it...

Well that kinda leads me to another thing is when you see somebody who is interested in music, what do you think umm are ways to guide them that will sort of keep them going? I mean obviously there's a whole lot of self-motivation that's involved but what do you think you can do as a, an external source that would motivate somebody to continue music throughout their life?

Well just keep encouraging them and try to stay 1 or 2 steps ahead you know as a teacher, which I did teach private lessons for 6 years when I was in college. So I had the opportunity of experiencing that and working with kids it all levels of aptitudes and attitudes and you know I had some students that just obviously they really weren't into it. You know some kids wanted to play drums and thought it was kind of cool but they didn't really want, they really weren't motivated and then I had a couple students that just worked and worked at it and one kid that started with me when he was like in the 5th grade ended up becoming first chair all state in the state of Arkansas so I was really proud of that. And uhh but you know staying one step ahead

and encouraging and giving them the right tools to equip them to be successful as a musician and uhh try to give them good stuff to listen to and try to figure out what they are interested in and help them develop.

Great! Uhh ok so I have just sixish more questions and they're just kind of your opinion.

What do you think are the most important character traits of a musician? Other than playing well what do you look for in a musician?

I think attitude is a big part of it. You know it determines people that you're gonna be competing with. Umm yeah somebody that's a team player really.

Ok. Yeah I like that. Uhh how do you know that music is important to you?

Oh because if I go any period of time without it I can feel the void. If that makes sense.

A lot of people talk about having songs stuck in their head all day or their constantly humming something or practicing and their you know on their steering wheel, you know do you find yourself doing things like that as well?

Oh yeah I constantly, I gotta, I'm either tapping my fingers or toes or uhh got some groove going on in my mind.

Umm what do you look for, how how do you look, hmm what do you look for in a musician that tells you music is important to them?

Oh you can just tell when you meet someone and play with them for the first time whether they're uhh how do I put this? Some people they learn to play the instrument well but not necessarily they don't always develop their own voice. So when you hear somebody you can tell that they've got their own sound. That's what I kind of look for. If that makes any sense.

Yeah mmmm. Umm can you recall a specific moment in time or specific combination of things that led you to be a musician for the rest of your life?

I think just all of the stuff we've been talking about like I said I knew from when I was young it was what I wanted to do and then having access to the resources to you know develop. Umm you know which like I said I was fortunate to have grown up in A, family that was encouraging and supportive and B, in a town that had the resources.

Yeah umm what do you think are the main reasons you kept playing music your entire life?

I just really enjoy it when it boils down. Nothing more gratifying than playing music with like-minded folks and having a good time it's a fellowship thing its uhh yeah it's just kinda hard to describe to someone that's not a musician I mean I know you get it.

Yeah. Umm well how do you, how do you think you continue to grow as an artist?

Well just continue to try to push yourself you know because you never get there you never become as good as you can be, at anything in life really. Fortunately, with music you know you can keep going until you're old. Keep learning new stuff keep learning how to do the same thing only in a different way whereas you play professional sports you know you might be able to play golf until you're an old man but if you're a football player or something you're done when you're 35.

Ok last couple of questions. How do you think traditional training, meaning private lessons and school, how do you think traditional training benefitted you compared to non-traditional training which would be like rock bands and playing by ear?

All I could say is that it's invaluable I mean it's if that's the right word. It's very valuable it's uhh yeah that's probably 80% of the reason why I have the skill set that I have. It's from my private instruction and then the ensemble of opportunities in school. And the drum and bugle corps which is not a school it's a community thing.

What do you think you, what did you gain from the non-traditional you think?

Just learning how to adapt to play with other musicians in an non-traditional setting where you know most of the time you're getting together with friends and you know to play with a rock band or whatever you're not reading charts, you're learning songs either by listening to the record and trying to copy the record or somebody wrote a song but they didn't really write a chart so we all try to learn the song and figure it out together so there is it teaches you how to interact with other musicians and you know go off the page. So you have to learn how to really play music at that point whether its country or rock or jazz or whatever you know now you learn to speak the language. You're not reading it off of a script anymore.

Do you think one is more important than the other? Traditional or non-traditional?

Umm no but I will say that I'm a big proponent of learning you know you call traditional teaching learning to read music and the develops the basic fundamental skill set on whatever your instrument is. If it's drums you learn the rudiments. Keyboards you're gonna learn theory and scale and that sort of stuff. I can't imagine... I know there's a lot of good players that never did that but I think you'd be at such a disadvantage you know. Although Buddy Rich didn't read music so hey! You know who's to say but to me I equate it to being a poet and not knowing how to read and write the English language. You could be a great poet but wouldn't it be a disadvantage if you couldn't write it down or pick up a piece of paper and read somebody else's poem.

That's a good point. Umm ok well my last question this is another one that's kinda it's hard to answer but everybody that I've talked to and everybody that I've interviewed has described this sort of magical feeling you get when you play music, and it doesn't happen all the time, but you play music and something about the place and the way the music is sounding there's sort of this goose bump inspiring feeling that happens. How do you describe that and where does it come from?

Well those are the magic moments that we try to hang on to you know. Or you at least try to create that moment at least once throughout any musical performance and then if you can sustain that moment beyond you know maybe if that moment lasts for 4 bars can you make it last for 8 bars can you make it last for 16 or can the whole tune be like that or can the whole night be like that and that's what we aspire to. I think it's uhh it's a combination of things you know I would certainly I guess the place that you're in could contribute to that. The sound that you're making is an ensemble. I mean things like the acoustics of the room can make a big difference on how the ensemble sounds and how your instrument sounds on the stage and how the blend the band is getting. When you get all the perfect elements aligned and sounding good, you're playing good, the whole band is playing good, that's the nirvana and it's an elusive thing to catch because there are so many factors. It's not just you, it's you and all these other things. Maybe you're offstage and you've got a really crappy monitor mix or something is just not going well. That can kill the music if you let it. Sometimes you just gotta rise above that. I know I'm kinda rambling now.

I know what you mean those are all factors that can hinder an experience like that. yeah ok well that's all I have for you.

Well I hope you can use some of it.

Participant I
Oct 4, 2016
6:01pm

Key:

() = other audible noises

[] = observer comments

Bold face = interviewer speaking

Non-Bold face = interviewee speaking

Will you state your age please?

I am 60 years old.

Okay, and what is your job title?

I own a small retail business and I am a professional musician.

And at what age did you start playing music?

Ummm... seriously started playing about thirteen. I played music since I was a toddler.

And when you say seriously playing do you mean playing out in gigs?

No, I mean studying seriously. My father was a professional musician. He was a professional jazz drummer. So I've been around professional music my whole life. It wasn't until actually he died coming home from a gig in Colorado Springs, we were living in Pueblo, Colorado and he had a car wreck. That was in 1967. I was 12, I think. I might have been 13, but I'd have to do the math. I was entering the 7th grade and I told my mom that I wanted to play the drums. She said you can't play the drums unless you take drum lessons and join the band and all that. So, that's really when I got relatively serious about it.

Okay, and before that you said you were playing but you were playing drums. Do you play other instruments?

No, I really don't. I am a drummer. I can play all the percussion instruments, although, I am not particularly good anymore and probably never really was but, I am not a melodic player; I am a percussionist.

Okay, did your mother play?

No.

Were you taken to concerts growing up?

Yea, for sure. Like I say my dad was a pro. So I would go with him literally to gigs with him if it was appropriate. I remember going to recording sessions with him and other age appropriate things with my father in the early to mid-60s. And then the very first concert I remember going to with my mom was Dave Brubeck. I was probably 13.

Yea, okay, so was there a lot of music played in your home as well? Recordings?

Oh yes, absolutely.

Okay, were both of your parent's jazz fans?

Yea, oh yea. I knew all about Charlie Parker when I was 9 or 10, but I didn't know anything about the Beatles.

Wow, growing up in the 60s... that's interesting.

Yea, we had Monk, and Jerry Mulligan, and Ella, and Charlie Parker... that's who played. That was the music in our house.

Wow.

I would learn about the Beatles, and The Monkeys, and The Animals and all that at school. I'd go to school and all my friends would be listening to The Beatles and I would be like 'Well who are

The Beatles?'. Being a teenager, that was popular music of the day, but Jazz has always been the primary music in our house.

Gotcha. Okay. You said you took private lessons. Is that right?

It is.

How long did you take private lessons for?

I took lessons for about six years.

In general, what did you start out studying, what did you eventually get to? What was kind of the evolution of that process?

Well, like I say I started playing the drums back when you could just be a drummer. So I studied rudimental drumming, rudimental snare drumming, and jazz drum set drumming from about 1967 to 1973. I studied with different teachers in both in Colorado and in Kansas City. And then by the time I got to be a sophomore or junior in High School I was starting to play out a little bit. I mean, trying to get out a little bit. But I was a kid, so I couldn't really go to clubs and things.

You said you had a lot of different teachers. Were there any of significant influence?

Well, I would say the most significant influence as a teacher in my life would have been my father. The learning that I got from him was just being what us musicians call, a hang. I hung with my father but also all the other musicians. I learned a lot about just being a musician from him. Having said that, there was a fellow... I was trying to remember his name the other day. I studied with him in Kansas City. I cannot remember his name. He was just a drum teacher. Probably a guy in his 30s who really understood and played Jazz. I'm sure he was a player kind of like you and I are today. He had me work on studying music He had me work on studying music of Dave Brubeck and Buddy Rick to learn how to swing. He had me study that music for two years at least. He was a huge influence on even how I play the drums today.

Okay, wow. Did you participate in school band or choir?

Band, but not choir

Okay and then how long did you participate in that?

Well, I was in school from the 8th grade, when we left Colorado, to my junior year. So 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th. So I guess 3 or 4 years in the school band. I didn't do band my senior year. I was in the Jazz Band but I didn't take orchestral band because I just felt I was too cool.

So you quit because you were in Jazz band because they wouldn't let you take Jazz band unless you took Orchestral?

Yea, that's what happened actually. I ended up not being able to do the bands at all because I just had kind of moved on and the orchestral band, I wish I had been a little more mature, what I wanted to do was play in a jazz band. I wanted to be in the Basie band. I wanted to play with Monk and that just wasn't going to happen at any level in high school you know. But I wasn't really mature enough to see that for what it was and take what was given to me and so I tried to... you know by the time I was 17 or 18 I was trying to play in night clubs. That didn't happen very easily, at that age.

Did you do a music major in college?

No, I majored in journalism.

And did you continue playing music through college?

Yea, I came to college as a nontraditional student. I played in Kansas City from 1973 until 1983. The last gig I played was on New Year's Eve of 1982. Two weeks later I was in the army. Then I didn't play another gig for 10 years. Then I came to the University of Arkansas as a Journalism... so I got out of the army and I came to the University of Arkansas as journalism major. I actually came here just because I liked the area. I just didn't want to go back to Kansas City. Too many

bad memories, you know? Too much baggage. I came down here and I thought 'What can I major in?'. I started to major in music but it's the same old thing. I didn't want to be a band director. At that point I was 32 years old. I was a 32-year-old freshman. So it was just like I'm not going to baritone or trombone to be a band director, just so I can do it. So I majored in journalism because I was also a pretty good writer. . I thought if I have to make my living writing and I am not going to be an English teacher, I can be a journalist. So I actually spent my career for the last 25 years working at the University Teaching Journalism. But I started playing again. Of course when I got down here I didn't know anybody. One day I saw that Jim had this 2-week intersession over Christmas break and this was in 1992. He just hosted some combos. I decided I would sign up for it. So I signed up playing these combos and I went in and you had to audition because he had to assign you to the level that you were at. So it was kind of like a Jaimie Aebersold thing. I went in and auditioned and he ended up hiring me to teach a combo that day so I started playing with him at the Hilton that night. I've been playing in Fayetteville ever since.

That's quite an audition.

Yea, I finished the audition and I didn't know anybody. He said you shouldn't be a student. You should be a teacher. I need people to lead combos. Can lead a combo for me? I said, I don't know anything about theory, but I know how to swing and I can get these kids swinging. He said that's what I want you to do. Then I played at Hilton that night with him and Mike Johnson, bass player Mike. Then me and Greeson, and Johnson, we gigged together for ten years. Off and on. And then Claudia came along and I started gigging with her. I've kind of been her side man ever since.

So just in relation to this research that I am doing, this interview, I am really interested to kind of know... You were a full time musician for ten years in Kansas City and then 1983 hits and you're in the army for 10 years and you're not playing music at all?

No, I was actually in the regular army for four years, then I came here in 1987. So I didn't come here and start playing immediately. I actually started playing again just because I wanted to meet some people who were like me. I never in my wildest dreams thought I would play professionally again. Then when I was in KC, I almost always had a day gig like almost all musicians. But I was able to work for four or five years as a salesman at a music company, but I was a roads salesman with him. So I would be the guy that rented you your first saxophone. I was that guy. I did that for about four years. I would play three or four nights a week. There was a recession, very much like the one that we just went through, in 1982. My territory was terrible. I had a very bad season. A lot of my school district that I called on literally went bankrupt. So business dried up. I looked around at myself, and I looked around at all my coworkers who were also musicians. These were all guys who were my age now, in their 50s and 60s. I thought, Jesus Christ, I am going to be doing the exact same thing in 30 years that these guys are doing now and I am never going to make anything out of myself. I was also playing in a 1980s cover band kind of thing. It was a pretty good band. We worked a lot. But, musically it wasn't very happening for me. It wasn't monk. So I just said, you know, I am not going to be rich and famous, I am never going to get hired by Pat Metheney, I am never going to get that gig, and I need to get a real education. The only way that I could afford to do that at that time was to get the GI Bill. So I spent four years in artillery doing that.

Yea, so I mean music being such a big part of your life growing up and to that time period, was it sort of a heart breaking moment to have to do that? To know you wouldn't be involved in music for that period of time? What was that like?

Yes, it was terrible. I remember the last gig I played, it was the New Year's Eve gig at a big restaurant in Kansas City. Probably a thousand people there and we did an organ trio with a female singer. It went over great. It was a pick up band. None of us had ever played together before. The owners of that restaurant wanted to hire us for like an ongoing... they wanted to put us in a contract for like three months. I think if they had done that a week earlier, I wouldn't have enlisted and I probably would have stayed and played. That would not have been the best decision to make, but that is how hard it was for me. I think I would have probably said 'Oh Shit, if I can get a gig and play every night like five nights a week at this place and I can make a living working every night then I probably would have done that. But it was too late and I had to report for duty.

Wow. Okay, well I am going to back up a little bit and just ask some questions about your childhood. Actually, right before that I have one more question. This is present time; could you describe how music fits into your day to day routine? Yea, it's incredibly important to my daily life. Of course I produce a radio jazz show for KUAF. As you know, I play usually 2 or 3 gigs a week. Music is always happening around me. I am always listening to music in the car. I kind of can't go through a day without a couple of hours of music somewhere in my life.

Okay, can you describe your earliest memory of music capturing your attention?

Yea, wow. The very earliest, I can remember being in Kindergarten, I can remember getting out the pots and pans... and my dad smoked so we had ash trays all over the house like in the 60s. I remember building a little set of drums out of the pans and the glass ash trays and things & trying to play drums to the radio, whatever I can get the music going at. That's the earliest memory that I have that's actually me doing something musical. Although I may have one that is little earlier if you want to get psychological. I remember being in a rhythm class. I would have been probably five or four. It was at this music studio that my father taught at called Crigleys music in Kansas City. I can remember being in this little music class with these other little kids and the teacher was teaching us how to march so that we could learn rhythm and then she would show us that overtime your right foot steps down, that's a quarter note. Every time your left foot steps down, that's the eighth note. She was teaching us both how rhythm worked and how our bodies should respond to it, and a little bit about notation. I can remember that. So that is probably my actually earliest memory of it.

So what is your earliest memory of music making you want to be a musician.

That.

You knew from 5 you wanted to play music?

That's all I ever wanted to do when I was little.

Cool. Okay. Do you remember ever wanting an instrument but not having access to an instrument?

Oh yea. I wanted a set of drums. I remember like having some of the cast off old spare drums that my dad had and he let me bang around on.

How long do you think you waited before you got that first set of drums?

Before I owned a set of drums... it was 1977 that were my drums. Like I say when my dad died, he was killed in a car wreck, he had played a gig that night. Two days later my uncle came out... we were living in Colorado and my mother's brother and we went out to the Progmore Hotel where dad was playing. I got his drums and that is when I started playing drums. I told my mom. Kind of in our family, the way I look at it, the man of the family played music. Like in a lot of

families the man of the family is a plumber or a policeman or whatever they are. But in my family the man was a musician and that is what I wanted to do. But my mother didn't want that. She was willing to let me learn to play and she wouldn't let me play unless I took traditional lessons. So good for her. But when I got to be old enough, fifteen or sixteen years old, and it was time that I really started to make noise that I really wanted to go to school and learn about it for real. My mother wanted nothing to do with that. She did not want that for me. She wouldn't allow it in a way, you know. Like a mom can do. I know why, in hindsight as an adult. She could remember how hard the life was. That's all my dad did. Being on the road all the time and we either have lots of money or no money and she just didn't want that for me. I know that's what happened. It really took her a long time to know that I was going to not be like this lost drummer guy out there in Ramada Inns for the rest of my life.

So, other than your father and other than private lesson teachers, were there any other direct influences in your life for music? Like big influences.

Sure. There were a lot. Morello was a huge influence on me. If you mean people I knew personally, there is a man named Gary Sivils who is a cornet player. Gary is 82 or 83 now. Gary had played with my father. Gary was a little older than him. They had worked together in the late 70s when I was playing a little bit and he was managing this music store that I went to. He hired me to work there. Gary is a fabulous jazz trumpet player. He doesn't play anymore; his chops are gone. He was and still is a huge influence on me. He is the guy that first put Pat Metheny's work in Kansas City when Pat was like 14. So this music store that I worked at, that's where all the jazz musicians hung out. On Saturday afternoons, all the big band directors in the Kansas City area would come in. The Methenys might come in. Pat or Mike or both. Clark Terry would come. Anybody that was kind of hanging out would come in and hang out at the music store, where I worked. So I had access to all these wonderful musicians helping me learn how to think about music in a good way. I will tell you something, Austin, one of the things that happened to me. When I went to work there and I was playing and working, like a lot of guys of that time I smoked quite a bit of grass. I mean I wasn't stoned all the time, but I smoked. What I realized, it took about a year for me to realize, is that everybody that got high and played, they hung out down in the repair shop. Where we repair the wood and brass and all that. And that's where all the stoners were. For a while I was down there with them. What I really realized, and it took me eight months to a year to realize, everybody that was upstairs were not smoking pot or drinking. They were not pretending to be Charlie Parker or Miles Davis on heroin. They weren't those guys. They might have done that in their youth, but they were sober as judges. That's where the really good musicians were. I remember one day thinking I don't want to be down here anymore. I want to be upstairs with those guys, that's where I belong. That actually had quite a bit to do with me going into the army because I quit smoking pot, I virtually quit drinking. Not that I was an alcoholic. I don't want to paint myself as a big lush. You know what I am saying. The lifestyle. I cleaned up completely and I knew that if I hung around in Kansas City I might not be able to stay clean. So the army was a way for me to completely change my life. That is why I joined as much as anything.

Wow, so let me find my place here. I have kind of skipped a few things here because you answered a lot of question that I had. Let see... with the influence, can you tell me his name again.

Gary Sivils.

Gary Silvis. What about him, maybe personality wise or in general, what was attractive about him? Why was he so important to you?

Well, that is a very layered question. It was a connection back to my dad. Gary led like the hippest jazz bands in Kansas City. The best players played with him and played for him. So I was attracted to that. I was attracted to his personality, I suppose. He was a jazzer. He was someone who I related to. He was about twenty years older than me so he kind of became a father figure, really. He kind of replaced my dad. It was a way that my dad never got to raise me. I lost my dad when I was twelve. I had always looked up to him and I still do, of course. But I never got to be around that man. I never got the chance to be around my dad as an adult. So in some ways the next best thing was to be around Gary. They were very much alike. They were very two peas in a pod kind of people. So I think that was a big part of it. In going forward as time went on, I just sort of recognized what a great musician he was. I could see the respect that the jazz world had for him and how he connected himself on band stands, I liked his wit, I liked his playing. I liked everything about his approaches to music. The bands that he led really epitomized that. That always resonated with me.

Yea, that's a great answer. That was a very layered answer to my very layered question. What was your first experience like playing with other musicians?

Oh my gosh. Professionally?

Just in general. It could have been a garage band or anything like that.

The very first band I was ever in was in September of 1967. My dad had been dead for a month at that point. I remember I was in seventh grade music class and there was a talent show. I formed a band. A little quartet. We learned like five or six songs and we won the talent contest. Then we did an assembly for the whole school, for the junior high I went to. We performed for then. By then we knew like fifteen songs. I remember we learned how to play Lady Madonna, Sunny, Gloria, Windy.... crap that's all I can remember. We had this book that was like twelve to fifteen songs. We started playing dances. We were all in seventh grade. We were all friends. We started playing these little parties. That was my very first band. Then my mom moved us from Colorado back to Missouri where her family was from. Then I wasn't really in band again, other than school band until damn, until 75. But I started playing as a pick up, you know as a side man in 72 or 73. I remember the very first band that I actually played for that I got paid for was a country western band. The drummer got sick. It was just liked playing for the Blues Brothers where they play behind the wire. It was just like that. We were across the street from a steel meal. All these guys had on uniforms, like country western uniforms. And I showed up and I just wore a flannel shirt because I didn't know what to wear. They had a female singer who was pretty good as I remember. She could sing. They were pretty good. They were just a traveling country western band doing Patsy Cline cover. I backed them up and played this gig. I remember everyone had drunk in there. Like really drunk and they started hollering at me to play Wipe Out. I think I played Wipe Out like six times that night. And I didn't know how to play Wipe Out. I didn't listen to that kind of music. I just knew it was a big drum solo. It was nuts. That was the very first pro gig that I ever played.

Wow. So, that's what I was going to ask you about earlier. Was obviously your roots are in jazz and you are currently a jazz musician. What about other groups, did you play pretty often in cover groups?

Yea, yea. When I was playing in Kansas City, out of every ten gigs, I bet you six of them were country gigs. And probably two of them were jazz gigs and probably two of them were rock gigs. And when I say rock I am talking about the Allman Brothers , Lynrd Skynrd, all those groups... I played every song and genre you can think of.

Is there a part of you that enjoys playing that type of music or was that more for just money?

It was for money and it was a gig. Remember I was starting to play when disco was really really popular. I literally got fired from gigs because they got a drum machine, I am not kidding you. I was literally replaced by a drum machine once. Because they couldn't afford... it's like a keyboard player, a bass player, a singer, and a drummer. They keyboard player bought a drum machine. That's just what we did. So I would take whatever gigs I could get. A lot of folks are like that. But I will you tell you this... when I started playing down here, I made a conscious decision that I would not play anything but jazz gigs unless they were good musicians. So I never played the crap country gigs. I don't want to diss country because there is a lot of country music that I really like. There is a lot of pop and rock that I really like and I would be happy to play with fine musicians that play pop or country. That would be a dream, but having said that, Jazz is always my first love. I always wanted to be 3423 That's what I wanted to do.

Well, when you were growing up, what was a typical practice session like for you? What would you do?

I would practice every day for about two or three hours for the years that I was studying in junior high and high school. I would come home from school and I would practice rudiments and then I would do that for an hour or an hour and a half. And then I would move on to playing a long to records. Back in those days you couldn't hear written charts That kind of stuff didn't exist very much. But I would play along to Monk. Like I wore out straight no chaser about five times. Literally wore they record out. And I would play along to Dave Brubeck and Jerry Mulligan records, and Buddy Rich records. Because of course everybody wants to be Buddy Rich when you're a drummer when you're a kid. So I would just play along to these records until I would get the feel of Morello or the feel of Buddy Rich. I don't mean to say that I ever approached the level that those guys played at. I just mean the feel that you go after and so I would play along to Blue Rondo Ala Turk over and over again just so I could make it the exact same way that Morello did it. So I could get the feel for how he played brushes. I would play along with Night Train, Oscar Peters' Night Train. I would do that every day. I would repeat that every day in some format or another. So that was a normal practice session for me.

Okay, what do you think your greatest motivation was for continuing music growing up and what do you think it is today?

Wow, the greatest motivation I think then and now is the great satisfaction in the creative process. I want to have an audience of course and I want the audience to like what I am playing, but it is more important to me, especially now, it is more important for me to have a conversation with other musicians that are on the band stand with me and then to share that conversation with the audience. So if we are playing a gig together and we are playing with each other properly and responding to each other properly, to me that is a conversation. If you can also include the audience in that, it is just so much better. So, I think that really speaks. As a drummer, I think I kind of play off both of those. I don't play harmony like you guys do. I don't play melody like you guys do. But if I can give you guys architecture to hang that melody and rhythmic pattern on then I can give you that skeleton and it will set you guys free... I get a lot out of that. I get a big charge out of that. It makes me feel like I am doing what a drummer should do. So they always say, the guy that can play the giant drum solo, everybody goes wow. The guy that can go 1,2,3,4... that's they guy who gets hired. There is a real art to that. My favorite drummers now are the guys like Connie Kay and Ed Pickpin. They are the guys that play very subtle and less is

more. You play the right note, not a lot of notes. So back to the answer, that is charge when I am on the band stand and I can tell that my band mates are hearing a phrase the same way I am hearing it. Or I am hearing it the same way they are hearing it. We are breathing together. We come into the phrase, we come out of the phrase. We come into the chorus, we come out of the chorus as a conversation, and not as an ego trip for me or you. I think that then that is when the audience is invited into it as well. Then they can appreciate it as well. It is not just about pyrotechnics and how fancy you can be or how explosive you can be. It is really about being intimate and to me that is the most profound conversation that I can have.

Wow. So people talk about that magic that happens sometimes when you play music together and I feel like your kind of just described that experience. I feel like that is how it happens. Everyone has to be on the same wavelength. Okay, so what do you think are the most important character traits in a musician? More than just being a musician, what do you look forward to in a musician?

I think having integrity as a human being. I think that's the most important thing... I don't care what you do. I don't play with people that treat other musicians poorly. And I don't play with people that treat the audience poorly. I don't play with people who don't show up on time. I don't play with people who try to screw the club, or screw the waitresses, or screw the audience. It is all about having integrity in your humanness. Those are people that I am attracted to and that I want to befriend and be around. And people that treat other musicians poorly, I just don't play with them. I might play a gig with them and I find out who they are, and if you're taking a twenty or thirty percent higher leader fee on a potted plant gig and I find out about, we aren't sharing the burden of music and that is a problem to me. That speaks to who you are as a human. Don't get me wrong, not that there aren't times when leader fees are appropriate. I don't mean to single that out but if I find you as a caring human being around other people and you like me as well, that is important.

That is a great one. How do you know that music is important to you?

I don't know how I know it. It is just in my soul. I don't really know how I know that. Music isn't the only thing that is important to me. I think one of the reasons, frankly, that I never became a full time musician and just gave everything to it is because I still care about other things outside of music. There is this kind of nasty practical streak in me that I could never quite let go of. So it was always important to me to make a living and provide for my family and to have standing in the community that was broader than just getting up and playing a gig and going home and sleeping all day. I had to do more than that in my life. I like to do other things besides play. So I was never able to kind of give myself over in the way that I think you have to if you are going to make it as just a player which is five or six hours a day and you are out every night either playing or listening and that is it. I am not quite that one dimensional even though I admire people that do it. I just couldn't do it.

Well, I am in the last few questions here. These are kind of tough. If you look at someone like Claudia, how do you know that music is important to them?

I guess in the same way that... When Claudia comes to a gig, or Ben or Drew, in our community. They are prepared playing. If the music is difficult, they have taken the time before they gig to learn it. One of the things I hate doing is going to an important gig with folks and finding out half of the band never looked at the charts or never bothered to even listen to the famous recording of whatever the song is. And I have done that. I have done that here. How can you not care about it? I don't think you should know that immediately about someone. You may not know that for the first few gigs you play with them. But if I show up repeatedly to gigs with

other musicians and you can tell that that musician is not prepared, they are not connected, they are not connected to us. You can kind of tell that they have checked out. That shows in the music. Not that I think that I am God's gift to playing but I don't want other musicians to hold back my creativity and my integrity in the music. If I don't feel like you are bringing 100% to the gig, two or three times is bad, then I am not going to work with you anymore. Unless it pays really really really well. You know money means a lot. So I would play for free say with Oscar Peterson. But I might need a lot of money to play with... I don't know... name a person that you don't care for. That's just business.

Well, let's see. What do you think are the main reasons you have kept playing music your whole life?

I just think because of the very intimate joy that I receive in the music, on the band stand, with my fellow musicians. I think that for me and other musicians, that we are as open and honesty in our forms of communication as we can possibly be when we are playing. So that kind of conversation, that kind of interaction with other human beings, keeps me coming back to it. It is not about becoming rich and famous, though that might be nice, that is not what it is about. It's not about making a lot of money, though that would be nice too. But it is about setting on the band stand and having that joy, for lack of a better word. That kind of joy that you get when you call a tune and you can tell that everybody is invested in that and really bringing themselves to it in an honest way. That keeps me coming back.

Yea, so for you it is the group experience. It's not an individual practice session?

No, it's the group.

How do you continue to grow as an artist?

For me it is by listening to as much music as I can and continuing to practice as much as I can. Though in my life, I don't get to do that as much as I would like. But, I guess it is back to the first answer. I really want to come to the band stand and think about the music and respect it and to grow in the song. So for instance, so 10 years ago, I couldn't play Brazilian Samba worth a shit. I didn't know anything about it. And I still don't know quite a lot. There is just so much to know. And I am smart enough to know, the more I know, the more I know I don't know. But I did decide at some point to say this music is important and I started to recognize it and to really study it and to really pay attention to the good jazz players and the good Brazilian Jazz players that were playing it. And I started studying it very deeply. As much as my life would allow me to do that. I would spend hours and hours and hours watching YouTube clips of Batucada groups in Brazil playing Batucada. Playing all the different styles and the high style and all that stuff. I would set and watch these pandero guys. I couldn't speak Portuguese of course, but I would just suffer through these long tedious Portuguese language videos so I could pick up the rhythm of the Pandero and how to play samba. Then I would go back and bring that to the gig. I would go back every week and bring a little something from every song every time and that keeps me growing. So I keep investing in different ways of thinking about it and trying to listen to people. I am not a polyaniline. I don't think that every musician has something to offer. I think that is bull shit. You hear people say and that and you think 'No, there is really some musicians who don't have anything to offer'. But on the other hand it is important to listen and really digest what is being offered and try to interpret that. I don't try to learn things from a pattern standpoint. A lot of drummer approach playing the drum set as I am going to learn a series of patterns that will set in a series of bars. Does that make sense?

Yeah.

Okay, well I don't play that way. I learned my 26 standard rudiments when I was a teenager. I still play very fundamentally, but I play for the sound. So when I play brushes I am not playing because this pattern goes this way and it switches that way and I have learned these patterns. I play because my ears tell me that is the way I am supposed to move my fingers.

Yea, and you have grown up listening to that playing and playing along with other brains that...yea... it just in your brain.

Yea, it is just in my brain and that is how I approach playing. So when I play a tune, I am always thinking of a melody when we are playing standards or whatever the song is. I am always singing songs inside why you guys play, while I am comping, while Claudia is comping or whoever. I am hearing that simple melody so that I can play over it and I can comp at the right moment and it doesn't intrude what the lead player is playing. I work hard at that. A lot of times the way that I comp on my snare drum, what I am really doing in my mind is I am playing the big band trumpet part. The little kicks that the trumpet would play, that would have been written in. I am thinking of it like I am the trumpet section or I am the saxophone section and I am playing that riff behind this blues. That is the snare drum I am playing.

Oh, that is really neat.

Yea, that is how I approach it. So that is different from saying I am going to play a paradiddle here. And also the way that I solo, which is hard, and I am always learning and always trying to get better at it. I approach a drum solo just I think the way that you would approach playing an improvised part. I am playing the song in my head and my heart and I am trying to play the drums over that in a way that is melodic, maybe a little bit harmonic, and that actually expresses the song. Not just eight bars of drum solo that is a bunch of "diddle diddle diddle da". So I am trying to play the song and that is a lot harder to do. It is easy to play a strict paradiddle around a drum set. That's not hard to do at all. But it gets old and the audience gets old with it. I get old with it. The bandmates get old with it. But its damn harder to play Laura and doing samba version of Laura and playing a drum solo over it and have it still sound like Laura.

Well, this kind of flows into the last question I have talking about that difference between what I call traditional playing, learning to read rudiments and learning to read music. And then kind of non-traditional training, like playing by ear and listening to records. Between those two things, obviously they both hold great significance in your life as a player. Do you find if you had to pick one or the other, what would you pick? Do you think one is more beneficial?

I think it depends on the kind of the music that you are into. I am going to limit it to jazz. I think with jazz after you have gained a certain amount of technique that it is all about the feel and the interpretation of the music. And of course I am speaking of the drummer too. If I were a classical player I might answer that question differently or if the music I was really attracted to was highly technical, meaning that there were lots and lots of meter changes or time signature changes things like that. If that was the music that was really attractive to me I would probably think about it differently. But because I am attracted to jazz that has probably been played from about 1920 more or less to B-Bop. That is really the music that speaks the loudest to me and I don't think you can really learn that from a book. I don't think you can learn that any other way than to play it and to listen to it a thousand times, and play it two thousand times.

I agree, I definitely agree. That is a good point. Pretty much anyone I have interviewed shows a strong direction towards the non-traditional and really listening and diving into music. I think you make a really good point by saying it really does depend to some degree on the music. But with jazz, they call it an oral tradition for a reason.

Yea, for sure. It's an oral tradition. I'm not sure that jazz could exist the way it does today if we didn't have recordings. I just don't think it could, but classical could. That's because classical is interpreted so differently and it's not an improvisation of music, at least the way we do i.e. know that Bach and Beethoven were great improvisers, I mean Mozart, and all of those guys were great improvisers in what they did. But the way that we think of classical music, it is not an improvisational music. In the same since, neither is country and neither is rock, the way that I think of it. When rock bands sound like a tune you want to sound like a record. You want to sound just like it. You better by God sound like the recording. So in jazz, it is all about reinterpreting and having your own voice, that's why I think it my so attracted to jazz at the end of the day. But I don't think you can do that without records. And I think that technique is nothing but a tool. And I am not saying that you shouldn't have lots of it. Technique is important and obviously the more technique that you have, the more tools you can bring to your instruments. There is no doubt about that. If you're somebody like B.B. King or Buddy Guy on the guitar. Buddy Guy can hold one note on the guitar for a minute and a half and say more than a lot of guys over the years that can play a thousand notes or a million notes and they say nothing. So it is more important to me to play one note really well than to play a thousand notes poorly.

Yea, I agree. Well said.

Participant J
October 4, 2016
9:01pm

Key:

() = other audible noises

[] = observer comments

Bold face = interviewer speaking

Non-Bold face = interviewee speaking

Would you please state your age?

I am 35 years old.

And what is your job title?

I am a manager and brass repair technician.

And at what age did you start playing music?

I started playing music in the second grade, so I suppose that's somewhere around nine years old, give or take.

Okay, and what kind of instrument were you playing?

I started on the cornet.

In the second grade?

I did, yea.

Wow, okay. How did... Explain that. So you were in elementary school starting on the cornet. Did you have a band program?

Yea, well, Kindergarten through the end of first grade, I was in a standard elementary school. I didn't know it at the time, obviously being so young, but my mom enrolled me in a lottery drawing for what's called a magnet school. It an arts and science school. It's kind of heavy on the arts and sciences as you can imagine. And the second week of second grade I was awarded a spot, so I moved over there. And they had a music program, so I was able to start playing an instrument.

Wow, that's incredible. Okay, do you play multiple instruments?

Uh, I wouldn't say that's necessarily true. I'm capable of making characteristic sounds on most brass instruments, enough to play test them because that's part of my job. But I couldn't really sit in with any particular band or orchestra on another instrument other than a trumpet or any of the derivatives of a trumpet.

Okay, did your parents play musical instruments?

Yes, actually, my mom is really the main one. She played piano. And I believe she was self-taught. I never really asked her any questions honestly. She taught lessons for a number of years out of her house. My dad did play trombone in high school. But he never went anywhere with that.

Okay, were you taken to concerts growing up?

Was I taken to concerts, is that the question?

Yes.

Um, well sure yea. I mean, I have two older brothers and the middle of the three of us was also a trumpet player and he was about 5 years older than me. So he was going through high school band right when I was kind of getting really interested in music. so I went to a lot of his concerts. kind of aspired to be just like him for a period of time. definitely attended a lot of that. in addition, once I got into high school, I saved up money over time, several years of high school,

and bought my own tickets to concerts and things like that. went to a lot of rock concerts and some jazz stuff throughout high school.

Okay, any things for trumpet players specifically?

What's that?

Anything, like did you go to any concerts that were specifically focused around a trumpet player?

Once I got into high school, I did. I would say, well, I don't know. it's kind of a hard question to answer. I don't recall going to any that were like centered around a trumpet player. I remember going to the airmen of note concert in Russellville and that teacher, there would be a trumpet player, Bryan McDonald, who was really fantastic at the time. So I would say yes and no. That might be a vague answer.

Okay, did you take private lessons?

Yes, I definitely did that. If you include my brother, I started in about 5th or 6th grade. If that does not count, since he was not a trained teacher, then I started in about 9th grade with band directors.

Okay, and then other than that, what you were doing in second grade and beyond. was that just like a band program?

Uh, yea, it was standard orchestra. and I was only at that school second through fourth grade. but at that three years in attendance I played cornet for one year, dabbled a little bit in clarinet. I played cello for a year or so. And then eventually went back to the cornet at that particular school. For 5th and 6th grade, that's when I was taking lessons with my brother because I went back to the standard public elementary school where there was no music program. so I had at least a year of organized instruction in music at that point. Already knew most major skills and knew how to hold the trumpet and play the trumpet and that sort of thing. so I, I was sort of getting ahead those two years you might say.

Yea, and did you continue band all through high school?

I did. yea, in fact, I never stopped music since then.

Okay, and I definitely want to talk to you more about music for you outside and after school. but for now, did you participate in choir?

Uh, you know, I think I had to be in choir for one semester in college. but honestly, that's like a really vague memory now that I think about it. you would think you remember real specific things like that. but I've never been into choir. it's never been my thing. so I just kind of let that memory go.

Okay, and did you continue music in college?

Did I continue music?

Yea, were you a music major?

Yes, it's safe to say I was.

And with that you played in music ensembles. did you play in music ensembles outside of college and university life?

Oh yea. I think that's where I got some of the best learning experience available. Um, how far do you want me to go to answer that? just like yes or no?

It is interesting that you say that. We will talk about that a little later. This is kind of just, the survey part is just sort of a yes or no. Okay, this next part is just on a scale or 1 through 10. Least influential being 1. 10 being most influential. How influential were your parents in your musical life?

I would say a 9.

Other family members?

I would say an 8.

Alright, so this starts the interview section. Describe how music fits into your day to day routine.

Well, basically my whole quote on quote professional life is centered around music. I manage a music store. I repair musical instruments and be sure they are repaired I have to play them. so even though I might play the same thing every time I play test a trumpet or trombone, I get a daily dose of music to some effect. In addition, I'm always listening to music at work as a part of that routine. as you would imagine, I'm in and out of band rooms from time to time. So I get my does of education along with just hearing other people perform music to some degree. so I would say it's a very big part of my daily life.

Okay, and then as far as playing gigs and practice, like personal practice. How often would you say that happens?

It's kind of an odd time in my life to ask that particular question because I have a fairly young baby and a 5-year-old son. In addition to that, I've just started a job this past January that is brand new to me with more responsibility than I was used to in my previous position. So I have less time now than I've ever had to practice. which is really kind of a bummer. I don't feel like I'm growing like I'd like to in music. at least not as far as playing the trumpet and performing. I guess to answer your question; I might get about 15 minutes a day on average. What was the other part of the question about performing?

Just how often you play gigs?

I would think on average, monthly, I probably play four to six gigs a month.

Okay, so describe your earliest memory of music capturing your attention.

Oh my goodness, I remember... I don't know how old I was, so unfortunately I can't really give you an idea of age but I know I was very young. My mom, as I mentioned earlier, used to teach piano lessons out of our home. I remember neighborhood friends coming and going often and the piano was always there. And as far as I can remember it was in the same spot for years. So I don't know if that's a good answer or not, but I would say it was certainly in the toddler ages. In the 3 to 5-year-old range. And that's a best guess. I don't know for sure.

And what would be your first strong memory of music making you want to be a musician?

Hmm...it's definitely going to relate to my brother being in high school jazz band. They had a band that was actually really good for a bunch of high school kids, at least for the area I was in. I don't know how it compares to other areas. But a lot of really strong musicians, really strong leader in the band leaving high school. I guess if he was in 9th grade, I would have been in 4th grade. Somewhere in that ball park. So I would say that was probably the first time I heard music in a really inspirational level, that made me want to do that.

Okay, and I'm curious, I want to ask this before I forget. What kind of music did your parents listen to? Like was there a lot of music played in the house?

Yes, and no. I mean it wasn't like a constant thing. And I get the feeling that my dad's music never quite made it to the top of the playlist because it was mostly moms music. But I listened to a lot of oldies on the radio when I was going with my mom to pick up my brother from high school or middle school. And I definitely think that that has an impact on me today. because one of the more frequent gigging bands that I play with, sort of makes their bread and butter, the band is called Full House, playing Motown stuff. So I think I really enjoy doing that because of those radio stations. You know the Golden Oldies man, when they were actually oldies and not 15-year-old hits like you hear today on the "Oldies" stations. But you know, the Temptations and

that sort of stuff is what I fell in love with. I think that that was mostly my mom's favorite music.

And what about your dad?

You know, I don't know a lot about what my dad likes to listen to. I know he loves 3 Dog Night. Which is just so funny. You never know my dad, he's kind of a serious guy to some degree. I don't really associate my dad with music very much. So to talk about him in the light of music is sort of funny.

So kind of maybe like a southern classic rock, that sort of thing?

Yea, I think classic rock is the best way. he grew up in New Orleans and he never really talked about type of music or anything. So I don't think the native music is something that really moves him like you would think growing up an hour away from New Orleans. I'm sure that it makes him think of home, and for that reason he loves it, but it's not what he would listen to.

Okay, sure. This might be redundant, but what made you pursue music in the first place?

I guess the initial push for me was to try to be like my bigger brother. Or one of my two older brothers. but I think at the point that I was really mature enough to answer that question to some degree, it was because music was and is a release for me. it's a way to relax the body and the mind especially and just do something that's fun. And I hate to call it spiritual, but I guess to a degree it is spiritual in that it changes you every time you do it. And I think that's at the heart of spirituality.

And do you find that experience in performance or in practice or both?

It can be both, certainly for me more prevalent in performance. When I really dig in and get on a practice routine, when you really start practicing and digging in so you start to feel yourself getting better you start to get that snowball rolling downhill and you get that momentum moving again, you can really change a lot of areas of life that you never would dreamed or connected to music.

Yea, do you ever remember wanting an instrument but not having access to one?

Yes, actually, two times that are distinct to me. I did not want to be a trumpet player, I wanted set be a percussionist first. Which I'm sure every kid does at some point. Clay Hankins was my seventh grade band director. This would have been the first band program I was going to be a part of since I left that other school. And I didn't want to do trumpet because I had already done it enough at the time I thought. so I wanted to do percussion at the time because it was just really interesting to me. He had me pick up other instruments and when he saw me play the trumpet it was clear that I had some instruction on the trumpet. I don't remember if it was good or not but he could tell that I knew something. so he sorts of forced me to play trumpet. I remember a year or two after that, I wanted to learn saxophone. and asked to borrow a tenor sax and he actually let me do it for a little while but it never went anywhere and I never really learned very much about it.

So how did you get back into trumpet eventually?

I never really left the trumpet world. I played second grade and back to trumpet in fourth. and didn't really do anything organized in 5th or 6th grade. but when they had the band night in 7th grade tryouts. I ended up getting placed on trumpet and was placed in the 8th grade band while I was in 7th. so it was just sort of the perpetual thing for me to be on trumpet.

And in 5th and 6th grade while you weren't in band, you were taking lessons from you brother?

Yes, it was definitely something being pushed by my mom for sure. and I would imagine my dad as well behind the scenes.

Yea, okay. So for you, it seems like trumpet was sort of... so for you when you got into trumpet there wasn't really a defining moment you just sort of started on that and your brother had a background in trumpet and it just seemed like the natural flow of things or would you describe it differently?

It's always kind of clicked. I mean it's really kind of bizarre because I never really felt like... I mean there have certainly been times when I've struggled to learn very micro things on trumpet. I'm sure there's things on saxophone like that for you. Really, as a whole for trumpet playing, it's just been there. I just kind of feel like it's a gift. I'm saying knowing that I am not the best out there 'or not achieved anything magnificent or whatever, but it just comes naturally to me. it just feels naturally. I hope you understand the difference in what I'm saying and what some people say about themselves. Just the fact that I was able to pick up the trumpet and just go with it without severe instruction. And it's just always been that way and for that reasons its always easiest. and it just turns out it's something I love to do. I hope that fits.

Who would you describe throughout your lifetime as your biggest musical influences, in terms of people you know in person?

Okay, so not like famous people that I am trying to sound like or be like or whatever.

Right, like parents or neighbors, like who were your biggest influences?

Well certainly my mom and I would say in small part my dad when I found out he was in music, that was kind of motivating. let me just say my mom first, my dad a close second. and there is always a cool cousin. His name is Kent. he is an excellent guitarist and I believe he is self-taught as well. and is just very naturally gifted at guitar. he can play anything you've ever heard on radio with spot on accuracy. he can sing really well and just has the passion for music. He also has the look and I always just really looked up to him for all those reasons.

Okay, so were they...I mean obviously your parents were very encouraging for your music. But I mean, how was he for you with music? like was he encouraging with your playing or do you really have any memory of that?

Yea, we had limited contact because he was living in Florida for most of the time I was Jr. high and high school. he lived in Destin and gigged out there a lot. but I do recall going out there a couple of times to visit for family vacations and I remember once we went to a burger joint called Fudpuckers. They are kind of famous now. In Fort Walton beach it was one of the places to go. We were able to go and hear him play. That was kind of my first live music experience outside of an academic setting. I remember bits and pieces that really stick out to me. I don't remember any specific songs or whatever other than they did a couple of Beatles tunes I think that were really nice.

How old were you at this time?

I don't know. somewhere around 9th grade, maybe 8th grade. Somewhere in that ball park, early teens.

Okay, got you. Let's talk about high school and earlier. Were there any bands that you played in outside of school bands?

No, not really in those days. I did a few gigs in my 10th, 11th, and 12th grade years. The band director I had at those times, he was a trumpet player 'as well, and he really took me in and I think sort of changed my direction in music to a degree. He sort of focused me a little bit more. so like for example, we played a Christmas cantata one year. I remember bits and pieces of that pretty vividly because it was one of the first paid gigs I ever did.

So you said he focused you in a different direction. do you mean in terms of real experiential learning?

Yea, but also with regard to learning more than just a piece of music. So in high school band you are going to work on all region, all state, and band music. And outside of that, what is there to somewhere who is 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade. And what he did was take a couple specific exercises from his years at Arkansas Tech as a trumpet player and basically just turn me loose with them and he was one of those who did weekly private lessons. so he was assigning me specific keys for these exercises. And they were just technical exercises that I still do today. But I did them a lot in college as well, so I kind of got a leg up on that. And I think it was just the exposure to more advanced, out of the box for a high schooler at least, ideas as trumpet player that sort of matured me a little bit.

So would you say during high school and really before you were classical trumpet?

I would say I was classically trained to a point. I don't really even know what that means anymore unless you aren't in school.

I guess what I mean is, did you grow up through high school and middle school playing trumpet where you playing classical music typically? I guess concert band music typically? and then were you in anything like a jazz band or anything like that?

Okay, yea, I see what you're saying. I pretty much did it all. In terms of high school, I would say I was pretty cultured. I was in the high school jazz band. I was in the symphonic band or whatever they called it. They may have just called it band. I don't remember to be honest with you. But I also just took any gig that would come my way, which often was church music. So I got a lot of exposure to five and six sharp keys. So yea, it was kind of good mixture. A little bit with orchestra music for my all state and solo ensemble stuff. I was usually doing some trumpet related classical music. So yea, I definitely, and then in my spare time I was practicing Maynard Ferguson. And that's really where my heart was, was during that sort of stuff.

So that's really interesting to me. What did you do outside of... you know everyone that goes through a band program does what's required of them in band, or some of what's required of them in band. you know but then for people who continue later in life, you know, like where were your interests at, you said Maynard Ferguson, but was it primarily jazz you think? Over classical?

It's so complicated for me. I want to say jazz so badly, because I think it's such a neat art form. It's so American, and I'm really proud of that, as someone who has grown up in America that that's something that people in America created and I think that's really amazing. I certainly would love to see more people learning it, myself included. But as a trumpet player, as someone who spends more time playing the trumpet than anything, I don't really see myself as a jazz musician. Therefore, I don't really see what I did in high school as learning jazz. I certainly listened to it to a degree, but it was mostly Louis Armstrong, and you know the more sort of pop jazz artists. So I think I was listening more to commercial music and I think my love is with jazz commercial artists. which is probably a ridiculous term. but really it's like someone like Maynard Ferguson for an example to clarify, is someone who is capable of playing true jazz music. When you listen to certain jazz music you can just tell this guy is really on fire. and can improvise very well. He's not just a screen and read player. He made his money playing true commercial music with high notes involved. That's what he became known for, so that's what he did to make his money. And that little niche market of the money making stuff is what I was listening to at the time in high school, and that's what I spent nearly every spare moment practicing and playing along with recordings and trying to imitate.

So would you say that now, in the present, this is kind of a weird way to say this, but would you say that you seek out bands or you're interested in playing in groups where you get to

sort of, I don't mean this in an egotistical way, but you get to sort of feature those talents that you have? because I know from personal experience you're very comfortable with higher register playing. and is that something that you enjoy doing? do you seek out playing in groups where you can feature that?

Well, yea. but it's not for the purpose of trying to be heard so that its featured, so to speak. but I would say it's mostly because it's something that I just truly love. I've always loved, and maybe it is a narcissist thing, and...

No that's what I was trying to preface. Like I don't mean that in like a you are a narcissist sort of way.

Yea, I know you weren't. but I think there probably is something to that subconsciously. It's not something that I am aware of. But as a trumpet player, you are heard first. And you tend to be heard last, and you tend to get the melody all the time. The band tends to look for you to style. Your kind of like the leader in a lot of ways. You're by no means the drummer, I'm not saying that. A lot of very critical areas the lead trumpet player of a big band is really looked upon as the leader to set all of those things. And I think they are really liked. I like being the leader, and I like that in other areas of life too. I think that one of the biggest things that music has given me, it sort of hones that ability to lead. I mean, I'm still learning how to do it. It's a lifestyle thing. But, playing lead trumpet music and playing it with a big band of 16 or 17 other people that you know are listening to as like the guy to set the tone is certainly a skill that I don't you get in everyday experience. I may have strayed wildly off the path, but I kind of felt like that's where I needed to go.

No, it's all relevant. I'm just trying to paint a picture of your story. So I want to talk a little bit about your first, I guess really your first experience collaborating with other musicians in a way that was impactful for you. Can you describe that moment?

Can you narrow it down a little bit? Because really that would be the same cantata that I talked about a minute ago. For me, that moment stands out to me.

I guess really it may be that scenario for you. But what I am really looking for I guess, is when was the first experience that you had where you were playing with someone else and you really heard the music come together for the first time and it was like this really sort of magical experience for you.

Man, your kind of got me with that one, because it's just been so long. I've never even thought about it. I mean, it's going to sound kind of ridiculous, I do recall, we did a marching band show when I was in 10th grade. And it was a show about 007 or something like that. But there were a lot of other factors there besides just the comradery of the musicians and playing music. But it was a 10th grader, and I was surrounded by upperclassmen playing lead trumpet. and I was the only one of my age group playing the first trumpet part. To me that was a really big deal because I had been working a while on trumpet, for years before that. So it was kind of like a, I don't want to say syndication, but it was kind of like gratifying for recognition. I remember playing with those upperclassmen who were really good and thinking, wow this is awesome, these guys are great, the band sounds awesome, this is really fun. it was fun to integrate my sound into the bigger ensemble sound.

Yea, that's a great answer, great example. So, where was it exactly, where did you grow up and high school?

It was in North Little Rock High School.

North Little Rock? Okay. What was the music scene like in North Little Rock? I remember you mentioning going to band concerts for your brother and things like that. Growing up was there a live music scene that you remember going and experiencing?

I know there was a live music scene, but I wasn't really involved with that. And there is a pretty clear reason for it, it's nothing that my parents did wrong. North Little Rock was no cake walk. It was pretty serious over there from the little rock gang scene and although it was getting better in the late 90s, you did not just wonder around at night. For that reason, I think my parents were kind of scared to death going out in Little Rock where the more dangerous areas were. So I didn't really go to hear a lot of random street musician or bar musicians, or open mics or any of that kind of thing.

Sure that makes sense, you continued as a music major in college. were there any groups that you played in outside of the university?

Absolutely as I mentioned earlier that's kind of what I feel was responsible for shaping well that's kind of a big statement to make. It had a big impact on me. A lot of what I learned that I used to do with regards to gigging knowledge I think came out of that. I played with the band called The Jack Terry big band. It was a band Full of the sort of older guys that had probably had a career in music at some point they were very serious. They had probably moved to this area or never left this area. They had sort of settled here to retire and live a happy full end of their life. They got together once a week to sight read a bunch of their music that sort of miraculously showed up every week. I remember getting invited to come out and play and I took up the offer and it turned out to be some of the best sight reading practice I had ever wandered into. We'd go through probably 20 charts a night period of just big band standards. I'm playing with guys who have been playing this stuff for fifty years you get to get some really good playing experience in on that. That was a great testing ground for me to just sort of try out some stuff as far as trumpet playing goes, read some music I've never heard of before and sort of get out of the test tube bubble of University and see what real musicians do on a day-to-day basis. Of course there are other ensembles as well but this was sort of the one that sort of defines all of those other ones for me.

So what were your practice sessions like at this time? What were you doing?

Do you want to know the kind of stuff I was working on?

I guess more like did you spend more time working on music or reading music or did you spend time listening to recordings and playing along with recordings... in terms of that what were you doing?

Will let me sort of lay some groundwork before I give you this answer Because it was kind of an atypical experience I think. The University of Arkansas is and most definitely was a university that was very heavy on classical Arts and not heavy at all on jazz music. I was very much interested in performing Jazz as a living but I just simply could not get access to that in mass quantities through the University of Arkansas. So in order to get a degree there you have to follow the degree plan. As such this meant playing classical music for the majority of my day, if not all of my day. So knowing that just know that my practice schedule reflects that curriculum. I was trying to sing all of this sort of trumpets typical etudes and scales, major minor scales, multiple tonguing, technique sort of things. Unfortunately, very very little of that was related to Jazz or aural dictation or learning the ropes, where you learn by ear. I did very little of that as a part of my schooling practice sessions and I would say that styling along with orchestral music was probably about 6 to 8 hours a day.

Wow. Okay. Let's see here. I missed A few questions. I skipped some stuff because we had already talked about it. Have there been any moment in your life or you thought about quitting music or did quit?

Yeah I'm kind of ashamed to admit it but it's even been recent. I don't think I ever will but it just gets really hard with kids in with a job that's demanding and very little personal time to pursue art form sort of hobbies. It gets to a point to where I, at least until very recently, I was in demand quite a bit. I was getting frequent calls to play a lot of places. But I was not practicing at all. So people were asking me to play a lot. My capabilities are diminishing because of very little practicing. It gets very frustrating for someone when your mindset is still at the 6 to 8 hours a day practice sessions but you're physically only practicing 15 minutes a day. Your brain can only compensate for so much. For that reason, I kind of go through cycles when I get back into it and I'm like 'Oh man why would I ever quit this where you're loving every minute of it' to 'I just don't have time for this. Why would I take any gigs? This isn't fun.' It's sort of like a vicious cycle for me right now just because of personal life Just not having enough time organizing to schedule.

Well I mean there's been a lot of big huge life-changing adjustments in your life and it seems like very recently you know That those things have happened. So you're adjusting.

Well I probably should be fair and also add that music has Really provided for our family in a lot of times that were really difficult. But with 2 kids instead of 1, and at the time with 1 instead of none, as you can imagine the financial picture can be difficult. There have been a lot of months your music has truly paid the bills. I suspect you have probably lived that a couple of times too, you know, where you're just kind of wondering you know what am I going to do or whatever. Then you get a call to go play this one game that's kind of the saving grace. You just thank God and wonder what do other people do in this situation that can't go get a gig. For that reason, I've always been very thankful for some training in music and being able to play music well enough that someone might actually pay me to do that.

Yeah. It is a blessing at times for sure. Did you... Sorry I'm like closing my eyes listening and then losing my place. You have any memories of anyone ever discouraging you for music?

Hmmm... That's a really good question. I have like vague recollections. Honestly I was just really so stubborn in high school that it really wouldn't have mattered if someone had handed me a million-dollar check and said this can be yours. I probably would have torn it up because I was just so laser focused in not only being in music, but also where I was going to go to school, how I was going to get through the program, and with what I was going to do with my life. I mean I was very specific about all those things. I kind of remember my band director at one point trying to push me into music education Instead of performance. Ultimately I ended up doing the performance right after trying education for year-and-a-half. That's the only recollection that I have of that. I don't really have a specific memory of it.

Looking back do you feel there is any specific reasons, I'm sure there are a multitude of reasons, but can you name a reason why you were so laser focused on being a musician?

No.

That was kind of an off the cuff question for me, but I just thought I'd throw it out there.

I can't explain it. I've just kind of always... Up to getting into college, I've just always felt like that was the answer to me. Like I was always going to be a professional trumpet player. at the time I wanted to go onto film score or recording as a living. I wanted to go out to LA and do the sort of LA film score thing. It turned out that was not where I was supposed to be. I don't know,

I just never questioned it. I just always assumed I was going to be a professional trumpet player, and that was that.

Yea, did you ever have anybody that had to push you to practice or keep you encouraged?

Ummm... I don't know if I ever had to have that. I certainly did have that. My mom was always there. She always encouraged me. No matter how bad I must have sounded, she always said it sounded wonderful. My parents, even through college came to every single performance I ever had, unless they were just deathly ill. I don't think they were ever deathly ill for the record. They were always there. As annoying as it was sometimes, as both a high schooler and college musician, I look back on that and think that that was one of the biggest encouragement factors that I could ever have had.

Yea, absolutely. Having that parental support is huge. So please tell me if I've already asked you this. It's getting towards the end of my questions and I am drawing a blank if I have asked you this. Could you describe your experiences with private lessons and what your teacher was like?

Yea, we touched on it a little bit, but you never asked directly. They were pretty non-traditional, but there was a structure to them. I grew to be pretty close to my high school band director, to the point that we are still friends today. Every once in a while, he will come up and we will go get lunch together. We were pretty close. I think we bonded, it's safe to say. So for that reason, it was a lot of joking around, a lot of talking about what to expect as a college musician, and what not. We would work on technique, we would work on any problems I was having in terms of trumpet playing, and sort of talk through the bigger points like that. He would generally just let me ask questions that I had read or heard of and he would address any concerns I had about my point.

Was he inspiring as a musician?

Yea, absolutely. He was one of the first trumpet players I had ever heard that was like a mature musician. I don't know if you have ever run into him before. He has a pretty healthy ability to play in the high register as well. He was sort of my first up close experience of a trumpet player that could do that.

Was he the one that turned you on to Maynard?

No, I think one of my two older brothers actually was. They actually performed a couple of Maynard tunes in the high school jazz band. I remember him playing and it just really stuck out to me. It was kind of like your stereotypical saxophone player with Coltrane. It just catches your ear. That was kind of it for me. I just wanted to sound like that from then on.

I'm getting into the last leg of my questions now. These are a little more introspective. If they are hard to answer, I am sorry. What do you think your greatest motivation for continuing music was growing up and what do you think your greatest motivation is today?

Greatest motivation growing up, that implies at a younger age. For me that would have been about second, third, fourth grade. Somewhere in those first three or four years. For me at that point it was just something new. It was a new challenge. Just like learning anything, when you learn something new you want to be good at it and that pushes you to do more. That was definitely the motivation of early years. And I think the second part was today. For now, I think it has reached the point where I am so invested in music emotionally and financially, that it just seems like a shame to throw all of that away. I have had so many experiences. I have always been playing music if you count all of the crazy early years, for over 20 years. It just seems like a huge waste of time to stop playing music. Thousands of dollars invested, thousands of dollars

made. Literally thousands of hours, probably tens of thousands of hours in terms of practicing over those years. The idea of just quitting, even though I have admitted now on tape that I have considered it, I just talk myself out of it each time. This is one of the points that I make. I can't quit now. Even though I am not that great because I haven't practiced in so long, I just feel like it's fun and I feel like I can continuously improve at it. For those reasons I talk myself out of it every time.

I'm glad you have. I am definitely glad you have. Okay, what do you think are the most important character traits of a musician other than being good at their instrument?

That's a good question. It's kind of a tough one. It depends on the type of music you are playing I think. It also depends on the instrument you are playing I think. What I said earlier I think is an example. I feel like playing lead trumpet requires someone that is just innately a good leader. Someone who just naturally has that ability to lead. At least someone who is not trying or maybe has an ability to push past the shyness even if they have a shy personality. I think looking past the nuances, I think you have to be someone who carries great determination, someone who does not get frustrated easily. I think it has to be someone who is motivated and it might be someone who requires a specific event to get them to that point of motivation. But I think once it happens it needs to be someone who can carry that motivation and act on. So maybe a man of action, if that's a character trait, I don't even know if that is or not.

I like it. We will go with it. So I feel like these get sequentially tougher and tougher. How do you know that music is important to you?

Because I haven't quit. I think if something is important to you, you find a way to keep doing it. There have been tons of times where it made so much sense for me to blow off a gig and stay home. I mean as recent as a month ago. I just think you keep going and I think that's my answer.

When you look at Claudia, how do you know that music is important to her?

Well, Claudia is kind of a special case I think. Because Claudia, first of all has been playing and performing music for longer than you and I have both been alive combined. She's got decades of experience, and I say that with the upmost respect. Not to laugh, although it is kind of funny to think about. She has been doing it so long. With that said, you can watch her play and watch the enjoyment come out of her motion. You can watch her facial expressions; you can watch the way she moves to play. There are so many physical cues that you can see as she plays. It's like the love of her life. To a musician, you can hear it. I am sure you have been there. You have heard someone play who hates playing or doesn't like music, or it's very mechanical and doesn't play from the heart. It's just kind of clunky. That's kind of a silly way to describe it, but that's the best way I can describe it. There is no finesse to it. There's no care in the way that they shape a melody. With Claudia, you would never hear something like that, even on the most boring gigs out there. She is going to play for herself, because that's what she does. It is her love and her music. She enjoys it, I think is what I am trying to say. I think all those things combined resonate with even someone who has never heard music before. You can see it. It's obvious.

Yea, Yea. That's a great response. What do you think is the main reason you kept playing your whole life?

Well, I would say for 10 years or so, most of that was sort of introductory level learning. So for that reason, for someone who likes puzzles for example... Which is me, I love a good mystery. It's always how do I do this? It's always the pursue of figuring out the next cool thing. For example, I taught myself how to circular breathe because I saw Wynton Marsalis could do it. So I just kept thinking about it over and over again. How is it possible that someone can play and breathe at the same time? So finally, I just kind of figured it out. The only possible way it can

happen is trap air in your mouth and breathe through your nose. I sort of fumbled my way through it. That's one example of just figuring out the next mystery. To someone who really loves doing that and problem solving and thinking through the next big thing, I think that has really propelled me forward. In recent years I would say you have less to figure out obviously once you have been playing for so long. You have gotten to a point where you know the basics. It's sort of the pursuit of perfection to a point. So it's kind of a stubborn thing in the later years, I think... If it's okay to kind of refer to these as the later years, at the grand old age of 35. It kind of feels like it's been forever.

Okay, I've got 2 more questions. The first one is how do you think traditional training benefited you compared to non-traditional training? And maybe I should clarify traditional training--school and private lessons and reading music. By non-traditional training I mean like playing to recordings and being in sort of those experiential band site reading gigs. You know being around other musicians, that is sort of the non-traditional. How do you think one benefited you compared to the other?

Well, they certainly both have their benefits. Just to state that right off the bat. I think that classical style of training in school with private lessons and practicing techniques and all of those things for hours and hours at a time... I think those benefit you in certain setting more than non-traditional training ever could. So some obvious examples would be playing with the symphony, playing in the brass quintet, playing solo trumpet performances at the feature soloist, some orchestral thing--all of those are scenarios where it really kind of fits. To sort of reframe the question, if that's okay for me to do, I think those also would benefit me in the other side of the equation. In situations like what we are doing with the Fayetteville Jazz Collective Octet, you know typically someone playing trumpet in one of those things in a bigger city, wouldn't necessarily have a full start to finish traditional training. They might be self-taught and might have grown up in New Orleans and played street musician stuff all their life. So I think it's both a benefit and a curse in that situation because I am very much on the page as far as not improvising. I don't improvise very well. I think I am also very much more of a clean player for that reason. Having grown up in the more classical side of things. On the other hand, I think someone such as yourself who I imagine has probably way more time learning things by recording and just playing along, you have spent loads of hours learning by aural dictation. I think the person that learns that way, or has experience in their career learning that way has a huge leg up in the jazz world, obviously. I think also in the classical world too, because I think you are a little nimbler in terms of reacting. I think that is crucial in a musical situation on a professional level. Being able to adapt quickly and change the way that you play something when you are asked to on the spot, I feel like I have the benefit of both worlds. I spent a lot of time doing that with regard to learning Maynard Ferguson stuff and so on. I wasn't dictating Clark Terry solos or anything but I certainly spent a great deal of time trying to sound like other trumpet players and I think it's really benefited me over the years to be flexible when asked to change the way that I sound on something. That's a really long winded answer.

No, I think it's great. It actually really strongly reflects with a previous interview I had. I feel like the consensus is kind of the traditional training versus the non-traditional, they are both beneficial. However, it really kind of depends upon the music you are talking about. So yea, if you are talking about classical, the traditional training obviously has huge benefits by being able to read music and having that ability. Whereas the non-traditional would definitely coincide with something like Jazz where there is a huge aural tradition and so much of it is learning by ear. So I think it does vary.

I just want to jump in for the sake of argument and say that I think on the other side of that a lot of jazz musicians would really benefit from spending some time with a metronome or with a tuner, especially. There are so many jazz musicians that make it sound like its art, but they really just don't know they are playing out of tune. That is certainly not the case across the board and I am not saying that music should always be in tune, because that is not the case either. Sometimes it is a tool to use to bend something out of tune. Miles Davis was great at that. There were a number of trumpet players who did that well. I think by learning where the center of the horn is, you can then feel it. Once you feel it, then you can feel how far you can bend it. I think it further hones your ability to sort of bend the rules when you know where the rules are so to speak.

Yea, that's a great way of putting it. So now I am going to be really mean and ask you if you were a musician and you had to be on one side of the fence or the other completely. Either you were completely school band, reading music, like that background. Or you could be completely on the non-traditional side. Which one would you have to choose? Or which one do you think would be more beneficial?

So you're saying like trained versus not trained?

I guess so. Not that necessarily, but more like, you know with the jazz tradition learning from better players and learning by ear and listening to recordings or the other side would be learning from a band director. Which I guess, you know would be a better musician and learning to read music and going from that side of things.

Yea, that is certainly a tough question because obviously there is not a right answer. There have been some fantastic jazz musicians that came out of band programs and clearly some that amazing musicians that never saw a band instrument. Like Louis Armstrong is a perfect example of that. When he got his first cornet, he paid like five bucks for it and he had to work for weeks to save up for it. I don't think he ever had a single traditional lesson in his life. Just as an aside, his embouchure was atrocious. Just one of the worst embouchures you can use on a musical instrument. I think this further supports the rogue side, the learning by ear side. If you've got it, you got it. You don't let anything get in your way of your music. He is a clear example of that. To try my best to answer your question. I don't think I really fall on one side or the other. I think they both provide an excellent opportunity to a musician. I think they both provide a benefit regardless of what you do for a living. I think learning by ear translates to so many areas of life, that it's ridiculous. Just being able to learn something by what you hear and do it is a valuable skill in a number of job markets. So I think that carries a wide appeal, But I also think having the discipline to really force an instrument to sound the way you want it to sound based on what's written on a page and following instructions clearly dove tails with a lot of areas of life as well. With regards to specific music knowledge, I would say, I kind of wish I had more of a background in learning by ear. I hate to say by ear because there is such a stigma with saying that. At least there is from where I went to school--that learning by ear meant uneducated. I totally disagree with that way of interpreting but I think that there is just so many benefits of listening to something and learning it one measure at a time and listening to it and hearing it until you've got it. The couple of times that I have been able to do that with material that is kind of complicated... it never leaves you. You never forget it. Ever. I think that's a great reason that it should be taught in schools, or at least exposed to in schools. It can be a great tool. It is not appropriate for every situation, but even a classical symphony player can listen to his favorite Bud Herseth trumpet recording from the 50s and 60s and learn it the way Bud Herseth played it. I think that being able to do that gives you a lot of benefits that someone that can't do that misses out on. That's my best guess at answering that.

That's great. That's a good approach at both sides, I think. So my last question is... It doesn't happen every performance, but there are performances in our lifetime where there is a sort of magical feeling that happens when you play music. It may be for a song, it may be for eight measures, it may be for an entire night. But there is this feeling that happens and music is in that moment a very special thing. How do you describe that? Do you know what I mean? That sort of goose bumps feeling? How do you describe that moment and how do you think it happens? Where does it come from?

I think the most cliché way possible to describe it would be with the sort of stereotypical golf cliché and that's like you get one good shot and you'll always come back. For me, it's more than just a feeling of success. It's like a really gratifying thing where like you have tried really hard to figure something out for days and days and days and you've worked every way you think you can, and you have just not been able to figure it out. Something just clicks at the most inopportune moment. When it hits you, it's just a very profound moment of clarity. For me, that's kind of what those moments are like. You spend hundreds of hours working on specific skills as a musician and when I say specific skills, I mean getting that one rhythm to lay perfectly. I am certain you can identify with that. When you finally get it and you are able to apply it, something like that is an example of when that would happen for me. There are other times too. Just to put it into the situation that you were involved, there have been times with the octet, that as the trumpet player I never felt quite so successful before. So just being able to play with three other wind player that are at the level that you, Matt, and Rick are at and play everything for just twenty seconds perfectly at the section, is extremely gratifying and for me, that's kind of like one of those moments. To swing as a four-piece section together and just the same way or to end a cut off perfectly together, that we have all talked about. To get something right perfectly. Those are sort of those moments for me that are just sort of 'Oh man, I've got to keep coming back and doing this'.

Yea. I feel exactly the same way.

It feels like there was a second half of that question that I didn't quite get around to. Did I answer it.

I feel like that was as good as an answer as any I have gotten. That's great.

APPENDIX C

Artifacts

Participant A, B, C, D, E:



Participant F:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUvc3TgdazU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=27z3MeuTvVU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wn3Z91ihSbA>

Participant G:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JaNtdwv0_Ww

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYxXMjjRIRA>

<https://www.reverbnation.com/bryantband>

Participant H:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkXbHvWKPfY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9dffAwrnDw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjdtvWLk3k4>

Participant I:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yL8aCVcE34>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRjdNslImkA>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0hrR1tVY00>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTiwTGWKp8U>

Participant J:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLY1HnH_f0g
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uotHXjRCFUk>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQgfFhBdYUM>

APPENDIX D

SURVEY

How old are you:

What is your job?

At what age did you start playing music:

What is your primary instrument?

Do you play multiple instruments?
(YES or NO)

Did your parent(s) play a musical instrument?
(YES or NO)

Were you taken to concerts when you were growing up?
(NEVER SOMETIMES OFTEN)

Was there a lot of music played in your home growing up (i.e. recordings, jam sessions, etc.)
(YES or NO)

Did you take private lessons?
(YES or NO)

Did you participate in school band or choir?
(YES or NO)

If yes, which grade levels:

Did you continue music in college?
(YES or NO)

Were you a music major?
(YES or NO)

On a scale of 1-10 where 1 means no effect at all and 10 means very effective how influential were the following groups in your experience as a lifelong musician?

parents

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

other family members

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

friends

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

other musicians

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Describe how music fits into your day to day or weekly routine?

Do you play gigs often?

Do you practice often?

Describe your earliest memory of music capturing your attention?

A person- who?

A recording- which one?

How old were you?

A concert- who?

Describe the memory and the feeling...

Earliest memory of music making you want to be a musician?

Do you remember wanting an instrument but not having access?

What were factors related?

Money?

What made you pursue music in the first place?

Your primary instrument is (_____). Was there a defining moment when you knew you wanted to play (interviewees instrument), if so describe. If not, what was the reasoning for playing your instrument.

How did you get started playing an instrument? through parents, teacher, friend, etc.

Who were your biggest direct musical influences in your life?

Why was that influential?

Did they model for you?

Were they very kind?

How were they kind?

Why do you think they were so influential?

Personality, musical ability, etc.?

What kind of music did you play growing up?

Do you still play that kind of music?

Why or why not?

What was the evolution of your musical preferences?

who or what caused these changes?

Talk about your first experiences with music as a collaborator.

-age

-how often did you meet

-describe the other musicians (older, younger, better, worse etc.)

-do you feel like they inspired you to be a better musician?

Describe a typical practice session growing up

-how has it change over the years?

What was the music scene like where you grew up?

Did you hear a lot of live music in that area?

Were there musicians that were very encouraging/wanted to include you?

(If interviewee participated) Describe your band/choral experience during grade school.

Did your interest for participating increase or decrease?

What or who caused this motivation?

While you were in school did you participate in any other music groups outside of school?

How did you continue music after grade school/college band?

Have there been any moments in life that you thought about quitting music or did quit?

Do you have memories of anyone ever discouraging you from music?

If so what kept you going or what got you back into music?

Did you have anyone that had to push you to practice or encouraged you to keep improving?

What was your parents' role like in your music life?

You chose to/not be in school band what was your rationale for staying/leaving?

(IF) You chose to be a music major in college, what events or people led you to your decision?

Describe your experience with private music lessons?

Did you enjoy the lessons?

How long did you take from lessons from them?

What did/didn't you like about your teacher?

Do you feel they had a significant impact on you as a musician/person?

In what ways do you feel they were influential

What do you think your greatest motivation for continuing music was growing up and what do you think it is today?

What do you think are the most important character traits of a musician?
Other than playing well what do you look for in a musician?

How do you know that music is important to you?

What do you look for in a musician that tells you music is important to them?

Can you recall a specific moment(s) in time when you knew that you would be a musician for the rest of your life?

What do you think are the main reasons you kept playing music your whole life?

How do you continue to grow as an artist?

How do you think your traditional training benefitted you compared to your non-traditional training?

Do you think one was more beneficial than the other? Why?

There is a magical feeling that can happen when playing music. How do you describe that feeling and where does it come from?

APPENDIX F



Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board

September 13, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Austin Farnam
Jeffrey Murdock

FROM: Ro Windwalker
IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 16-08-050

Protocol Title: *Characteristics of Lifelong Musicians*

Review Type: EXEMPT EXPEDITED FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 09/13/2016 Expiration Date: 09/12/2017

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (<https://vpred.uark.edu/units/rscp/index.php>). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

This protocol has been approved for 10 participants. If you wish to make *any* modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.

Appendix G

Characteristics of Lifelong Musicians Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Principal Researcher: Austin Farnam

Faculty Advisor: Jeffrey Murdock, Ph.D.

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

You are invited to participate in a research study about lifelong musicianship. You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been a musician for the majority of your life and are a person of interest for this study.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY

Who is the Principal Researcher?

Principal Researcher

Austin Farnam

University of Arkansas

J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences

Graduate Student, MM-Education
[REDACTED]

Who is the Faculty Advisor?

Jeffrey A. Murdock, Ph.D.

Associate Director of Choral Activities

Assistant Professor of Music Education
[REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

What is the purpose of this research study?

What are the all-encompassing qualities, life-experiences, and characteristics in people that foster lifelong musicianship.

Who will participate in this study?

Musical performers with alternate/additional careers , ages 35-60

What am I being asked to do?

Your participation will require the following:

An interview approximately 20 minutes in length. Questions will consist of early to current experiences with music and why you feel you have continued to be a musician throughout your life.

What are the possible risks or discomforts?

There are no anticipated risks.

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Music Building, Room [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

You may also contact the University of Arkansas Research Compliance office listed below if you have questions about your rights as a participant, or to discuss any concerns about, or problems with the research.

Ro Windwalker, CIP
Institutional Review Board Coordinator
Research Compliance
University of Arkansas
[REDACTED]
Fayetteville, AR 72701-1201
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I have read the above statement and have been able to ask questions and express concerns, which have been satisfactorily responded to by the investigator. I understand the purpose of the study as well as the potential benefits and risks that are involved. I understand that participation is voluntary. I understand that significant new findings developed during this research will be shared with the participant. I understand that no rights have been waived by signing the consent form. I have been given a copy of the consent form.

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What are the possible benefits of this study?

The information provided will be helpful to teachers, students, parents, and future researchers. There are no direct benefits to the participant.

How long will the study last?

The interview will be a one-time occurrence and is expected to last 20 minutes.

Will I receive compensation for my time and inconvenience if I choose to participate in this study?

Compensation will not be provided

Will I have to pay for anything?

There will be no cost associated with your participation.

What are the options if I do not want to be in the study?

If you do not want to be in this study, you may refuse to participate. Also, you may refuse to participate at any time during the study. You will not be affected in any way if you refuse to participate.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

All information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by applicable State and Federal law. Identifiable information such as name, age, and gender will be numerically coded for confidentiality. Only the Principal Researcher has access to editing rights of the interviews.

Will I know the results of the study?

At the conclusion of the study you will have the right to request feedback about the results. You may contact the faculty advisor, Jeffrey Murdock at jeffreym@uark.edu or the Principal Researcher, Austin at alfarnam@email.uark.edu. You will receive a copy of this form for your files.

What do I do if I have questions about the research study?

You have the right to contact the Principal Researcher or Faculty Advisor as listed below for any concerns that you may have.

Principal Researcher
Austin Farnam
University of Arkansas
J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences
Graduate Student, MM-Education
[REDACTED]

Faculty Advisor
Jeffrey A. Murdock, Ph.D.
Associate Director of Choral Activities
Assistant Professor of Music Education

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