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**BETWEEN TWO WORLDS:  
TENSIONS OF PRACTICE ENCOUNTERED BY  
SECONDARY SCHOOL MUSIC TEACHERS IN  
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Education at  
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## **Abstract**

This qualitative study examined the tensions of practice encountered in the daily working lives of secondary school music teachers who hold the responsibility for music in their school. The analysis used data from semi-structured interviews with nineteen participants, including current and former practitioners and music advisors in Aotearoa New Zealand. The participants represent a range of musical traditions, teaching experiences, and demographics. Data were analysed thematically in terms of four research questions: (i) the expectations attached to the role of secondary school music teacher; (ii) the tensions of practice encountered; (iii) the manner in which teachers experienced their working lives; and (iv) their efforts to resolve the tensions they encountered. Major tensions of practice were found to arise from the boundary positions which teachers occupied at the interface of two worlds – the inner world of music and the outer world of the school – and from the complex demands of working in the three different areas of classroom, extra-curricular and itinerant music. Further tensions stemmed from changes brought about by national policy changes from the mid-1990s to a broad, practically-based official curriculum and standards-based assessment in senior secondary school credentials. Within their roles, teachers experienced conflict, ambiguity and overload which had an impact on personal well-being and their identities as musicians. They derived satisfaction from drawing students into the inner life and meaning of music. The study addresses a major gap in the understanding of secondary teachers' work. It contributes to local and international research literature into the lives of teachers, the position of music in schools, and the nature of music education. It has practical and theoretical implications for policy makers, school leaders, teachers and researchers.



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## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to:

My Dad, Ken Gregory, whose inner life and love of music still shine through in his ninety-third year, and in loving memory of my mother, Joan. Their shared vision of a family bach at Kuratau on the shores of Lake Taupo, furnished a tranquil and often solitary retreat where much of the gritty work for this project was undertaken.

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## Glossary

ANZ	Aotearoa New Zealand	The name for New Zealand which recognises Māori as the people of the land
ANZC	<i>The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum</i>	Curriculum document for the arts. Published in 2000 and replaced by the NZC in 2007
ANZAAE	The Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators	The professional association of visual art educators in ANZ
ATCL	Associate of Trinity College of London	A music qualification at diploma level
ERO	Education Review Office	Government body which reports publicly on the quality of education in NZ schools
HOD	Head of Department	A middle management position
HOF	Head of Faculty	A middle management position usually encompassing several departments
IEP	Individual educational plan	A term used in special education but used here by music teachers to indicate individual learning programmes
IRMT	Institute of Registered Music Teachers	Professional organisation of music teachers
ITM	Itinerant teacher of music	Instrumental and vocal teachers who provide lessons to secondary students during the school day
MENZA	Music Education New Zealand Aotearoa	National subject association for music education
MERC	National Centre for Research in Music Education	Partner organisation of MENZA
METANZ	Music Education Trust Aotearoa New Zealand	A charitable trust for music education advocacy

NCEA	National Certificate in Educational Achievement	National qualification for secondary school students with 3 levels
NZ	New Zealand	
NZC	<i>New Zealand Curriculum</i>	Official NZ school curriculum published in 2007 and mandated from 2010
NZCF	New Zealand Choral Federation	National choral network in NZ
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority	Has a range of roles in secondary and tertiary education. Administers NCEA.
NZSME	New Zealand Society for Music Education	National music education society which was replaced from 2004 by MENZA, METANZ and MERC
PPTA	Post Primary Teachers' Association	Secondary teachers' professional association
TIC	Teacher in Charge of Music	An assistant teacher with responsibility for music

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

*Truth is an eternal conversation about things that matter,  
conducted with passion and discipline*

Parker J Palmer  
***The Courage to Teach***

This is the report of a study of nineteen secondary school music teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand<sup>1</sup>, and the tensions of practice they experienced in their daily working lives. Although several decades have elapsed since the publication of Lortie's (2005a; 1975) now classic study *Schoolteacher* and his oft quoted assertion that "teaching is long on prescription, and short on description" (p. vii), the imperative to "look behind the schoolhouse door" (Goodson, 1994, p. 51) and to examine the lives of teachers remains as pertinent, and important, as ever.

This chapter provides the introduction to the study. It explores the context, rationale and aims of the project and narrates the personal journey of the researcher. The chapter concludes with an overview of the structure of the thesis.

### **1.1 Context and rationale for the study**

New Zealand, in common with other Western societies, has experienced significant social, political, and economic change since the 1980s. Apple (2004) goes as far as to assert that we are "living in a period of crisis" (p. 9). Global forces such as neo-liberalism and the need to 'serve the market' have meant, too, that "Western education systems have been subjected to substantial reform and change" (Lee, O'Neill, & McKenzie, 2004, p. 47). Within New Zealand, the 'Tomorrow's Schools' reforms of 1989 have resulted in new systems of educational governance. The New Zealand Curriculum Framework (1993) has ushered in an outcomes-based curriculum, while the

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<sup>1</sup> The use of the Māori word 'Aotearoa' before 'New Zealand' shows respect to the tangata whenua (people of the land). In the interests of fluency, 'Aotearoa' is not routinely used in this thesis and no disrespect is intended.

National Certificate of Education (NCEA) has brought standards-based assessment into senior secondary school qualifications.

Within this broader educational policy context, secondary school music education has also been facing its own particular challenges. Music, as one of the arts, has always occupied a marginalised position in the school curriculum (see for example Harland et al., 2000; Pascoe et al., 2005) and current changes to education, and to the ways in which music functions within society, have the potential to have an impact on this status. And yet the value of the arts which enable us “to see what we had not noticed, to feel what we had not felt” (Eisner, 2002, p. 12) remains significant. Jorgensen (2003) warns that “when the arts go awry, where they are ignored or marginalized, the broader society of which they are a part is likewise at risk” (p. xiv).

One of the consequences for teachers of the current educational context is that they have had to “rise to the challenge of a world in which the pace, nature and contexts of learning have been radically transformed” (Galton & MacBeath, 2008, p. 5), a world in which “the expectations made of teachers are expanding” (Bartlett, 2004, p. 567). Bartlett (2004) contends that the “new social realities of teaching represent a dramatic shift in the work environment and expectations made on teachers” (p. 567).

Teaching is, at heart, an intensely personal act. Parker Palmer (2007) asserts that “we teach who we are” (p. 1). Teaching is also “difficult, complex and emotionally draining” (Bartlett, 2004, p. 567). And “teachers matter. They matter to the education and achievement of their students and, more and more, to their personal and social well-being” (Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kington, & Qing, 2007, p. 1). While teachers matter in every subject area, within the realm of music education, Jeremy Winter (2004) asserts that “in regards to making a difference in arts education in New Zealand, the teacher at the front of the classroom is still the most important person” (p. 46).

Goodson (1981) maintains that “in understanding something so intensely personal as teaching it is critical we know about the person the teacher is” (p. 69). To come to an understanding of teachers we must examine teachers’ lived experiences, viewing them not from the perspectives of others, but from teachers’ own perspectives. While there is a growing body of literature devoted to inquiries into teachers’ lives, there are very few studies about the lives of secondary school music teachers. Cox (1999) contends that “we know very little about the opinions or professional lives of teachers who teach music in secondary schools” (p. 37).

Given the current educational context in Aotearoa New Zealand, the importance for music education of the teacher in the classroom, and our lack of detailed knowledge about the lives of music teachers, this study into the lives of secondary school music teachers was timely.

## **1.2 The study**

The central aim of this inquiry was to explore the tensions of practice that secondary school music teachers experienced within their working lives. The focus of the study was on the experiences of music teachers who held the responsibility for music within their school.

Wenger (1998) asserts that practice is “First and foremost, a process by which we can experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful” (p. 51). ‘Tension’ has a range of meanings including:

The act or action of stretching or the condition or degree of being stretched; stress; inner striving, unrest or imbalance often with physiological indications of emotion; either of two balancing forces causing or tending to cause extension; a balance maintained in an artistic work between opposing forces or elements. (Tension, 2012)

Thus tensions of practice can be found when conflicting, challenging or incompatible situations or truths need to be resolved or rationalised. Such tensions can take the form of polarities of thought and experience, which may pull in opposing directions and require balancing, or the discovery of reconciling principles.

My goal in seeking to explore of the tensions of practice encountered by the music teachers was to understand the landscape in which they were situated, and discover how they experienced their daily working lives. The focus on making meaning of the day-to-day, lived experience of teachers is in keeping with Merriam’s (1998) notion of school as a lived experience, and D. Scott and Usher’s (1999) assertion that much interpretive research focuses on the everyday lives of ordinary people.

The research investigated four broad questions. These were:

1. What are the expectations attached to the role of secondary school music teacher?
2. What do secondary school music teachers perceive to be the tensions of their practice?
3. How do secondary school music teachers experience their working lives?
4. How do secondary school music teachers go about resolving their tensions of practice?

The study was situated within the constructivist-interpretive paradigm and the qualitative research tradition. A significant feature of qualitative research is its capacity to be “open, sensitive, and responsive to problems and issues in the field as they are defined by the participants, not as they are presumed to be by policymakers and reformers” (A. Hargreaves, 1993, p. 53). The study sought to find out “how it is” for the music teachers, rather than “how it should be” (A. Hargreaves, 1997, p. 710). A full description of the methodology of the study is set out in Chapter 4.

Central to the aim of this project was the commitment to making this thesis accessible to teachers. Goodson (2003) maintains that “educational research has seldom seemed useful to the teacher” (p. 8). Research has tended to serve the discipline of the researcher. Studies have often been reported in the technical language of the research discipline, and this language can be a barrier to teachers, whose lives are taken up with the day-to-day realities of school and classroom. In the interests of accessibility, this thesis uses plain language. When technical language is required, it is accompanied by a brief explanation.

Goodson (2003) further asserts that “a major value underpinning studies of teachers’ work and lives is that such studies increase the visibility and indeed usability of teachers’ perspectives” (p. 55). Within this thesis, to promote the visibility of the teachers, material in the data chapters is, whenever possible, reported in the teachers’ own words.

The usage of three sets of terms used in this thesis requires clarification. Music in New Zealand schools is to be found both within the classroom and outside of the classroom. The traditional term for music outside of the classroom is ‘extra-curricular music’. Ingvarson et al. (2005) define ‘extra-curricular’ as work that “involves teaching or supervising students who volunteer for activities outside of normal timetabled lessons” (p. 41). Although some schools have replaced ‘extra-curricular’ with the term ‘co-

curricular', in this thesis, the term 'extra-curricular' rather than 'co-curricular' is routinely employed.

Teachers who hold leadership roles in schools are typically referred to as either 'senior managers' (meaning the principal and deputy and/or associate principals) or 'middle managers' (referring typically to teachers who are heads of subject departments). Those terms are also used in this thesis. While some research separates the concept of 'management' out from 'leadership', in this thesis, the term 'manager' follows school practice, and denotes both roles.

At times the need arose to differentiate the 'artform' of music from aspects of its disciplinary practice, or from the separate areas (such as classroom music, or extra-curricular music) into which schools typically divide the 'art' of music. Following Rilke<sup>2</sup>, Parker Palmer (2007, p. 109) describes music, in common with other core areas of human knowledge as a 'great thing'. The term 'great thing' is employed in this thesis, where necessary, to avoid ambiguity.

### **1.3 Personal story: From practitioner to researcher**

Early in this inquiry I set myself a reflexive exercise to chart my journey from practitioner to researcher. The fields of interpretive and qualitative research which I was entering demand high degrees of self-knowledge and insight into one's own values and motivations as a researcher. What I came to call my 'reflexive essay' provided me with the opportunity to simultaneously look inward to my own values and history, and at the same time connect them 'outward' to the ideas and theories of others.

The journey towards this research reflects my life journey, in which the twin strands of music and teaching have formed the warp and weft of my own 'story to live by' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Music and teaching are both integral to the person I am; they have been woven into the fabric of my life since childhood. My father was a primary school headmaster, my mother and grandmothers all trained as teachers and I too became a teacher. Although not active performers themselves, my parents loved and appreciated music, and I grew up in a household where education and music were highly valued.

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<sup>2</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke describes the 'grace of great things' in *Rodin and Other Prose Pieces* (1986).

Bound into my story is a deep personal 'knowing' of the value of music and of teaching. This way of knowing, which stems from my own life and career experiences, resonates with Parker Palmer's (2007) description of knowing as "a human way to seek relationship and, in the process, to have encounters and exchanges that will inevitably alter us" (p. 55). It is this personal knowing – my own story – gleaned through my relationships, encounters and exchanges that has provided the motivation for this study, established my position as the researcher and suggested the nature of the research itself.

### **1.3.1 Exploration of my values and motivations**

Reflection on my own life story has illuminated those pivotal places which emerge as 'key points' or 'encounters' (Palmer, 2007) of my experience. It is in the re-storying of those encounters that I have forged new understandings, and have discovered, examined and claimed the motivational seeds of this research.

As I look back across the years, the first encounter is the lived experience of teaching that was a part of my parents' stories, and that I in turn wove into my own story of teaching. School and teaching dominated my childhood. Until I was nearly thirteen we lived in school houses situated on the grounds of three different country schools. Not only did the school create the physical landscape of my life, but the passion and dedication which my father brought to his role as the headmaster, and my mother to her equally valued role of the headmaster's wife, meant that teaching dominated my world. A conception of teaching merely as an 'occupation' falls far short of the reality of our lives. Feldman (1997), drawing on the work of Stengel (1996), asserts that "being a teacher is a way of being; that teachers are human beings for whom teaching is a way of being human [and that] Stengel links these ways of being to ways of knowing" (p. 764). Stengel's concept of teaching as not just a way of *doing*, but also as a way of *being* and *knowing* was an experiential truth for me. Integral to my parents' *beingness* as teachers was what van Manen (1991) calls *tactfulness* in teaching. "Tactfulness means 'touching' someone, rousing them from slumber into greater personal awareness while respecting and preserving their personal space" (Barone, 2001, p. 140). And so I wove into my own story the valuing of tactfulness in teaching, which itself was more than 'just a job' but a way of expressing my own humanity.

The story of my beginnings as an orchestral musician provides a second encounter. Aged twelve, starting at secondary school, I was offered the opportunity to learn an orchestral instrument. Declaring that my hands were too small for my preferred option of the 'cello, the music teacher introduced me to the French horn. In those days, French horn players were few and far between, and girls playing the French horn were a rare breed. There quickly followed rich involvement in local, regional and national orchestras, and even though the only classroom music consisted of two 35 minute periods of core music per week in Forms 3, 4 and 5, my musical activities, grounded in rich extra-curricular school music experiences, provided sufficient foundations on which to study music at university. Those university studies, in turn, made possible my ultimate career direction.

This story is a powerful illustration of the key role that secondary school music teachers can play in opening doors to life-changing experiences – to life itself – for their students. The teacher in my story was an expert, possessing “unique types of knowledge” (Feldman, 1997, p. 759). His actions as a teacher set in motion lifelong learning for me. Yet such a view of the teacher does not satisfactorily explain the allure that this story holds for me. Closer examination allows a new story to emerge which has powerful resonances with my formative experiences. The music teacher lived his passion for music and music teaching; for him teaching was also a way of being human. In this story, the *beingness* of teaching has become entwined with music itself. This story draws together my two life threads of teaching and music into a persuasive narrative; a narrative which begins to shed light on the questions “Why this research with secondary music teachers; why me?”

The third encounter occurs at the time that I was emerging from university as a first year teacher of French and English. Although I had studied music, my preference was not to teach music, which was my passion. But in that decile<sup>3</sup> 3 school, there was no music happening at all – and I found that I could not bear it. There were no instruments available, so I started modestly by establishing a girls' choir. The next year I got bolder and formed a massed choir for prizegiving, and the following year we successfully produced *The Pirates of Penzance* – complete with the first fifteen rugby team as the pirates, and the deputy principal as the 'Modern Major General'. I vividly remember the letter I received after the production from one boy, who struggled in class, and for

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<sup>3</sup> New Zealand state schools are grouped in ten deciles (each representing approximately 10% of schools) according to the socio-economic status of their population. Decile 1 schools have the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds (Ministry of Education, 2012b).

whom this had been a significant life experience; and the emotion of the kaumatua<sup>4</sup> as he shook my hand for a prolonged period following the prizegiving, and searched for words to share with me what it had meant to him to have music feature in the ceremony. These were humbling experiences, which underscored for me the immense power and value of music as a means of both personal and public expression; as a “myth of the inner life [which] informs one’s deepest self” at a level that is “inexpressible through ordinary discourse” (Jorgensen, 2003, p. 82). These stories became woven into my own story of myself as a secondary music teacher – a guardian of the myths, perhaps? – and later fanned my growing desire to examine more closely the lived experience of secondary music teachers.

The fourth encounter occurred after years spent rearing three sons; and 16 years teaching at a large high decile girls’ school, where I became the Head of the Music Department (HOD Music) and where there was a wonderful sense of community among the music students, who were highly motivated and high achievers; and after time spent at Massey University as a pre-service music educator; to a recent phone call: “Hello, it’s Julie here. I’m back in town with my wee son. I’d love you to meet him. Can we meet up?” Julie wanted to share with me what it had meant to her to belong to our school music groups. As a teenager she had been diagnosed with a serious illness, her family circumstances were difficult, and belonging to our music groups had been a life-line for her. For Julie, engagement with music had gone way beyond providing a means of expressing or defining herself, it had become life-giving and transformative. I wove into the fabric of my own story, these rich strands of secondary music as a place on the landscape where community could be created and lived; a life-sustaining place where individuals could simply *be* and *belong*.

Nevertheless, my world as a secondary school music teacher was an uneasy, tension-laden landscape, where the feeling of being overwhelmed was seldom far from the surface, where a balance between the personal and the professional became impossible, and where the core teaching role came with a second job that was “paradoxically both highly visible and [yet] unseen” (Donaldson, 2002) piggy-backed on top of it. Using a metaphor drawn from music, this story imagines my world as a secondary music teacher as a seething composition of complex, postmodern counterpoint, which had coursing through its fabric a cacophony of voices, themes, leitmotifs, moods, cross rhythms, keys, concords, discords and devices – all sure of

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<sup>4</sup> A respected elder of the Māori people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

their own worth, all vying for dominance. Within this symphony, in the role of the music teacher, an often solitary figure, I was required to act simultaneously as composer, conductor, performer, producer, interpreter and critic. In 2002 I chose to step aside from secondary school teaching, and entered the field of pre-service teacher education. My ongoing employment in pre-service secondary music education has enabled me to engage in my 'unfinished business' in secondary music education and examine the situation of its teachers.

My encounters present contrasting aspects of my life as a secondary school music teacher, and reveal certain paradoxes. In allowing these differing narratives to co-exist, I am identifying with Parker Palmer's (2007) assertion, that:

Paradoxical thinking requires that we embrace a view of the world in which opposites are joined, so that we can see the world clearly and see it whole. Such a view is characterized by neither flinty-eyed realism nor dewy-eyed romanticism but rather by a creative synthesis of the two. (p. 69)

It was my life experiences, examined here through four encounters of my own story, that brought me into doctoral study with the topic already chosen. I wanted to explore the complex, yet very personal nature of secondary school music teaching, through teachers' own accounts of their work. I wanted to examine the tensions of practice they encountered in their everyday teaching lives; to sit down beside them, listen intently to their stories – their 'knowing' – of their own lived experiences as teachers, and to document their experiences in a way that enabled them to be brought into a place where they could be simultaneously highly visible *and* seen *and* heard.

### **1.3.2 My position as the researcher**

My personal narrative, which explored the motivational underpinnings of this research, also reveals the values that I hold. It enabled me to address the imperative to be open, and declare my position a researcher. To borrow an analogy, my narrative enabled me to "declare what kind of bread" I am (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998, p. 26). I was not entering this research as an outsider in the field of music education. My years as a practitioner meant that I had extensive insider knowledge. In undertaking this research, I endorsed the view that:

Valuable enquiry around teachers' work can and should be undertaken by experienced practitioners who are attuned to the real dilemmas faced by teachers in schools and who are prepared to undertake enquiry around

these without seeking to make judgments about supposedly good or bad practices. (J. O'Neill et al., 2004, p. 28)

Nor was I setting out from an emotionally 'neutral' place. I agree with Coffey (1999) that:

Emotional connectedness to the processes and practices of fieldwork, to analysis and writing, is normal and appropriate. It should not be denied, nor stifled. It should be acknowledged, reflected upon, and seen as a fundamental feature of well-executed research. Having no emotional connection to the research endeavour, setting or people is indicative of a poorly executed project. (pp. 158-159)

I was, however, acutely aware of the need to understand the participants' perspectives, and not impose my own onto them (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). I was aware too, of the necessity not to "colonise" the teachers' stories (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 17), or to select out partial fragments, and so allow others to see only what I want them to see (Day & Leitch, 2001). I saw the process of examining my own lived-experience and claiming my own values as an essential pre-cursor to working ethically with my research participants.

## **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis is structured into eleven chapters which represent four major sections: context for the research, methodology, data presentation, and finally discussion and conclusions. This chapter has provided an introduction to the study, and has set out my own values and position as the researcher.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of the social, historical, political and educational context in which secondary school music teaching in New Zealand is currently situated. Its initial focus is broad, examining the nature, value and purpose of music education, along with approaches to classroom music teaching. The focus then shifts to New Zealand and this part provides a brief history of school music education and an outline of its policy context.

Chapter 3 examines empirical literature relevant to the study, and outlines the gap in the literature that this study addresses. The chapter is structured into five major

sections: Secondary school music teaching and teachers; teachers' workload; emotional aspects of teaching; teachers, identity and community; and contexts of teaching.

Chapter 4 presents the methodology. The first part examines the philosophical foundations of the research, discussing the interpretive hermeneutic paradigm, the qualitative research tradition, the concepts of *bricolage* and the *bricoleur*, and issues of accountability. Next the research design is introduced. This includes an outline of the research aims and questions, the methodological approach, ethical issues, the research methods, participants and sampling process. There follows an outline of the fieldwork, data analysis, presentation and the interpretive approach. The chapter ends with an explication of the *two worlds* metaphor which was developed from the work of Clandinin and Connelly (1995) and later used in the discussion as an interpretive tool.

Chapters 5 to 9 present the data drawn from the interview-conversations held with the participants in the study. Chapter 5 presents a representative sample of the participants, providing a picture of their backgrounds as musicians, their motivations to become secondary music teachers, and their beliefs about the values of music in the lives of their students and school communities. The second part of the chapter introduces the core expectations of roles as classroom teachers and middle managers or teachers in charge of music.

Chapter 6 introduces the music classroom. It explores aspects of classroom music teaching, and then presents the teachers' stories of their experiences in teaching music to junior secondary school classes, that is, to students aged about 13 and 14, studying in years 9 and 10.

Chapter 7 shifts from the junior to the senior school, and presents the teachers' experiences of working with year 11, 12 and 13 students. Situations such as the need to teach multi-level classes and work with students on their own individual learning programmes are examined. The chapter then presents the teachers' stories of working with NCEA in music at years 11, 12 and 13.

Chapter 8 moves beyond the classroom, and focuses on the extra-curricular aspects of the teachers' lives. It introduces their experiences as middle managers, and provides details of their roles as a head of department (HOD) or faculty (HOF) or as an assistant teacher in charge of music (TIC). The chapter explores the extra-curricular programme,

the itinerant programme, the management and direction of music groups and their place in the corporate life of the school.

Chapter 9 is the final data chapter, and focuses on the teachers' lives. It examines the rhythms of their working days, the nature and significance of the support they received from colleagues, and the effects of their work on their personal lives.

Chapter 10 presents the discussion of the data and is structured in relation to the four research questions. The first research question explores the teachers' identity, motivations and expectations of their role, and the expectations of their managers. The second question explores tensions of practice through a discussion of the *two worlds* metaphor and Bernstein's (1996) concepts of 'classification' and 'framing', 'singulars' and 'regions'. The third question examines positive and negative aspects of the teachers' experiences. It draws on role stress theory, articulated by Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, and Snoek (1964), to explore role overload, role conflict and role ambiguity, and examines the impact of isolation and recognition on the teachers. The fourth research question explores ways in which the teachers acted to resolve their tensions of practice. Bartlett's (2004) theory provides an explanation of why the teachers overworked. The chapter concludes with a summary of the discussion.

Chapter 11 provides the conclusions to the study. It summarises the findings and the interpretations of the data in relation to the four research questions. Next the strengths and limitations of the study are outlined. The contributions to knowledge are outlined and these are followed by recommendations for policy, practice and future research. The chapter concludes with some brief final thoughts.

## Chapter 2

### Music education and compulsory schooling

#### 2.1 Introduction

The field of music education contributes significantly to the context in which New Zealand secondary school music teachers work. That context cannot be understood in isolation from social, cultural and political influences that have shaped it historically, and that continue to shape it today. In order to understand the tensions of practice encountered by secondary school music teachers in New Zealand, we must examine the particular context in which these teachers work. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an introduction to that context.

The chapter progresses from an examination of broader perspectives of music, and music education in secondary schools, to a discussion focused on secondary school music education within the New Zealand context. It has six sections. Section 2.2 presents a brief examination of the nature, value, and purpose of music and music education. A full exploration of the topic lies outside the bounds of this study, but some discussion here is important, as it provides insight into the realm of music, which, as we shall see later in the thesis, created not only a key part of the working world of the music teachers in the study, but also contributed a core component of their identity.

Section 2.3 provides an historical context to current secondary school music education from an international perspective. It initially examines traditions and contemporary music education practice in the compulsory school sector, and presents three identifiable approaches to school music education – the ‘traditional’, the ‘progressive’, and ‘broad-based’ approaches. This is followed by a brief introduction to some the cultural forces which are impacting contemporary music education.

In Section 2.4 the focus shifts from the international arena to New Zealand, and this section explores the development of music in this country as a secondary school subject. It examines the place that extra-curricular music plays, and the status of music as an academic subject in New Zealand schools. Section 2.5 focuses on educational policy and discusses the context in which *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (NZCF) and *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (ANZC) were developed.

Following a discussion of the ANZC, Section 2.5 introduces senior school music components and credentialing requirements through an examination of NCEA and senior assessment requirements for music. Section 2.6 presents a summary of the chapter.

## **2.2 Nature, value, and purpose of music and music education**

Music, as one of the arts, is arguably a fundamental expression of the human condition. Its presence has been recorded in virtually every society, as evidenced by pictures of musicians in bas-relief at Susa, the capital of Sumeria, dating back to 2600 BC. Dissanayake (1995) states that “all known societies practice at least one of what we in the West call ‘the arts’, and for many groups engaging with it ranks among their society’s most important endeavours” (pp. xii-xiii). She postulates that the arts are fundamental to our ‘beingness’, “for the species-centered view of art reveals that the aesthetic is not something added to us – learned or acquired like speaking a second language or riding a horse – but in large measure is the way we *are*, *Homo aestheticus*, stained through and through” (p. xix). While many scholars agree that at present no clear evolutionary or survival purpose has been found for the existence of music, the pervasive nature of music within society argues that it has “a crucial role to play in human existence and has a very powerful impact on our emotions in ways we may not consciously be aware of” (Hallam, 2001, p. 61).

There is a lack of agreement between scholars as to the meaning and value of music. Reimer (2002b) suggests that while “the question of why humans value music has eluded all efforts to answer it conclusively despite many attempts throughout history” (p. 195), music possesses two characteristics which point to its value:

1. Music makes human experience “special”. ... Music makes ordinary experience extraordinary, or insignificant experience significant. Music creates an alternative to the reality of the everyday; an alternative to the ordinary way of being.
2. Music, unlike all of the other arts, depends on the use of sounds, organized in ways various cultures sanction, to create the sense of specialness it adds to human experience. (Reimer, 2002b, p. 195)

Csikszentmihalyi (1996), in turn, suggests that the creative experience of ‘flow’, that can occur with musical engagement, enables people to transcend their lives. Green

(2006), on the other hand, contends that music is a part of everyday life. In common with authors such as DeNora (2000) and Elliott (1995), she dismisses the idea that “music’s ‘true’ meaning and value rise above mundane social and political considerations” (Green, 2006, p. 101). Green perceives music as having two kinds of meaning: ‘inherent’ meaning, which is contained with the patterns of sounds and silence, and ‘delineated’ meaning, which resides in extra-musical connotations, such as those ascribed through social, cultural, religious, or political associations. She contends that people can have positive or negative responses to either inherent or delineated meanings.

Lack of agreement as to the nature and meaning of music is mirrored by dissent as to its purpose in education, as will be seen in the section which follows.

### ***2.2.1 Development of music education***

While the existence of music as a phenomenon dates back for millennia, so too does the field of music education. Music is one of the oldest curriculum subjects. Allsup (2010), for example, tells us that the “earliest records of inquiry as to the meaning of music and a musical education were recorded in ancient Greece” (Allsup, 2010, p. 40). Yet despite these ancient beginnings, and the pervasiveness of music within the world’s cultures, the role and value of music within educational settings in Western society have never been entirely without issue. Allsup (2005) points to a central tension for present-day music educators when he notes that “as educators and musicians, we understand deeply and intuitively the value of what we do, but there is no universal agreement as to how we define or explain our craft, let alone justify its study” (p. 43). Allsup (2005) contends that the field of music education philosophy, which developed at the turn of the twentieth century, grew “almost entirely out of a need to rationalize the inclusion of music in public schools” (p. 49). Yet a century down the track, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Bennett Reimer (2003) spoke of a profession which was “grasping at straws”, commenting that “it would be difficult to find another field so active, so apparently healthy, so venerable in age and widespread in practice, and at the same time so worried about its inherent value” (Reimer, 2003, p. 2). Philip Ball (2010), drawing on Claude Lévi-Strauss, asserted that a core issue “is not ... that music is unintelligible, but that is untranslatable. ... We understand, but cannot put that understanding into words” (P. Ball, 2010, p. 355).

### **2.2.2 Justifications for music in the school curriculum**

Music education historian Michael Mark (2002) contends that up until the middle of the twentieth century the justification for the inclusion of music education in schools largely rested not on the inherent value of music itself, but on the perceived power of music to positively influence the lives of individuals and communities. He maintains that in all eras of Western civilisation some form of music – and hence music education – was considered necessary to help maintain a stable society. Such justifications for the importance of music can be termed ‘extrinsic’ and differentiated from ‘intrinsic’ justifications which value music for its own sake. Mark notes that although much has been written about the power and value of music throughout the centuries, the first true philosophy of music education – ‘music education as aesthetic education’ (MEAE) – was not developed until the middle of the twentieth century, from within the music profession itself. Pointing to the thinking of historical figures such as Plato and Aristotle, and more recently to Pestalozzi and Dewey, Mark comments that “throughout Western history, music education has always had philosophical bases on which to operate, but they were societal or educational philosophies, rather than philosophies of music education” (M. Mark, 2002, p. 144).

The seeds of MEAE – a philosophy which provided an intrinsic justification for music education – were sown in the 1930s and picked up in the middle of the century by music educators such as Charles Leonard and Robert House (M. Mark, 2002). With the publication of Bennett Reimer’s (1970) highly influential work, *A Philosophy of Music Education*, intrinsic justifications for music education gained further recognition amongst music educators. Allsup (2010), for example, contends that in North America MEAE became the principal rationale for music education for several decades. Reimer (2002a) defines the value of MEAE in the following manner:

While music has many important non-musical or nonartistic functions, its musical or artistic nature is its unique and precious gift to all humans. Music education exists first and foremost to develop every person’s natural responsiveness to the power of the art of music. If that goal is primary, others can be included whenever helpful. But when music itself, with its universal appeal to the human mind and heart, is bypassed or weakened in favour of non-musical emphases that submerge it, we have betrayed the art we exist to share. It is that simple. (pp. 183-184)

There remains today a dynamic tension between the various rationales for school music education. Bowman (2005b), for example, maintains that the concept of music education as aesthetic education is, of itself, a form of extrinsic justification. He argues that music is a social phenomenon and that it should be “concerned with the process of narrative sense-making, of weaving meaningful and coherent personal (and interpersonal) stories from musical actions” (Bowman, 2005b, p. 41). Other authors, in justifying music education, suggest that the arts are underpinned by unique thinking processes (see for example Dissanayake, 1995; Gardner, 1993; O’Connor & Dunmill, 2005). Best (1992) and Eisner (1994, 1998) contend that the arts combine both rational and emotional thinking. Ballantyne (2001), in arguing that music is a unique subject area which is qualitatively different from other curriculum subjects, articulates both intrinsic and extrinsic justifications, which identify utilitarian and aesthetic aspects, and acknowledge the value and role of extra-curricular music.

It is against this somewhat uneasy backdrop that we can examine the major traditions of school music education.

### **2.3 Approaches to secondary school music education from the mid-twentieth century**

Although music educators such as Keith Swanwick (1988) maintain that there is a very diverse range of practice within school music programmes, some distinct approaches, or theories, of music education can be identified. Each theory is underpinned by its particular justification for music education and its own perspectives on the nature and role of music, from which aims, content and teaching style are developed. In *Music, Mind and Education* (1988), Swanwick describes three broad approaches which can be distinguished as being based respectively on ‘traditional values’, ‘a focus on children’, and ‘respect for alternative traditions’. Swanwick asserts that his categories do not reflect actual work of individual teachers or writers. Rather they are “strands of thought and practice gathered into conceptual bundles to make theoretical harvesting a little easier” (p. 10). Plummeridge (2001) also identifies three theories of music education, which he defines as the ‘traditional’, the ‘progressive’ and the ‘eclectic’. He too cautions that none of the three ‘ideal types’ that he describes actually exists in a pure form and that in practice, teachers rarely follow one particular theory, relying rather on ‘what works’ in the classroom, for which they draw on ideas and materials from a range of

approaches. There is considerable overlap between the first two typologies suggested by Swanwick and Plummeridge, and their third categories provide insights into a category that might be called 'broader-based' approaches to music education. These categories serve as a useful framework through which to identify approaches to classroom music education which emerged in nations such as the United Kingdom, and which have contributed significantly to the present-day context in which New Zealand secondary school music teachers are situated.

### **2.3.1 Traditional approach**

Swanwick (1988) contends that the traditional approach might be regarded as the oldest and most established theory of music education. Although associated particularly with music educational practice in England in the 1950s and 60s, its influence has been widespread in Western nations and is still in evidence today. Shaped within the cultural milieu of modernism, the traditional approach rested on the belief that the aim of music education is to preserve and pass on to the next generation music and musical practices that are considered to be culturally significant. The music that came to be associated with this approach belonged to one particular tradition – music of post-Renaissance European masters such as Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. Works of the great European composers form the basis of a canon of music that is today often referred to as 'Western art music'.

Within a 'traditional' classroom, students are viewed as "inheritors of a set of cultural values and practices" (Swanwick, 1988, p. 10). Induction into the musical culture is via engagement with 'good' music as a performer or through musical appreciation<sup>5</sup>. Students are thus encouraged to develop instrumental and/or vocal skills. For the musician, access to the music itself is from a written musical score, and so the development of musical literacy, in the form of the ability to read (and when necessary write) standard Western notation, lies at the heart of an education in Western art music. Alongside the development of instrumental skills is the development of musical appreciation. Music works are analysed to identify structural components such as melodies, motives, key centres and form.

The teacher in the traditional classroom is a knowledgeable authority figure, the 'Keeper of the Canon'. It is the teacher's role to guide students into an understanding of

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<sup>5</sup> Reimer (2009) suggests that within this approach, music education has a role to play in "elevating the taste of the masses" by providing them with access to "classical" or "serious" music as opposed to music which is "popular" or "transient" (Reimer, 2009, p. 76).

the great works and to ensure they gain the requisite skills and knowledge. Thus the task of the music educator is “primarily to initiate students into recognizable musical traditions” (Swanwick, 1988, pp. 10-11).

Plummeridge (2001) states that the traditional approach to music education developed in relation to wider principles of education, which Malcolm Skilbeck (1976, p. 24) defines as “classical humanism”. Classical humanism casts back to the spirit of classical times and is concerned with the preservation of the best of cultural heritage. Traditional attitudes tended to reflect a widely held belief (still apparent today) that success in music is the province of a minority of talented individuals, and not attainable by the majority. Plummeridge (2001) maintains that “inherent in classical humanism is an academic elitism that supports and maintains the status quo” (p. 26). In such a context a major purpose of music education is to identify and ‘cultivate’ the talents of those students who are perceived to have special gifts in music. Plummeridge notes that in schools where this belief is evident, there is “likely to be an inclination towards high-level extra-curricular activities rather than music as a class subject” (p. 26).

One feature of classical humanism that has had a profound impact on music education is its classification of knowledge into an hierarchical structure in which rational thought occupies the highest place. The arts, whose domain is perceived to be connected to the world of feeling and emotion and not with rational knowledge, occupy a lowly place in the hierarchy when viewed from the perspective of rational knowledge, which dates back to thinkers such as Plato. Thus in schools, subjects such as science and maths that are underpinned by rational knowledge are privileged, and the arts are often marginalised. Despite the fact that research studies in such varied disciplines as cognitive psychology<sup>6</sup>, cultural anthropology, and philosophy of music education, have brought many new insights into the nature of cognition and knowledge, the belief in the separation between rational knowledge on the one hand, and the apparently non-rational, emotionally-based knowledge of music and the arts on the other, remains pervasive, and is cited internationally by educators (for example Drummond, 2003; Palmer, 2007; Reimer, 2009) as a fundamental reason for the often precarious position that music occupies in the wider school curriculum.

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<sup>6</sup> See for example Gardner’s (1987) theory of Multiple Intelligences, which include a specific Musical Intelligence. “An intelligence,” says Gardner, “is an ability to fashion products, or to solve problems, that are of significance within one or more cultural settings” (p. 80). According to Elliott (1995), part of Gardner’s mission is to emphasize that abilities not typically considered intelligences in Western culture (for example musical and bodily-kinesthetic ones) should be counted on an equal footing with linguistic and mathematical abilities.

### **2.3.2 Progressive approach**

Progressivism in education dates back to such thinkers as Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel, all of whom placed high value on the place of music in education, and to the work of John Dewey for whom the arts were the highest form of human expression and communication.<sup>7</sup>

Whereas classical humanism can be viewed as being aspirational and even elitist, progressivism is egalitarian in emphasis and embraces an optimistic view of human nature. Progressivist educators are concerned with the development of particular human qualities – such as self-expression, imaginativeness, creativeness, along with sensitivity and the appreciation of beauty. They value allowing children to ‘grow’ into fulfilled individuals. The teacher is no longer the authority figure and ‘fount of all knowledge’. Rather, he or she is a guide, who allows the child, an active explorer, to grow into a fulfilled individual. A central tenet of this philosophy envisages the child as a creator, rather than a performer, with artistic exploration happening largely without adult interference.

Music can be seen as a ‘natural fit’ with these theories, because it directly relates to feelings and emotion. Although the influence of progressive philosophies in general education can be seen in the early part of the twentieth century, Abbs (2003) suggests that the progressive movement remained largely untapped in music education until the 1970s. The publication in 1970 of an influential book *Sound and Silence* by Paynter and Aston (1970) provided teachers with the stimulus to explore child-centred learning in music.

Plummeridge (2001) suggests that in a progressive music classroom, young people pursue their own musical explorations and there is an emphasis on activities such as improvisation and composition. The role of the teacher has changed from being the traditional instructor to that of a facilitator whose job it is to encourage students’ own creation.

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<sup>7</sup> Thwaites (2008) contends that “Dewey’s influence on music education is not aimed at the gifted, or necessarily the musicians of the future, but is framed in simple democratic terms through which all children’s musical abilities can be developed so they can make cultural use of their leisure time” (p. 4).

### **2.3.3 Broader-based approaches**

The wider context in which more broadly-based approaches to classroom music are situated is described by Abbs (2003). He asserts that whereas education in music and other arts for much of the twentieth century was shaped by the over arching influences of modernism and progressivism, these gave way during the late twentieth century to radically new ways of thinking about and working in the arts. Abbs suggests that within this new paradigm, the arts are not seen as primarily as a means of self-expression, or as the servant of other agendas, but as “fine vehicles of human understanding” (p. 56).

Abbs’ (2003) discussion of music as one of the arts points to an assumption he believes underlies the new paradigm, that “all the arts belong together as a single epistemic community” (p. 57). From the vantage point of within the arts, the status of arts knowledge has undergone a transformation. Plummeridge (2001) asserts that music is now regarded as “a way of knowing or a realm of meaning with a cognitive content that is equal to that of mathematics and the sciences” (p. 27). Abbs (2003) too asserts that the arts are “cognitive to the very core” (p. 56).

These approaches share in common the belief that music education must find a much broader basis than that provided by either the traditional approach, with its emphasis on Western art music, or the progressive approach, which emphasised students’ own musical exploration, potentially at the expense of engagement with canons of existing musical works. Classroom practice within these more recent traditions has been built on a broader base of composition, the appreciation of musical works from a wide range of cultures, genres, styles and traditions, and the development of theoretical, aural and practical performance skills. According to Plummeridge (2001), this broader approach to music education has gained wide acceptance and has become the basis for the development of modern school music curricula.

### **2.3.4 Impact of contemporary cultural forces on school music education**

Green (2001) contends that changes made within the music curriculum during the past forty years reflect changes in the role music plays in wider society, and these in turn reflect broader shifts within society in relation to demography, technology, globalisation, gender, social class, and race relations. Sloboda (2001) asserts that school music education is currently influenced by the cultural forces of multiculturalism, youth culture, electronic communication, feminism, secularism and niche cultures which, in turn, are “sometimes considered as key manifestations of a postmodern society, characterised

by a free, even anarchic cultural 'market' in which the conditions for one segment to acquire cultural dominance do not exist" (p. 251). Philosopher Nel Noddings (2007) contends that "postmodernism is more a mood than a movement" (p. 77), and in turn, Reimer (2003) speaks of postmodernism as a 'mindset'. Reimer (2003) considers that the influence of the postmodern mindset on the arts has been "widespread and deep" and that "the arts may be the fields most directly affected by this viewpoint" (p. 19). He notes that one important postmodernist agenda for the arts is to eradicate the modernist distinctions between 'high art' (notably Western art music) and 'popular' expressions (for example Anglo-American pop music); distinctions that have underpinned much school music practice. The hegemony of both the content and processes of Western art music continues to be questioned (see for example Kwami, 1993; Lines & Naughton, 2002; Mansfield, 2007; Plummeridge, 2001; Spruce, 2001).

According to Allsup (2010), what counts as high art or good music, has, in fact, nothing to do with a work's 'inherent' quality, but rather is related to status, cultural expectations, and access to power. For postmodern music education philosopher Thomas Regelski (1998), musical value should only be determined by its 'use-function', by how well it satisfies the role a particular culture has created it for, rather than any notion of 'inherent' value. Lamb (2010) contends that because postmodernism is an approach that allows the exploration of multiple perspectives and multiple subject positions, it is adopted by many advocates for egalitarian music education.

There is ongoing debate amongst music educators as to the implications for school music education of contemporary social forces. Modern uses of technology for informal and formal communication, recording, composing and presenting are all influencing music education (see for example Frankel, 2010; Hodges, 2001; Lamb, 2010). In pointing to the significance of ICT for music education, Savage (2007) states, "If educators fail to grasp this major cultural shift, music as a curriculum subject will become increasingly alienated from young people's lives and they will find their music education elsewhere" (p. 75).

Many educators acknowledge the cultural significance to young people of the musical sub-cultures with which they identify (see for example Green, 2001; D. J. Hargreaves, Marshall, & North, 2003; D. J. Hargreaves, Purves, Welch, & Marshall, 2007; Saunders, 2010). In addressing the issue of students' apparent lack of motivation for school music, Green (2002, 2005, 2006) makes the case that not only must the *content* of the curriculum broaden to include popular music traditions, but that pedagogical

*processes* themselves must also reflect the informal music learning processes of popular musicians.

It is outside of the scope of this thesis to consider these, and other, cultural forces in detail. However, a final word must be given to Dunbar-Hall and Wemyss (2000), who articulate a significant dilemma that music teachers face as a result of contemporary influences: “If the solution ... in the teaching of popular music lies in ... the adoption of teaching strategies based on popular music’s nature, does the same premise hold true for other types of music? Should one approach be used for all musics, or should each music influence its own teaching approach?” (p. 31).

## **2.4 New Zealand school music education traditions and contemporary practice**

While the preceding sections of this chapter have provided a broad overview of music and music education, the remaining sections are largely focused on the New Zealand context. Given that schooling in New Zealand has its roots in the country’s colonial past, discussion in this section will also trace the close association of secondary school music education with its English counterparts. The section will commence with a brief overview of the contemporary schooling context

### ***2.4.1 The contemporary New Zealand schooling context***

Schooling is compulsory in New Zealand from the age of six to sixteen. However, most children start at age five and many have some form of pre-school education. Primary schooling encompasses years 1 to 6. Most children then spend two years - years 7 and 8 - at an Intermediate school, and then typically move to year 9 at secondary school at around age thirteen. Years 9 and 10 are normally thought of as the junior secondary school years and years 11 to 13 as the senior school. In their senior years, students typically study towards external qualifications. There is some variation of these structures, particularly in isolated rural areas where area schools may cater for students of all ages, and in some private schools.

The *Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2000), which was in place at the time of this study, required all students in years 1 - 8 to be provided with learning opportunities in music. Students in years 9 and 10 were to have learning

opportunities in two arts disciplines, which might not have included music. Music was an optional subject beyond year 10, and typically attracted a minority of students.

### **2.4.2 *Origins of classroom music***

The origins of classroom music as we know it today are to be found in the social and educational reforms of nineteenth century England (Plummeridge, 2002, p. 4). This was a time when the church still played a very prominent part in people's lives, and singing at school was encouraged as a way of enhancing participation at church. Class teaching of large groups of children was established at this time by innovative educators such as Sarah Glover, John Hullah and John Curwen. Over time, independent (private fee paying) schools developed, and while music did not necessarily form a part of the taught curriculum in these schools, choirs and orchestras were developed and encouraged as 'worthy activities' which could add to the cultural and social life of the school (Plummeridge, 2002). This split between music as a 'subject' to be studied in the classroom, and music as an activity to be pursued through extra-curricular performance groups, provides the foundation for contemporary school music practice not only in England, but in countries such as Australia and New Zealand, whose education systems have been profoundly influenced by English policy and practice. It is this division between classroom music and extra-curricular music which has given rise to the 'dual role' that New Zealand secondary school music teachers find themselves managing (see for example Cox, 1999; Scheib, 2003; Thwaites, 1998). The theme of the 'dual role' is revisited in Chapter 3 (Section 3.3) and explored in the data and discussion chapters.

### **2.4.3 *Development of music as a secondary school subject in New Zealand***

When New Zealand was first settled as a British colony, music education was initially developed along the lines of English music education and the English influence on music in New Zealand education, at all levels, has continued. It was reinforced, for example, in the period 1925 to 1928, when a Supervisor of School Musical Education was appointed to the Department of Education, and full-time lecturers in music began work at each of the four teachers' training colleges. All five appointees were Englishmen and they were expected to apply English methods of music education to New Zealand schools (Braatvedt, 2002).

Music, initially in the form of singing, has been a part of the primary school curriculum since state education began in New Zealand during the second part of the nineteenth century. Jansen (1966) points to the largely extrinsic purposes of music education at this period when he notes that at the turn of the twentieth century, music was useful for “its moral effect, its refining and cheering influence, its relaxing power after serious study, its capacity to cultivate the intelligence and for the creation of social amusements of an innocent character” (p. 30).

Music did not, however, become a compulsory subject in New Zealand secondary schools until 1945. The 1877 Education Act did not establish public secondary schools. Instead, post-primary education was initially privately run and was largely the prerogative of those wealthy enough to pay the fees. It was then up to the school authorities – especially the head teacher – to decide whether or not music was included as a part of the curriculum. In 1898, for example, there were 25 private secondary schools, but only 11 taught music (Jansen, 1966).

The provision of free post-primary education initially developed as an extension class, Standard VII, so called because it followed Standard VI, the final year of primary schooling. Thirty-five years later, R.E. McLay (cited in Braatvedt, 2002, p. 205) states in an article in the Education Gazette of June 1939 that “Music is still the Cinderella of the subjects in the school curriculum, and this is true of both primary and secondary schools”.

A number of factors led to music finally being included as a compulsory subject at secondary school. Initially the main focus of secondary schooling was to prepare young people for the university entrance exams, and the curriculum reflected that. In 1942 the University Senate accepted the accreditation<sup>8</sup> of University Entrance and that enabled a liberalisation of the secondary school curriculum. The Minister of Education, the Hon. H.G.R. Mason, set up the “Consultative Committee on the Post-Primary Curriculum”. This report, which became known as the Thomas Report, was presented to the minister in 1943 and embodied in regulations in 1945. The recommendations in relation to music built on what was already happening in many secondary schools. According to Braatvedt (2002), the Thomas Report also took into account the Spens Report in UK which stated that:

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<sup>8</sup> Accreditation of University Entrance was a form of internal assessment, by which students, (usually in Form 6) were deemed by their school principal to have met the conditions for entry into New Zealand universities, as set out by the Universities Entrance Board.

a more prominent and established place in the ordinary curricula of schools both for boys and girls should be assigned to aesthetic subjects, including music, art, and other forms of aesthetic training, and that special attention should be paid to developing the capacity for artistic appreciation as distinct from executive skill. (p. 220)<sup>9</sup>

The minimum time allotment recommended for third and fourth form pupils (years 9 and 10) was the equivalent of four 40 minute periods per week of music, art, or craft, and three periods for fifth formers. In addition to these recommendations, 1945 saw the inception of music as a subject for school certificate. Despite the changes instituted by the Thomas Report, Jensen (1949, cited in Braatvedt, 2002, p. 220) described music in secondary schools as “pathetic”. However, as Jansen (1966) points out, the lack of enough suitably qualified music teachers, coupled with a lack of commitment to the subject meant that in many schools music was no more than massed singing – sometimes with the entire school.

Although music became a compulsory part of the secondary school curriculum in 1945, it was not until a further 24 years later, in 1969, that the Director General of Education’s report was able to state: “The music lesson has changed from one of entertainment to a time for learning, using a wide variety of musical activities” (Braatvedt, 2002, p. 298). However, despite the shift in focus from recreation to learning, and the implementation of senior music courses, the 1968 Tait Report found that “most music education existed more by chance than by design” (Thwaites, 2008, p. 8).

Braatvedt (2002) suggests that music education in New Zealand made “great strides” during the 1950s and 60s which were “undoubtedly ... a time of unprecedented growth in school music” (p. 332). She notes that in that time New Zealand went a long way towards implementing the kind of music education programmes that were being provided in the UK and the United States. Even so, it is clear that the success of school music programmes was still dependent on adequate resourcing and support from principals and the availability of trained music teachers. Jansen (1978) asserts that the minimum time allocation for secondary school music classes, as laid down in the Thomas Report, soon became the maximum time scheduled in schools.

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<sup>9</sup> Note the connection here to the traditional approach to music education and its valuing of music appreciation.

By the time of publication of the 1989 Music Education Syllabus for schools, the aims of music education had shifted – in keeping with overseas approaches – to take account of the growing emphasis on the practical music skills of performance and composition. The stated aims of music education were “to involve people in the active, creative processes of making and listening to music, in ways that promote individual aesthetic growth and fulfilment”. The objectives were to “create music; re-create music; appreciate music” (Ministry of Education, 1990, p. 6).

#### **2.4.4 Status of music as an academic subject in New Zealand**

For much of its history, there has been a constant theme of lack of valuing of music education by educational authorities and school head teachers. One of the five major conclusions Braatvedt draws from her 2002 PhD thesis, *History of Music Education in New Zealand State Primary and Intermediate schools 1878-1989*, is that “Music education has been part of the New Zealand curriculum since the nineteenth century yet it has not been perceived as a ‘mainstream’ subject in the school curriculum” (Braatvedt, 2002, p. xvii).

Smith (2008) maintains that the reason for the curriculum marginalisation of music is the distinction “embedded still within the popular ethos” between “hard subjects” (p. 3) based on intellect and reasoning, and arts subjects which are perceived to be the province of emotion and feeling. Drummond (2003) suggests that one of the methods used to gain a more secure place for music as a ‘serious’ secondary school subject, has been to seek to ‘remake’ music along the lines of basic curriculum subjects<sup>10</sup>. He states that in New Zealand “for the past fifty years the arts have been applying to join the club of traditional ‘school subjects’ and, as occurs whenever one joins a club, the only way in is to show you can follow the club rules” (p. 54).

Drummond (2003) argues that the three step application process used by music educators to gain entry to the academic subject club can be clearly seen. A description of the process demonstrates the strong connection that secondary music education in New Zealand has had with the ‘traditional’ approach to music education that was described in the previous section of this chapter. The first step was to argue that music education is about Western art music, thus bringing the subject into line with the

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<sup>10</sup> David Elliott (1995), who was opposed to that course of action, contended that music educators, such as Reimer (2003), have considered that the ‘technical-rational’ procedures used for curriculum-making are appropriate for music. From Elliott’s perspective, because music is fundamentally different from the scholastic subjects, it would be extremely unwise to use the same curriculum process for music as for subjects such as science or maths.

“official tastes of the club committee” (p. 54). The second step was to demonstrate that music was being studied from an intellectual perspective. This led to an emphasis on music reading and the analysis of music as autonomous art works, with aesthetic value<sup>11</sup>. The final step in the process was to make sure that music as a curriculum subject was taught strictly in accordance with the rationalist view of education. This included the use of prescriptive goals, learning outcomes, and national examinations – none of which, in Drummond’s opinion, have much, if anything, to do with “either the practice of music, or its listening enjoyment” (p. 54).

Although music has been, to use Drummond’s terms, a ‘club member’ in New Zealand now for several decades, recent occurrences indicate that its place is still tenuously held. The introduction of the ANZC meant that music educators in the early 1990s had to assert music’s unique nature in a context in which a ‘generic arts’ subject was seen to be expedient. In addition, music educators had once again to argue the ‘academic’ value of music when, following the implementation of NCEA, the practical music domain was not included in the first group of subjects on the approved list for University Entrance (despite the fact that music had been included for the previous eight years).

#### **2.4.5 *Itinerant music***

The 1960s<sup>12</sup> saw the development of the Itinerant Teachers of Music (ITM) Programme which has played an increasingly dominant role in secondary school music education in New Zealand since that time. This programme is based in state and integrated secondary schools and area schools in New Zealand. Through it, students receive instrumental or vocal tuition during the school day. Students are released from their regular classes to attend their music lessons, which typically take place in small groups, once a week, for 20-30 minutes. From its inception, this programme provided musicians for school orchestras, bands and choirs. With the move to performance-based classroom music programmes, the work of the itinerant teachers has become more central to the success of classroom music programmes.

There are in fact two different groups of itinerant music teachers and the term ‘itinerants’ or ITMs is usually used for both. The majority of instrumental teachers are

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<sup>11</sup>When the Department of Education provided a subsidy to enable schools to purchase gramophones and (vinyl) records, only records approved by the Senior Inspector were permitted to be used in the schools (Jansen, 1966, p. 52). Braatvedt (2002) comments that “contemporary popular songs were not approved in the classrooms of the 1950s and 1960s” (p. 334).

<sup>12</sup> Carter (2003) states that the programme had its early beginnings in Auckland in the 1940s.

correctly known as 'instrumental tutors'. These teachers, many of whom are not trained or registered as classroom teachers, are employed directly by secondary schools<sup>13</sup>. They often work in a number of schools – sometimes for as little as two or three hours a week – and are paid by the hour. The 'true itinerants' fill the 67 permanent itinerant music positions in the country. Like instrumental tutors, they typically work in a number of schools. However, this group (who must be registered teachers) are attached to a host school, which oversees their work (Carter, 2003).

The roll-based staffing allowance for instrumental music tuition for secondary, area, composite and restricted composite schools is calculated using the following formula: Staffing roll x 0.001 FTTE (full-time teacher equivalent) rounded to two decimal places (Ministry of Education, 2012a).

#### **2.4.6 *Extra-curricular music***

In New Zealand, while music as a classroom subject has often been precarious, in many schools music has played, and continues to play, a significant role in the life of the school (Thwaites, 1998). The 1943 Thomas Report included amongst its reasons for introducing compulsory core music in secondary schools that it would "enhance the corporate life of the school" (Jansen, 1966, p. 135). Jansen (1966) comments that in the period following the Thomas Report, "many schools had a brass band, an orchestra, a pipe band or a school choir – usually all organised as extra-curricular activities" (p. 151).

As Plummeridge (2001) acknowledges, "arts activities can, of course, make a very useful contribution to a school's public image" (p. 28). In relation to New Zealand secondary schools, Thwaites (1998) noted that "the extra-curricular image that the music department portrays plays a significant role in the marketing of most schools" (p. 210). National events such as chamber music competitions, the Big Sing (a national choral competition for secondary schools), stage band and symphonic band competitions, and the Smokefree Rockquest (a national rock music competition) are often seen as a source of valuable promotion for schools.

Extra-curricular music also provides an avenue for both teachers and students to engage with music as an expressive art form. Jansen (1978) points to the fact that the

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<sup>13</sup> The New Zealand Teachers' Council requires such teachers to hold a 'Limited Authority to Teach' (LAT).

real life of music is, in fact, often to be found in such activities when he states that “the elective and extra-curricular musical activities show where and why the really alive music is going on” (p. 5).

## **2.5 Contemporary policy context**

The focus of this chapter now shifts to the immediate socio-political context in which the secondary teachers who participated in this study were situated.

### **2.5.1 Socio-political context of the curriculum**

At the point in time when teachers in this study were interviewed, education in New Zealand schools was regulated by *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (NZCF), which was introduced in 1993. Music education was governed by the allied curriculum statement *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (ANZC) (Ministry of Education, 2000)<sup>14</sup>.

These documents were developed during a period of significant change within New Zealand. During the last decades of the twentieth century, government policies within Western nations were variously being described as shaped by the combined forces of neo-liberalism, neo-conservatism and managerialism. Within New Zealand, changes touched every aspect of society and “from 1984 through to 1999 our country had unsuspectingly ‘imposed’ on it, one of the most rigid and extensive programmes of economic, social and cultural *structural adjustment* undertaken anywhere in the world” (A. M. O’Neill, Clark, & Openshaw, 2004, p. 32).

The implications of these policies for education were articulated by Apple (2004):

Neo-liberals argue that our educational policies should center around: the removal of schools from state and bureaucratic control; the enhancement of privatization and marketization; weakening the power of teachers and their unions; restoring what we supposedly all agree on as official knowledge; creating and enforcing mechanisms that guarantee measurable results; and the reconstruction of a people’s character based largely on individual entrepreneurial values. (p. 11)

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<sup>14</sup> These documents have since been replaced by *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007).

During the 1980s, comprehensive reviews of curriculum, assessment and educational administration were undertaken in response to concerns at the time that “school education in New Zealand had not adjusted rapidly enough to changes in society or to the growing demand for more equitable learning and assessment” (Ministry of Education, 1993, p. 27). The 1988 *Picot Report* ushered in *Tomorrow’s Schools*. It dissolved the Department of Education and replaced it with a smaller Ministry of Education; schools would be administered locally by Boards of Trustees who would create a charter – a form of contract between school, community and state. Curriculum reform led to the development of the NZCF and its associated seven learning areas. Reform in assessment and evaluation led to the establishment of the Education Review Office (ERO), the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and the replacement of the senior qualifications of School Certificate, Sixth Form Certificate and Bursary with the National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA).

Within this context, the Labour Government introduced the outcomes-driven *New Zealand Curriculum Framework*, which was closely modelled on the recently mandated curriculum in the United Kingdom, and which was, according to A.-M. O’Neill et al. (2004), “a highly prescriptive, bureaucratic and politically contentious model” (p. 37). Published in 1993, the NZCF became the foundation for learning in New Zealand schools. Although a product of very different times, the NZCF did retain some ideological and structural features from the first national curriculum in 1877. Knowledge was structured in terms of ‘subject areas’ – now termed ‘learning areas’ – and there remained a focus on the preparation of students for the workforce – always a high priority in New Zealand education. In her foreword to the document, Dr Maris O’Rourke, Secretary for Education, made the links to the workplace clear:

If we wish to progress as a nation, and to enjoy a healthy prosperity in today’s and tomorrow’s competitive world economy, our education system must adapt to meet these challenges. ... As we move towards the twenty-first century, with all the rapid technological change which is taking place, we need a work-force which is increasingly highly skilled and adaptable, and which has an international and multicultural perspective. (Ministry of Education, 1993, p. 1)

The NZCF embodied nine principles, which were intended to provide the direction for all teaching and learning. It also established the importance of ‘essential skills’<sup>15</sup>, which were to underpin learning in all areas. The curriculum created seven essential learning areas: health and physical well-being, social sciences, science, mathematics, language and languages, technology (a new learning area), and the arts. Between 1990 and 2000, a separate curriculum statement was released for each of the learning areas. The NZCF also set out the policy for assessment within schools, and at a national level. Perhaps the most radical innovation of the NZCF was the fact that every learning area was structured into eight ‘progressive’ levels, which spanned learning from year 1 to year 13<sup>16</sup>. At each level, achievement objectives were set to guide the nature of the learning.

In a critique of the NZCF, A.-M. O’Neill et al. (2004) contended that the framework was beset by a “multitude of competing [*sic*] values and discourses” (p. 43) all of which teachers had to try and take account of in their work, and that it did not “embrace an educational or pedagogically informed approach to teaching and learning” (p. 43). Learning outcomes and assessment had been divorced from pedagogies, and were now the key aspects governing teaching and learning. Teachers had “primarily become ‘technical functionaries’ whose professional judgements are subordinated to the regulatory or governing processes which control, evaluate and legitimate their teaching and performance (at its most extreme form in the NCEA)” (p. 43).

### **2.5.2 The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum**

*The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000)* (ANZC) was the last of the curriculum statements to be released<sup>17</sup>. It drew together dance, drama, music and the visual arts into a single learning area of ‘the arts’. This was a radical departure from previous practice in New Zealand, where art and music had occupied discrete places in the curriculum; dance was subsumed within physical education; and drama was a component of English.

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<sup>15</sup> The eight essential skills are: communication skills, social and cooperative skills, problem-solving skills, self-management and competitive skills, physical skills, information skills, numeracy skills, and work and study skills.

<sup>16</sup> There is an expectation that students will cover work in approximately the first 4 levels of the curriculum prior to entering secondary school. Years 9 and 10 focus at levels 4 and 5. External credentialing through NCEA ensures that year 11 is set at level 6, year 12 at level 7, and year 13 at level 8 of the curriculum.

<sup>17</sup> A parallel Māori language document entitled *Ngā Toi* was developed which was intended primarily for use in Māori immersion schools and bicultural classes.

The decision to amalgamate the four arts into one learning area followed similar curriculum moves in the United Kingdom. In the UK an attempt in 1998 by policy makers to go further and create a generic arts “subject” comprising music, visual arts and other performing arts was very nearly successful. In reflecting on the situation, Cox (2001) comments that music educators were “given a jolt when their subject had to fight for its life in a battle with the social efficiency tendencies of a government determined to prioritise ‘the basics’” (p. 20).

Mindful of the experience of UK music educators, members of the New Zealand Society for Music Education (NZSME)<sup>18</sup> published a very strong response to the idea of the arts as a single learning area:

We resolutely oppose any suggestion that the learning, teaching, training and course content of those art-forms can be integrated at a fundamental level. Each has its own discipline, its own history, its own corpus of materials, its own language, and each must be studied thoroughly and in its own terms. There may well be ways in which collaboration between the art-forms can take place as a part of the learning and training process, but there must be separate, self-contained programmes and assessment procedures for the individual art-forms involved. (New Zealand Society for Music Education, September 1995, p. 30)

In their response to the draft arts curriculum document, the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators (ANZAAE) called for the complete abandonment of the curriculum statement, and a new one to be developed (ANZAAE, 1999, p. 4). Their request was not granted, and *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* was published in 2000, and mandated from 2002.

Although it treated the arts as one learning area, the ANZC did, in fact, retain separate discipline structures for each of the four arts; thus within the document, each has a separate statement. There was, however, a necessity to find some common organisational structure and this was done through the development of four generic strands, and through the adoption of the notion of ‘literacies’ in the arts. In relation to the strands, the curriculum states that “learning within each discipline is approached through four interrelated strands: Developing Practical Knowledge in the Arts,

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<sup>18</sup>In 2004, NZSME was restructured into three bodies: MENZA, a music subject association, METANZ, a music advocacy body, and MERC, a National Centre for Research in Music Education launched in 2006 and based at Canterbury University.

Developing Ideas in the Arts, Communicating and Interpreting in the Arts, Understanding the Arts in Context” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 13). Achievement objectives were provided for each level in each of the four strands.

The ANZC text maintains that:

Students develop literacy in each discipline as they:

- explore and use its elements, conventions, processes, techniques, and technologies;
- draw on a variety of sources of motivation to develop ideas and make art works;
- present and respond to art works, developing skills in conveying and interpreting meaning;
- investigate the discipline and art works in relation to their social and cultural contexts. (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 10)

No content was prescribed, although a series of ‘learning examples’ at each level did provide teachers with some suggestions of the kinds of learning opportunities they might create. However, taken together, the strands and literacies pointed to the major modes in which learning would occur. These modes reflected the broader-based approaches to music education discussed in the earlier part of this chapter, providing a focus on composition, performance, the study of music works in their social and cultural contexts and the development of practical knowledge of the elements, techniques and technologies of music. The curriculum placed value on the study of Māori music, the use of music technology, and stressed the importance of placing all music within its social and cultural contexts. Thwaites (2003) considered that the music curriculum differed from the 1989 Syllabus it replaced by moving from a behaviourist intent of ‘create, re-create, appreciate’ to a critical, postmodern perspective, whereby schools were challenged to view the arts as social texts.

The music curriculum statement made it clear that music from any style, tradition, or cultural context could be included for classroom study. Lines and Naughton (2002), in a response to the ANZC, acknowledged its role in paving the way for the study of a diverse range of music:

The traditional ‘canon’ of music has now been directly challenged. ... In our view, New Zealand schools are now to consider seriously all musics in their programmes including contemporary genres, popular musics, media music hybrids, music technology, combined arts and the integration of Māori and

Pacific music. Schools can no longer comfortably continue to present a structured and analytical 'classical' curriculum of music performance and learning as the dominant mode. They must start to find honest and evolving musical expressions of the cultural environments their schools are situated in. In the previous syllabus [1989], the emphasis was more 'holistic' and 'inclusive' and schools were not specifically challenged to change their modes of music operation. ... Music education must be understood as a rich practical combination of developing knowledge, performing, composing, improvising, arranging, directing, interpreting, making connections, listening and contextual understanding. (pp. 73-74)

However, other commentators suggest that the curriculum was compromised by its very structure (with its levels, outcomes, and achievement objectives) and by the fact that music was still primarily conceived of in terms of the discrete and separate roles of composer, performer, listener which are a hallmark of the Western art tradition (see for example 2008). Drummond (2003) points to the tensions inherent in fitting music into the curriculum model, stating that:

While the curriculum writers have struggled to maintain in the document the ways of thinking, ways of knowing and ways of doing that are unique to music, it has been a losing struggle. Inevitably so, perhaps, for it may well be impossible to join the traditional rationalist Western education system without compromising that 'unique way of knowing' that characterises arts activity. (p. 55)

### **2.5.3 Senior school music components and credentialing requirements**

The New Zealand Ministry of Education describes assessment as "the process of gathering, analysing, interpreting and using information about students' progress and achievement to improve teaching and learning" (Ministry of Education, 2011b). In the senior school<sup>19</sup>, assessment is linked to national secondary school qualifications and at the time that the teachers in this study were interviewed, senior assessment took place through the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). NCEA is an outcomes- or standards-based model of assessment which can be defined as measuring "the performance of a learner against set standards of achievement or

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<sup>19</sup> In NZ secondary schools, the term 'junior school' typically refers to years 9 and 10 (students aged approximately 13-15) and the 'senior school' to years 11, 12 and 13 (students aged approximately 15-18).

competence” (Anderson, 2000, p. 1). It was phased in during successive years – level 1 (at year 11) in 2002, level 2 (year 12) in 2003, level 3 (year 13) in 2004.

NCEA replaced the norm-referenced qualifications of School Certificate, Sixth Form Certificate and University Bursary. Under NCEA, assessment in all subject areas is modularised into ‘standards’ – either achievement standards or unit standards. Unit standards were developed before achievement standards, and were devised to “encourage the learner to take responsibility for their own learning” (Thwaites, 1996, p. 50). The first music unit standards were registered on the National Qualifications Framework in 1996<sup>20</sup>. Unit standards are fully internally assessed, and operate solely on pass/fail criteria, with no differentiation between levels of achievement.

Unit standards presented some difficulties “due to the vocational emphasis which [did] not necessarily suit general education subjects and the actual competency focus of assessment inherent in the achieve/not yet achieved methodology” (Dunmill, 2000, pp. 34-35). In 1998 the Qualifications Development Group (QDG) was established and oversaw the development and implementation of Achievement Standards. Achievement Standards have been written for all ‘traditional’ school subjects, and contain a mix of internally and externally assessed Standards, through which students can gain ‘achieve’, ‘merit’ or ‘excellence’. At the point in time when the fieldwork for this study was undertaken, Unit Standards typically served ‘non-standard’ subjects, although (as was the case of music) in some subject areas there were both Unit Standards and Achievement Standards fulfilling an almost identical function<sup>21</sup>.

#### **2.5.4 Assessment in senior music**

In music, NCEA assessment was initially based, to a very large extent, on the existing School Certificate and University Bursary assessment prescriptions, which had undergone significant changes from the mid-1990s. Prior to that period, prescriptions for senior music qualifications were based largely on an ‘academic’ approach, which did not include practical components of composition and performance. New Zealand practice mirrored that described by Finney (2002), who comments that “at examination level certain kinds of knowledge, such as well-codified harmonic progressions and melodic patternings, musical historical truths and established interpretations of music,

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<sup>20</sup>On the development of unit standards in music see Thwaites (2001).

<sup>21</sup>As a consequence of the process put in place by NZQA (from 2009) to align NCEA Standards with the 2007 *New Zealand Curriculum*, many unit standards are being deleted, and/or replaced by achievement standards.

qualified as being assessable” (p. 121). In 1972 aural skills were introduced into School Certificate and performance became a ‘co-requisite’ for senior students – although it was not assessed.

In 1993, following initiatives taken by groups of teachers in Wellington and Christchurch who had rejected the lack of practical music opportunities<sup>22</sup>, the School Certificate prescription was changed to include 40% performance and 20% composition – both of which were to be internally assessed by teachers. This change had a significant impact on the numbers of students studying music. Carter (2003) comments that following the introduction of practical music in School Certificate, student numbers more than tripled. Changes to the Bursary prescription followed in 1995. An internally assessed practical component of performance and composition was introduced, and students could choose to weight the percentage of each at 20/40, 30/30 or 40/20). The internal assessment from both School Certificate and Bursary was moderated nationally each year, and results were adjusted by the moderation process. Sixth Form Certificate sat between School Certificate and Bursary as a year in which student assessment took place internally. Although teachers had some freedom in the creation of the course, the available grades were based directly on schools’ overall results the previous year in School Certificate.

NCEA modularised the music programme into standards for performance (both group and solo), composition (which included arranging at level 3), the analysis of music works (including works from New Zealand and an exploration of the social, historical and political contexts of the works), aural skills, and knowledge of the materials of music (requiring music reading and theory skills).

Although the ostensible purpose of NCEA is to assess student work, in practice NCEA “now dominates teaching” (A.-M. O’Neill et al., 2004, p. 39). It drives what counts as knowledge, what is taught, and how it is taught. Abbs (2003) cites a personal communication from arts scholar Edwin Webb, who asserts that “teachers are driven by the needs of assessment to the extent that assessment itself now preponderantly *drives* education” (p. 59).

In addition to driving the music curriculum, NCEA also creates a context in which students’ work is assessed for grading purposes. This can create a point of tension for

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<sup>22</sup> See Thorpe (2007) for further discussion of this.

those music teachers who share Elliott's (1995) philosophy that "the primary function of assessment in music education is not to determine grades but to provide accurate feedback to students about the quality of their growing musicianship" (p. 264).

## **2.6 Chapter summary**

The purpose of this chapter has been to provide an overview of the social, historical, political and educational context in which secondary school music teaching in New Zealand is currently situated. It has shown that while music has been a feature of all human societies, its meaning and value are nonetheless difficult to articulate. Furthermore, music education, whilst forming part of educational curricula within the Western world for centuries, remains, at the outset of the twenty-first century, both somewhat marginalised and inherently unsure of its status and core purposes.

The New Zealand context in which secondary school music teachers are situated is complex. It has been heavily influenced by music education traditions brought from overseas, in particular from England and Western Europe. Within these traditions, three broad approaches to music education can be identified, each resting on its own particular theories about the nature, purposes and educational aims of music. The traditional approach privileges Western art music. It views music as a product – a 'work' – to be appreciated by way of an aesthetic experience, which is not necessarily attainable by all. In the classroom, traditional approaches favour the development of skills via the appreciation of the music of the masters. By contrast, progressive music education starts from the premise that all children can act as creators of music. It promotes the development of musical ideas through active participation in music making, improvisation and composition. More broad-based approaches to music education promote the experience of music through the modes of performance, composition and listening. Such approaches are inclusive of music from all cultures. It is on this approach that modern music curricula – including the ANZC – have been built.

Contemporary music education is influenced by cultural forces such as multiculturalism, youth culture, electronic communication, feminism, secularism, niche cultures and postmodernism, which are challenging both the content and process of school music education. The often tenuous place that music education occupies in schools has been influenced by views on what 'counts' as valuable knowledge.

Whereas Western knowledge and educational practice rest to a very large extent on the supremacy of rational thinking, musical knowledge enters the world of the aesthetic through feelings and emotions.

Within New Zealand secondary schools, music has had a long search for legitimacy as a classroom subject. It was initially included only in those schools where authorities valued it and were able to attract music teachers. The 1943 Thomas Report made core music compulsory and instigated School Certificate music. Although music has remained a classroom subject from that time, its educational aims, and purposes have varied and its status as an 'academic' subject has remained tenuous. Running alongside classroom music programmes, extra-curricular music activities also have a long history in New Zealand secondary schools. Such activities, which are seen to contribute to the corporate life of the school, also provide students and teachers with the opportunities to make music together. The provision of music lessons through the itinerant programme has also been a feature of New Zealand secondary schools since the mid-twentieth century.

The radical educational reforms of the 1980s and 90s which introduced the NZCF and the ANZC repositioned music as one of 'the arts'. The curriculum became inclusive of all musics, and placed emphasis on the development of practical music skills. At the same time, the establishment of NCEA early this century effectively modularised music courses and cemented the place of performance and composition skills.



# **Chapter 3**

## **Teachers' work and music education**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Chapter 2 provided an introduction to the context in which New Zealand secondary school music teachers are positioned, by means of an historical overview of secondary school music education, and an examination of current policy contexts in which New Zealand secondary school teaching occurs. The purpose of this chapter is to review relevant theoretical and empirical research studies that illuminate the practical strategies teachers deploy in response to workgroup, institutional, community and system demands.

The tensions of practice that secondary school music teachers encounter in their working lives are multifaceted. This study examines aspects of the teachers' identity. It examines the teachers' daily lives and how they were influenced by their working conditions, their particular school context, and the immediate context of secondary school music education. It also examines emotional aspects of teaching, such as motivation and satisfaction, stress and burnout.

Each of these areas is informed by a significant body of research. It is beyond the scope of this project to provide a detailed review of each body of literature, and thus a selection has been made according to that literature which best serves the study. Literature relating to the three areas of tension in practice is presented thematically under five major headings: secondary school music teaching and teachers; teachers' workload; emotional aspects of teaching; teachers, identity and community; and contexts of teaching. Sections include a brief overview of relevant literature and a closer examination of selected studies or bodies of work. Studies selected for closer review fitted some, or all, of the following three criteria: relevance to the New Zealand context; to the context of secondary school music teaching; and to important themes which emerged during the analysis of data. This last criterion is in keeping with the process of qualitative research in which "researchers build toward theory from observations and intuitive understandings gained in the field" (Merriam, 1998, p. 7).

Much of the research relating specifically to music teaching and teachers is included in Section 3.2. However, where studies are related to a specific theme discussed later in the chapter – for example the study on stress by Hodge, Jupp and Taylor (1994) – such studies are grouped with other studies on the same theme.

## **3.2 Secondary school music teaching and teachers**

Although the international research literature includes a number of large-scale studies into secondary school teaching in music and/or the arts, no large-scale study specifically devoted to secondary school music education, or to the lives of secondary school music teachers, has been undertaken in New Zealand. New Zealand was, however, a member of an international survey, *The Arts, Creativity and Cultural Education: An International Perspective* (Sharp & Le Metais, 2000). Findings from this study are presented, along with the results of several surveys and studies undertaken by groups such as the Institute of Registered Music Teachers of New Zealand (IRMTNZ) and Music Education New Zealand Aotearoa (MENZA), and by students completing higher degrees. Several of the New Zealand studies post-date the data gathering phase of this current research project. The findings of these later studies have been included here, as they provide a valuable means of testing the evidence from this research.

Given the close historical relationship between classroom music in New Zealand and the United Kingdom, and New Zealand's close ties to Australia, the findings of major studies into school music education undertaken in those countries have some relevance this study. This section therefore begins with a brief examination of some key themes that arose from those studies.

### **3.2.1 Large scale studies of secondary school music teaching**

In the United Kingdom, one of the most extensive studies into arts education was undertaken between 1968 and 1972 by the *Schools Council's Arts and the Adolescent Project*<sup>23</sup>. Major findings from the review were that “music faces possibly the sternest task of all the traditional arts subjects” (Ross, 1975, p. 51) and that “music teachers in schools generally are in desperate need of a clearer understanding of, and greater

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<sup>23</sup> This project gave rise to two texts: *The Arts and the Adolescent* by Malcolm Ross (1975) and *The Intelligence of Feeling* by Robert Witkin (1974).

unanimity over, their educational function” (p. 54). The disjunction between the musical culture of the students, who were immersed in their own particular musical idiom, and that of their teachers, the majority of whom received their musical education and teacher training within the domain of Western art music, was signalled as a significant issue. The research findings also pointed to the demands inherent in the study of music itself – such as the need for students to develop practical instrumental and music reading skills.

The *Schools Council Project for Music in the Secondary School Curriculum*, for which hundreds of music teachers and advisers met together over several years, emerged from the previous project undertaken by the Schools Council<sup>24</sup>. One finding of that study was that in many schools no connection existed between class music and extra-curricular music activities, and that at times teachers felt constrained to slant their programmes to extra-curricular music programmes and the needs of talented music students (Paynter, 1982).

*Arts Education in Secondary Schools: Effects and Effectiveness* (Harland et al., 2000) was a major study which drew on four different sources of qualitative and quantitative data about music, art and drama from 152 secondary schools in England and Wales. While “the overarching messages from this extensive examination of the effects of arts education are that the arts, well taught by enthusiastic, specialist teachers, do generate a range of desirable learning outcomes for pupils, for the school, employment and the local community” (Harland et al., 2000, p. ii), the study found significant inequalities between schools in the provision of arts education, and it painted a rather depressing picture, particularly in relation to music education, which it found to be “the most problematic and vulnerable art form” (p. 568). School music was often considered by the students to have limited relevance or significance for them and did not provide opportunities for enjoyment and the development of their own musical skills and expressiveness. Music in the senior school was perceived by students to become progressively more exclusive and less engaging and in general it attracted very low numbers.

In relation to the teaching of the arts, the study pointed to the significance of the person of the teacher, finding that within the arts, individual teacher factors are probably of greater significance in creating positive results for students than whole school factors

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<sup>24</sup> The outcomes of this report were unorthodox and written up in the form of a text, which became widely used, entitled *Music in the secondary school curriculum* (Paynter, 1982).

and that effective arts teachers provide a highly affirming and supportive praise culture. The authors found that students often perceived the success of arts lessons to be dependent on the extent to which they engaged with practical 'doing' activities. Students appreciated being able to learn "through *doing their own thing*" (p. 570), and spoke of the personal satisfaction they gained from being creative, developing ideas and producing their own individual outcomes.

A large scale study, the *National Review of School Music Education: Augmenting the Diminished* (Pascoe et al., 2005) was undertaken in Australia in response to significant concerns about school music education. In her foreword to the report, Professor Margaret Searles concluded:

Sadly though, while the submissions and surveys revealed some fine examples of school music programmes, they also reveal cycles of neglect and inequity which impacts to the detriment of too many young Australians, particularly those in geographically and socially disadvantaged areas. The research has revealed patchiness in opportunities for participation in music, significant variability in the quality of teaching and teacher education, a need for much greater support for music teachers, and unintended detrimental impacts on music education arising from changes in the place of music within the overall curriculum. Overall, the quality and status of music in schools is patchy at best, and reform is demonstrably needed. (Pascoe et al., 2005, p. iii)

These themes of the vulnerability of music within the school curriculum, of patchy provision of opportunities for students, of the significance of the 'person' of the music teacher, were echoed in the international survey to which New Zealand contributed. *The Arts, Creativity and Cultural Education: An International Perspective* (Sharp & Le Metais, 2000) drew on information from nineteen educational systems, including New Zealand, to provide a comparative analysis of the arts, creativity and cultural education<sup>25</sup>.

Although the arts were seen as being an essential component in the curriculum, and some form of arts education was a compulsory component in all nineteen educational systems, nevertheless, all participants from all countries expressed concern about the

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<sup>25</sup> The report is based on information from the INCA Archive (which provides detailed descriptions of different educational systems), together with discussions at a seminar, held in July 2000.

relative status and value accorded to arts subjects in schools. The issue of the low status of arts subjects recurred as a “constant theme” (Sharp & Le Metais, 2000, p. 16) along with the “urgent need to raise the status of the arts at all levels” (p. 15). The amount of time allocated to the arts was seen to be an issue, because it “may be too small and/or too fragmented to offer a coherent experience of the arts” (p. 6). The authors found that the numbers of secondary school students taking the arts as elective subjects is often small, with high achieving students often “encouraged to study ‘academic’ subjects as opposed to the arts” (p. 6). The study also acknowledged that while students are entitled to an arts education within school time, extra-curricular activities – those organised outside class time – have a great deal to offer students. In this relation, however, the authors noted that the work involved for teachers needs to be recognised, because “such programmes require considerable planning, organisation and support” (p. 11).

In the area of teacher support, the report found that there is a need to offer secondary teachers curriculum guidance, teaching materials, and opportunities to develop their own skills and to “replenish their own creativity” (p. iii).

### **3.2.2 *New Zealand studies of music teaching and teachers***

In a Master of Education study entitled *Music Education in New Zealand Secondary Schools: Crisis or Crucible*, Thwaites (1998) examined challenges facing secondary school music education. He speculated that the ‘crucible’ created by the changes to schooling “might bring about the creation of a new discourse for music education and new perceptions of the worth of music in schooling” (p. 3).

Thwaites’ thesis was written in the 1990s at the point in time when practical music making was being introduced into School Certificate and Bursary courses, when the first unit standards were being introduced, and during the time that the ANZC was being developed<sup>26</sup>. He found that there was little doubt that the introduction of internal assessment had significantly increased teachers’ workloads and that music teachers “work in constrained circumstances, working alone because of administrative or other situational constraints” (p. 183).

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<sup>26</sup> Thwaites was a member of the groups responsible for the development of the ANZC and the creation of music unit standards.

Thwaites (1998) suggested that the music teacher's role was changing, as teachers moved from the role of a professional to that of an entrepreneur. He reported that "music teachers are part of a group whose unpaid labour generally contributes to a schools' [sic] atmosphere, spirit and marketability" (p. 191) and that the dual role of being in charge of both curriculum and extra-curricular music that music teachers carried, had become an expectation which tended to be "tolerated in silence" (p. 188). Teachers often worked through their breaks and lunchtimes, and, especially before musical events such as productions or concerts, they often worked in evenings and at the weekend. Their workload impacted on their personal, family and social lives. Thwaites' findings in relation to the heavy workload created by the dual role carried by music teachers echoes the situation in the UK. Swanwick (1999), for example, commented that "doing both jobs of music teacher and director of music rolled into one is onerous, especially when people are only paid for one of them" (p. 102).

Rohan (2011) for a doctoral thesis that examined the ways in which cultural diversity informs music education practices, interviewed music teachers from secondary schools within New Zealand, Australia and the United States. She found that while teachers believed that Western art music should not be privileged within classroom music teaching, their students had a limited understanding of musics beyond their own cultures. The implications for classroom teachers were that they needed to offer greater breadth and depth in their programmes. This, however, has workload implications and highlights the fact that the inner requirements of the world of music may be greater than the capacity of classroom systems to enact.

J. P. Scott (2006), as part of a Masters of Education degree, undertook a study of the leadership of one secondary HOD Music. He found the work of the HOD to be complex, consisting of many different tasks and expectations, and that HODs should receive adequate training for all the facets of their role. He also considered that senior managers be encouraged to find ways in which they could support the HOD Music and provide time and space for extra-curricular activities. It is of interest to note that Bennet (2008) cites as a major issue for first time subject leaders in New Zealand secondary schools, a lack of structured support and development for the role.

MENZA (2009) undertook a *National Secondary Music Education Survey* online, to which 137 secondary music teachers responded. The survey showed that at year 9, 61% of schools had some kind of compulsory course, and 39% provided an optional music course for students who were looking to take music as a senior subject. At year

10 only 56% of teachers reported that they had a full-year music course, with others generally reporting that their courses ranged from one to three terms. While teachers' comments indicated that some were happy with the provision of music in the junior school, many were concerned at the number and configuration of timetabled hours, at the level of resourcing provided for music, and at the wide range of prior learning that students brought into their classes. At the senior level, the need to teach multi-level courses was raised as an issue by many respondents. Just over one third of the teachers – 35.4% – reported that they were teaching year 12 and 13 students together in one class. A further 13.4% were teaching years 11, 12 and 13 together in the same class.

### 3.2.2.1 *Studies of itinerant teaching*

Part of the responsibility of secondary music teachers is the management of the itinerant music scheme. Thus studies into music itinerancy are of relevance to this current project.

In 1995 the Council of the Institute of Registered Music Teachers of New Zealand surveyed their membership (Field, 1997). They found that approximately 75% of their members had some involvement with secondary school music education courses, many acting as itinerant teachers. Adequate communication between school music teachers and IRMT members was found to be an issue. "In most cases it is left with the pupil to communicate information about the performance course to the tutor. It is not clear who has the responsibility of informing their tutor about dates for performance assessments" (Field, 1997, p. 28). These findings were echoed by Carter (2003) in her Master of Teaching and Learning study entitled *Itinerant Teachers of Music: A State of Flux*. She found that the three dominant aspects of itinerancy were "temporality, invisibility and adaptability" (p. 75), that there were "problems in maintaining the fragile relationship between ITMs and HODs Music" (p. 78), and that communication about performance dates, reports, and changes to school routines was often poor.

Concerned at the situation pertaining to the provision of itinerant lessons, a group of secondary school teachers conducted an online survey with HODs and TICs in 2009 (Survey Group, 2009). Of the 47 responses, 74% came from state schools, with the remainder from state integrated and private schools. All decile types were represented and school rolls ranged between 60 and 2300 students. In response to the question, "Please describe who contributes financially to your itinerant programme", 46% of respondents stated that the programme in their school was funded purely from the

Ministry of Education allocation for itinerant teaching. Twenty-two percent indicated that the Board of Trustees topped up funding, and 39% stated that students contributed financially in some way to their lessons. The teachers' comments indicated that many needed more hours than were available, with some schools running waiting lists. Many teachers also found it difficult to target funding for both their juniors and seniors who were studying music for NCEA.

The MENZA survey undertaken in 2009 echoed these findings in relation to itinerant teaching. Of the 137 respondents, 88.5% stated that they had more students wanting music lessons than they could accommodate. In relation to the kinds of lessons offered, 73.1% of itinerant teachers took individual lessons, 81.5% provided tuition to groups of up to four, and 42.9% ran groups of over four students. The survey also found that 42.9% of itinerant teachers were involved in some way with extra-curricular music activities (MENZA, 2009).

Baker (2005a, 2005b, 2006) conducted a life history inquiry in England into the lives of 28 instrumental and vocal music service teachers - the equivalent of itinerant music teachers in New Zealand. The inquiry took place between October 2002 and March 2004 and the participants, who were aged from 22 to 60, represented a range of disciplines and professional positions. Music service teachers are employed by a Local Educational Authority (LEA) and provide lessons in both primary and secondary schools. In common with New Zealand secondary school practice, students are withdrawn from regular classes for group music tuition. However, whereas charges for itinerant tuition are not legal in New Zealand, in the UK the situation is somewhat different. A 1988 Education Reform Act had prohibited schools from charging for all extra-curricular learning, with the exception of individual instrumental tuition, but a 1993 Act extended permitted charges to group instrumental tuition of up to four pupils (Baker, 2005a).

Baker (2005a, 2005b, 2006) found that amongst music service teachers, strong parental influence was often a key factor in early motivation for music learning. Early motivation was also influenced by participation in community or extra-curricular music ensembles. Many found their classroom learning experiences to have been unrewarding. Many music service teachers did not undertake teacher training at the outset of their career and tended to model their personal teaching style on their own positive experiences of being taught. Baker (2005a) in developing a five phase career-course model found that teachers in phase 2 (ages 26-35) often experienced personal

isolation and found that some schools did not manage instrumental lessons well. Typical problems related to group size and teaching spaces.

### **3.2.3 Secondary school music teachers' lives**

There are very few studies specifically focused on the lives of secondary school music teachers. This point was underlined by Cox (1999) when he asserted that “we know very little about the opinions or professional lives of teachers who teach music in secondary schools” (p. 37). He conducted a study which aimed to “investigate the realities of the working lives of a small group of secondary school music teachers” (p. 37) in the United Kingdom. He interviewed, using semi-structured interviews, ten experienced music teachers, most of whom were heads of department.

Cox (1999) found that a central dilemma experienced by the teachers was between the personal commitment they made to their work, and the lack of recognition they received in their careers. There was little evidence that the music teachers wanted to pursue a musical career outside of school. They saw rather that their own music making was important for their teaching. What seemed to matter most was their ability to make music in school and thereby have a personal influence on the institution. However, the low status of music within their schools was a constant theme.

The teachers' satisfactions were congruent with Huberman's (1993b) findings that teachers are typically motivated by love of their own subject area and their desire to work with young people. Cox (1999) noted that several of the teachers gained considerable personal satisfaction from shaping their job so that it became a reflection of their own identity: “For several of my informants their overall contribution to the life of a school became a personal symbol of their creativity, a means of defining themselves” (p. 43).

Issues which caused the teachers difficulty included ill discipline in the classroom, clashes of values between participants and students, lack of resources, the physical demands of the job, the need to create work-life balance, and the demands of the extra-curricular role. Cox (1999) noted that “extra-curricular work, which presents the public face of the school to the community, can frequently necessitate a large investment of the music teacher's time” (p. 42). The study argued that the concerns of secondary school music teachers require more attention and concluded that radical

thought needs to be given to the role of secondary school music teachers, and that this may require some redefinition of the role in the future so that new ways of working can be generated.

Further studies of music teachers' lives are included in Section 3.4.2 and Section 3.5.1.

### **3.3 Teachers' workload**

This chapter now broadens its focus from an examination of studies specific to secondary music teaching to an exploration of more general research into the working lives and conditions of school teachers, and in particular those working within the secondary sector. There is limited literature relating specifically to the secondary music teacher, but a survey of the general situation pertaining to the profession as a whole is important in order to set a context for this study.

#### **3.3.1 Expansion and intensification of teachers' roles**

There is a large, and expanding, body of literature which suggests that from the latter part of the twentieth century, schools and the teachers who work in them have been subject to continual and escalating pressures (see for example Bartlett, 2004; Osborn & Broadfoot, 1992). In New Zealand, the neo-liberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s resulted in the fundamental reshaping of school governance, management, curriculum and senior assessment, as outlined in Chapter 2 (Section 2.5). This country has not been immune to global pressures on schooling caused – to use A. Hargreaves' (1994) words – by the divide between “an increasingly postindustrial, postmodern world, characterized by accelerating change, intense compression of time and space, cultural diversity, technological complexity, national insecurity and scientific uncertainty” (p. 3) and the “modernistic, monolithic school system” (p. 3) which is “cumbersome and unwieldy” (p. 4).

Two terms are consistently used in the literature to describe the pressures on teachers' roles: role *expansion* (Lieberman & Miller, 1999) and *intensification* (A. Hargreaves, 1994). Specific factors contributing to an intensified and expanded workload include issues of student welfare caused by social disruption, concerns with discipline, changes to teacher professionalism and leadership, and the need to comply with, and be accountable for, reforms of curriculum, assessment, and school governance (Bloor

& Harker, 1995; Dinham & Scott, 1996; Ingvarson et al., 2005; Murfitt, 1995; NZCER, 2002, 2003; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2001; Trethaway, 2001).

The authors of the *Teacher 2000 Project* (Dinham & Scott, 1996), an international study into teacher satisfaction, motivation and health, undertaken in Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the USA, concluded that “no amount of ‘positive thinking’, ‘working smarter’, or other ‘fashionable solutions’ could relieve the ‘intensification’ ... of teachers’ work” (Ingvarson et al., 2005, p. 27). This expansion and intensification of teachers’ roles has been reflected particularly in the workload of teachers.

### **3.3.2 Workload of New Zealand teachers**

In New Zealand, the issue of teacher workloads has been a matter of ongoing debate between the government and teacher associations, just as it has overseas (Galton & MacBeath, 2008, p. 98). A number of research studies commissioned by the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers’ Association (PPTA) track the workload of secondary teachers. A survey by Bloor & Harker (1995) of secondary workloads, found that participants perceived their workloads to have increased from a moderate load in 1991 to an extremely heavy load in 1995. In 1995, assistant teachers worked an average of 47.5 hours a week – seven more than the 40.3 hours which was considered reasonable. Middle managers (including heads of department and faculty), worked on average 55 hours per week and perceived themselves to have been disproportionately affected by changes in workload. The authors noted that the workload averages, in fact, represented a very wide variation in the actual workloads of individual teachers. Further findings showed that over two-thirds of the teachers surveyed indicated that increased workloads had negatively influenced the calibre of their teaching and had also led to increased levels of emotional stress, declining physical health and decreased quality of family life. Well over half of the teachers (61.3%) indicated that if given the choice, they would leave the teaching profession (Bloor & Harker, 1995, pp. iii-iv).

Since 2000, ongoing changes to the curriculum and the introduction of NCEA have placed further pressure on secondary workloads. A large scale study (Ingvarson et al., 2005) was commissioned in 2004 during the re-negotiation of the secondary teachers’ collective contract. It included a survey of 1,500 teachers and a number of in-depth case studies, and was undertaken by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). In relation to ‘actual’ workload, the findings from the survey did not differ much

from the 1995 Bloor and Harker survey. Assistant teachers' work averaged 47 hours and middle managers 52 hours. Findings from the case studies indicated that assistant teachers worked on average 43 hours per week, and middle managers 51 hours (Ingvarson et al., 2005).

The study introduced a new measure of 'perceived manageability' of workload, which was designed to measure work satisfaction and its impact on health and well-being. Findings from this suggested that middle managers were less satisfied with their workload than either senior managers or assistant teachers. Fifty-seven percent of middle managers perceived their workloads to be unmanageable; 63% did not have good balance between home and work; 77% felt that their workload was affecting the quality of their teaching; 84% felt their workload was heavy; 71% felt they could not do what they needed to do in a reasonable time; 23% were thinking of leaving their school because of the workload; 40% felt they had little time to get to know their students well; 70% felt they had no time to provide professional support to colleagues; 27% were thinking of leaving teaching because of the workload; and 47% felt their workload was adversely affecting their health .

The study further found that the most significant stressors affecting middle managers were the number of hours they spent at school, the amount of non-contact time they had available, the amount of paperwork their position required, the level of resources available to them, and the management of relationships with colleagues and parents. All teachers interviewed for the case studies said that they needed more clerical and administrative support, and that NCEA – particularly the paperwork involved – was a major factor in workload (Ingvarson et al., 2005).

A number of small scale New Zealand studies have explored workload related issues. Barrett (2008), for example, examined the impact of NCEA on collegiality, and her findings suggested that the introduction of NCEA had in fact encouraged a deepening of collegiality. Wright (2002) in a narrative study of three English teachers who were Heads of Department explored the constraints these teachers experienced in enacting effective leadership in the classroom and within their department. She perceived that lack time for leadership to be a critical issue.

The *International Teacher 2000 Project* also measured teacher satisfaction. The contributing New Zealand report (Harker, Gibbs, Ryan, Weir, & Adams, 1998) suggested that secondary teachers were less satisfied than primary teachers, and that

they perceived their working conditions and their general level of support had deteriorated. The study further found, however, that despite “great dissatisfaction with government and infrastructure support, many teachers [found] the rewards of working with students and contributing to their learning and development sufficiently satisfying to keep them in the job” (Harker et al., 1998, p. 55).

### **3.3.3 Explanations of work overload**

Bartlett (2004) explored the two main theories of overwork in family/work literature in relation to teachers in US secondary schools. She found that the teachers in her study were experiencing an expanded work role and that neither of the generally accepted theories as to the causes of work overload fully explained why the teachers in her study overworked. Juliet Schor’s economic argument that overwork is motivated by the desire for increased income, did not explain the teachers’ overwork, as they generally did not receive greater remuneration for working additional hours. Neither did Hotchschild’s theory – that people overwork because work rewards and satisfactions outweigh home satisfactions – fully address the issue. Bartlett (2004) found that “teachers trade their long hours for neither high incomes nor added workplace comforts and services” (pp. 575-576), and that they work in an “emotionally and interpersonally intense environment” (p. 575), engaging with large numbers of students, often with inadequate resources, spaces and personal breaks.

Bartlett (2004) proposed “a further, but partial explanation [of teachers’ overwork] by attributing overwork to teachers’ efforts to sustain a particular conception of teaching obligations in the absence of sufficient organizational support” (p. 576). She provided three related explanations: “(1) teachers’ equation of the expanded role with good teaching practice, (2) the moral imperative of teaching and (3) the desire to live up to the expectations held by themselves and their colleagues” (p. 576). Bartlett argued that, for the teachers in her study, to have abandoned their expanded conception of their role would have required them to either “accept a lower professional standard of themselves, or redefine what it means to be a good teacher” (p. 576).

## **3.4 Emotional aspects of teaching**

Study of the emotional aspects of teaching has been emerging, within recent years, as an area of inquiry in its own right, as efforts have been made to “remedy the neglect of

emotion in the fields of teaching and teacher development” (A. Hargreaves, 2001, p. 1057). While the area might still lack “systematic understanding” (A. Hargreaves, 2001, p. 1058), theories alluded to in Chapter 1, such the ‘tactfulness’ of teaching (van Manen, 1991) and ‘teaching as a way of being’ (Stengel, 1996), point to the significance of this area of research. The emotional aspects of teaching, which are central to this current inquiry, include teacher motivations and satisfactions, and issues of stress and burnout. Key studies pertaining to those areas are introduced in this section.

### **3.4.1 Teacher motivations and satisfactions**

There is a considerable body of evidence to suggest that the desire to build relationships with young people, and the love of one’s own subject, are key factors in providing motivation for teaching, and in determining the level of satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, that teachers experience.

Sikes, Measor, and Woods (1985), in their study of teachers’ careers, pointed to the “enormous influence on teacher identities and careers of relationships with pupils” (p. 242). They noted that their students appeared to be “the main reference group” (p. 242) for many teachers; that it was through their students that many teachers achieved their ambitions. Indeed, some teachers may consider that “a good pupil response” (p. 242) to be their main career aim. They noted that the significant satisfactions to be had from teaching, and the frustration of aspirations, could both be derived from relationships with students. They suggested that many teachers hope that they will have a positive influence on their students’ lives, citing teachers’ desire to build strong relationships with students as one of the reasons they engage with extra-curricular activities.

Sikes et al. (1985) provided the example of art teachers in the study. Art was perceived as a low status subject, with a poorer allocation of time, pupils and privileges than science – a high status subject – and that art teachers generally had poorer chances of promotion. They found, however, that art “extends beyond the boundaries of school and pervades the life-world of the teacher in a more complete way than subjects like science” (p. 243). The authors also found that “for art teachers, their subject and the pupils they deal with *are* their careers” (p. 243). Their findings in relation to the satisfactions of art teachers echoed those of Bennet’s (1983) study, *Paints, Pots or Promotion? Art Teachers’ Attitudes Towards Their Careers*. She found that art teachers

often pursued their artistic goals outside of the school arena, and that they were not necessarily driven by a desire to gain higher status or remuneration.

In his major study into the lives of teachers, Huberman (1993a) also concluded that “relationships with students are at the heart of most motivations” (p. 251). He went on to add that such relationships also accounted for the difficulties, preoccupations and crises experienced by the teachers in his study.

The international *Teacher 2000 Project* (Dinham & Scott, 1996) investigated the consequences for teachers – in terms of their motivation and satisfaction – of the changes to education systems that had taken place during the major reform periods of the 1980s and 1990s. In all four countries, the study found that there was a small set of factors that contributed to teacher satisfaction. These included the positive relationships built by working cooperatively with students and colleagues, and the teachers’ satisfactions derived from the development of their own professional competence. However, the teachers across all four countries rated their overall work satisfaction as low, with many teachers becoming more dissatisfied as their career progressed. A range of other studies also found students to be the basic referents as teachers talked about their schools, colleagues, classrooms, and commitments to teaching (see for example McLaughlin, 1993).

A number of studies have concluded that teachers’ well-being is connected to a positive professional identity. Day et al. (2007), for example, found that “teachers’ sense of well-being is deeply connected with how they define themselves as professionals, and how they see their professionalism being defined by others. Where there are differences, there are likely to be tensions” (p. 244).

### **3.4.2 Teacher stress**

Teaching is now considered by many researchers to be one of the most stressful occupations (Johnson, Cooper, Cartwright, Taylor, & Millet, 2005; Kyriacou, 2000; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978; Travers & Cooper, 1996). Galton & MacBeath (2008) note that stress is “one of the strongest recurring themes” (p. 8) in the literature on teachers’ lives, ascribing its source to “constant change and the changing nature of the job” (p. 8) and to the issue of workload, which they contend is seen, in many countries, as the leading explanatory factor for teacher stress and burnout. Their views are echoed in a

growing body of research (see for example Beckley, 2011; Dinham & Scott, 1996; Farber, 1991; A. Hargreaves, 1994; Lowenstein, 1991; Trenberth, 1996).

A Western Australian study of 574 teachers by Punch & Tuettemann (1990) found the teachers' level of psychological distress to be twice the levels expected of the general population. The factors which influenced teachers' distress were: "perceived lack of efficacy/achievement, inadequate access to facilities, lack of collegial support, excessive societal expectations, lack of influence/autonomy, student misbehaviour and lack of praise/recognition" (p. 369) (p. 369). The authors noted some differences in responses between men and women, suggesting that teachers' responses to their working environment are gender-related. They further noted that their findings were consistent with international research, including New Zealand research by Panckhurst (1982).

Carlyle and Woods (2002), in a study of the emotions of teacher stress, adopted the European Commission's definition of work stress as being:

the emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physiological reaction to aversive and noxious aspects of work, work environments and work organisations. It is a state characterised by high levels of arousal and distress and often by feelings of not coping. (Carlyle & Woods, 2002, p. xii)

The authors found that stress is not simply a physical, mental or psychological condition, but a "process wherein the individual undergoes change" (p. 134). They found that negative stress<sup>27</sup> causes the identity of teachers to come under attack, and that stress, once present in the workplace, can "spread like a virus" (p. 135), potentially damaging home, family and personal identity, and leading to loss of confidence, anxiety and a "downward spiral marked by deeply negative emotions" (p. 135). Travers and Cooper (1996) also found that stress negatively impacts on teachers' job satisfaction.

#### 3.4.2.1 *Role stress in music teachers*

Hodge et al. (1994) compared stress amongst music and maths teachers in Australia. They found a number of stressors encountered by the music teachers that were not necessarily encountered by maths teachers. Music lessons were practical in nature and often noisy. Additionally, the practical nature of the subject meant that the music teachers were often perceived as teaching a lower status practical subject, compared

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<sup>27</sup> The authors make the distinction between "negative" stress, which is the focus of their concern, and positive stress or "Eustress", characterised by a sense of challenge that is healthy.

with maths teachers whose subject was perceived as academic and so of higher status. Music teachers often worked in small departments, and so faced issues of isolation. The authors concluded that such factors could be expected to lead to higher levels of stress, and lower perceptions of accomplishment amongst music teachers, in comparison with the general teaching population.

John Scheib (2003) examined role stress in the professional lives of four music teachers working together in single department in a school in the USA. Scheib noted that a school music teacher, who “teeters between different worlds” (p. 125) – the classroom and the extra-curricular domain – can be seen to occupy a ‘boundary position’, a term used by Kahn et al. (1964) to denote people who hold positions *between* organizations or systems. Such positions are more susceptible to role conflicts (Fisher & Gitelson, 1983; Jackson & Schuler, 1985) which occur when people hold different expectations in relation to the same role. Scheib’s (2003) study examined six role stressors which affect job satisfaction: role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, underutilization of skills, and non-participation. He found that although role ambiguity and non-participation did not feature significantly, all four teachers exhibited “significant (and varying) levels of stress from inter-role conflicts ... between personal and professional roles” (Scheib, 2003, p. 130). He further found that role overload, which closely correlated to inadequate staffing resources, was the “next most significant stressor for all four subjects” (p. 132). In relation to the underutilization of their skills, Scheib found that the subjects “experienced tension when having to fulfil unwanted, unimportant, or tedious tasks that took time away from their desired activities” (p. 132).

#### 3.4.2.2 *Praxis shock in early career music teachers*

A number of studies undertaken in Australia have associated ‘praxis shock’ with early career<sup>28</sup> music teachers. Praxis shock can be defined as the difference between the expectations that beginning teachers bring into the profession, and the realities of the actual job (D. Mark, 1998). A high incidence of ‘burnout’ (see Section 3.4.3) among music teachers has been associated with teachers leaving the profession early (Ballantyne, 2006, 2007; Kelly, 1999; Leong, 1996). This has been linked to specific challenges faced by school music teachers. These include extra-curricular involvement, isolation of music teachers, and prevalence of private tuition (Hodge et al., 1994; Kelly, 1999). Ballantyne (2007) argues that “these challenges are arguably unique to the

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<sup>28</sup> Ballantyne (2007) defines early career teachers as teachers in their first four years of teaching after graduation from a pre-service programme.

specific experiences of classroom music teachers” (p. 300) and that they present difficulties for early career teachers in particular. In New Zealand, Pettigrew (2004), while not focusing specifically on beginning music teachers, found that their retention in the school system was considerably influenced by the support they received.

### **3.4.3 Burnout**

Chronic, unrelieved work stress can lead to burnout (2010; Carlyle & Woods, 2002). Burnout is a term that was originally coined by Freudenberger (1974) to describe healthcare workers who were physically and psychologically depleted. According to Byrne (1999), the term burnout is now commonly associated with human service professionals such as teachers, nurses, social workers, police officers, physicians, and therapists. Three core components of burnout were propounded in seminal research by Maslach and Jackson (1984, 1986): emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. These researchers examined, for example, the ways in which role-related stress (for example work overload) could lead to mental exhaustion.

A range of studies have demonstrated that teacher burnout is a function of the quality of worklife in the educational institution (see for example Cedoline, 1982; Cunningham, 1982, 1983; Farber, 1991). Contributing factors include role conflict, role ambiguity, work overload, poor classroom climate, low decision making power, and little support from superiors and peers (Byrne, 1999, p. 22). Studies by Russell, Altmaier and Van Velzen (1987), Dworkin (1987) and Dworkin, Haney, Dworkin and Telshow (1990) found that supportive principals, who offered positive feedback to teachers and treated them as valued colleagues, involving them in campus decision making, retarded burnout. Supportive colleagues, on the other hand did not. In fact, according to Dworkin et al. (1990) if there is an absence of support from the principal, then co-workers can in fact increase stress among younger teachers, rather than alleviate it (Dworkin, 1997, p. 674).

In her review of the burnout literature relating to education, Byrne noted that findings in relation to age, gender and years of experience are inconsistent. Studies by both Leong (1996) and Kelly (1999) however, suggest that burnout is a feature of early-career music teachers' lives in Australia, and Queensland specifically.

## **3.5 Teachers, identity, and community**

An understanding of teachers' actions and commitments within their working life hinges, to a significant extent, on an understanding of their identity as teachers, and the ways in which the identity is created, sustained and developed (S. J. Ball & Goodson, 1985b).

### ***3.5.1 Personal and professional identity***

Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) state that within the past decade, research into the professional identity of teachers has emerged as a separate field of study. The authors undertook a close analysis of research studies, and concluded that no single concept of identity underpins either general studies into identity or studies in the area of teachers' professional identity. They categorised the studies they analysed into three groups: (a) research into teachers' professional identity formation, (b) studies relating to the characteristics of teachers' professional identity, and (c) stories that (re)present professional identity.

The studies in Group (a) into teachers' professional identity formation generally saw the formation of that identity as an ongoing process of integration of the 'personal' and the 'professional'. Goodson and Cole (1994), for example, considered teachers to be "persons and professionals whose lives and work are influenced and made meaningful by factors and conditions inside and outside the classroom and school" (p. 88). Within this group of studies, the 'self' was generally not seen as being stable and unchanging, or unitary. For Coldron and Smith (1999), for example, being a teacher is a matter of "being seen as a teacher by himself or herself and by others; it is a matter of acquiring and then redefining an identity that is socially legitimated" (p. 712). Their research underscored the difference between agency (the personal dimension) and structure (the socially given). Volkmann and Anderson (1998) characterised teachers' identity as a "complex and dynamic equilibrium where professional self-image is balanced with a variety of roles teachers feel they have to play" (cited in Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 113). Day et al. (2007) contended that teachers must continually integrate their professional knowledge and their personal experience, with the 'micro-politics' of their school, and their wider socio-cultural contexts. Sikes et al. (1985) suggested that "typically, teachers negotiate with the role, taking on some aspects to some degree or other (and this can vary in strength and between situations) and rejecting others in a complicated process of dovetailing self and role" (p. 230).

An analysis of the studies in Group (b) showed that over half provided no explicit definition of professional identity. In the remaining studies, professional identity was defined in terms of “teachers’ sense or perceptions of their roles or relevant features of their profession, or in terms of their perceptions of themselves as an occupational group” (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 118).

The two studies analysed in Group (c) are of particular relevance to this research project, as both emphasised the influence of the teachers’ professional landscape on their professional lives. For narrative researchers Clandinin and Connelly (2000), professional identity is seen in terms of ‘stories’ that lives ‘tell’. Beijaard et al. (2004) comment that a ‘story to live by’ provides “a narrative thread or story-line” (p. 121) that teachers use to make sense of their experience. ‘Stories to live by’ is thus a way to “conceptually bring together a teacher’s personal practical knowledge, his or her professional knowledge landscape, and identity” (p. 121). Clandinin and Connelly’s work on professional knowledge landscapes is outlined in Section 3.6.1.

Roberts (2004) examined the identity formation of music teachers. He contended that people can be seen to have multiple identities, not all of which operate at the same time. He cited McCall and Simmons (1978, p. 65) stating that a person’s role identity is his “imaginative view of himself [*sic*] as he likes to think of himself being and acting as an occupant of that position” (Roberts, 2004, p. 6, original emphasis). Following Lofland (1969), Roberts further suggested that a person’s identity is sometimes imputed by others and that one particular role-identity may be so strong and prominent that other people will totally ignore any and all secondary categories of identity. This prominent identity or ‘pivotal category’ (Lofland, 1969, p. 124) usually begins to define who a person is. Thus “acts consistent with this pivotal category become more than just acts; they *become the people themselves*” (Roberts, 2004, p. 7, emphasis added). Roberts maintained that there is growing awareness amongst musicians of the link between music and identity. He cited Elliott (1989, p. 12) who stated that “because music is, in essence something that *people make or do*, a people’s music is something they *are*, both during and after the making of music and the experiencing of music (Roberts, 2004, p. 7, original emphasis).

In an exploratory study of primary school music leaders in Aotearoa New Zealand, Boyack (2011) found that the role of ‘music leader’ was not a feature that was added on to music teacher’s identity. Rather it was “embedded within their whole person and

a significant contributor to each teacher's overall identity" (p. 254). The music leader role was the visible, surface component of the teachers' personal and professional lives that were "multi-faceted ... [and] threaded through with music making, musical thinking and music experience" (p. 254).

### **3.5.2 *Identity and community in teaching***

Although the studies discussed above proposed no single definition of identity, all suggested that teachers' professional identities are shaped not only by personal factors, but also by the context in which they work. Teachers work within schools, and schools can be described as occupational communities. Van Maanen and Barley (1984) describe an occupational community as a group of people who consider themselves to be engaged in the same sort of work; whose identity is drawn from the work; who share with one another a set of values, norms, and perspectives that apply to but extend beyond work-related matters; and whose work relationships meld work and leisure. Little (1993) contends that although schools do form a kind of occupational community that is distinct from other professions, there are also distinct communities operating within schools.

Concepts of community are of significance to this study, and while it is outside of the bounds of the study to review all of the literature relating to 'teachers, identity and community', literature pertaining to subject departments, communities of practice, and Palmer's (2007) concept of communities of truth is relevant and outlined in the following sections.

#### **3.5.2.1 *Subject specialisms, departments, and teacher identity***

As Bennet (1983) reports, "teachers are not a homogenous group. They are differentiated, at the secondary level for instance, by subject specialisms and by the relative status of those specialisms" (p. 121). Little (1995) contends that subjects are not just "the stuff of curriculum, texts and tests" (p. 11); they are a fundamental part of the teacher's identity.

Subject specialisms create the primary organisational structure of secondary schools: the subject department or faculty (S. J. Ball & Goodson, 1985a; C. Bennet, 1983; Cox, 1999; Goodson & Marsh, 1996; Little, 1995). Goodson and Marsh (1996) contend that subject departments currently perform two major functions in schools: social and administrative.

There is widespread agreement amongst researchers that subject departments provide the “primary point of reference, or professional home for most teachers” (Siskin & Little, 1995, p. 6). Much of the routine, day-to-day communications of teaching take place within subject departments, and an environment is often created “where deep bonds of loyalty are developed” (Goodson & Marsh, 1996, p. 58). Subject departments are also considered to provide administrative functions, such as communications links between staff. Siskin (1994) found that power relations within a department can vary from democratic to autocratic and S. J. Ball and Lacey (1980) contended that subject departments can also be seen as a contested arena – in which factors such as teachers’ age, experience, or subject expertise may be considered in the allocation of classes or roles.

Subject departments can become ‘microworlds’ within the school as they grow to reflect the different norms, routines and values of the teachers within them (1996, p. 62). Little (1993) argued that not only do departments “exude a certain spirit” but that they also “confront quite different conditions of teaching” (p. 157). McLaughlin (1993) found that the characteristics of departments varied significantly within particular schools and that this “substantial variation mean[t] that teachers who work literally across the hall from one another but work in different departments experience their workplace in critically different ways” (p. 92). McLaughlin (1993) further found that the character of the professional community that exists in a school or a department – collegial or isolating, risk taking or rigidly invested in best practices, problem solving or problem hiding – plays a major role in how teachers see their work and their students and in why some teachers opt out, figuratively or literally, while many teachers persist and thrive even in exceedingly challenging teaching contexts.

There is often a significant connection between the school subject department and the wider epistemic community to which it is related through subject content. Many of the characteristics of subject departments reflect the history and social organisation of the wider epistemic community (Goodson & Marsh, 1996). Lodged within any given subject community there are likely to be a range of different ‘traditions’. The wider music community, for example, represents diverse traditions from Western art music, to world musics, contemporary rock and popular styles. While some traditions from the wider epistemic community will be incorporated into subject departments, there may well be ‘contested terrain’ where several traditions compete. “Each department will provide a unique configuration, caught as it is between the separate traditions and tendencies of

the subject community and the institutional forces of the school” (Goodson & Marsh, 1996, p. 63).

### 3.5.2.2 *Balkanized departments*

A. Hargreaves’ (1994) work on balkanized subject departments is of particular relevance to this study, and is outlined below. In balkanized cultures, teachers work “neither in isolation, nor with most of their colleagues as a whole school, but in smaller sub-groups within the school community, such as secondary school subject departments” (p. 213). A. Hargreaves believed that the outcomes of balkanization are negative for both teachers and students. The characteristics he ascribed to balkanization are: low permeability – subgroups are strongly insulated from each other and it is not common for teachers to belong to multiple groups, and high permanence – such groupings tend to be stable over time, and teachers “come to see themselves as not just teachers in general” (p. 214) but as belonging to a specific department, for example the music department. He also considered that:

Within balkanized cultures, people become especially attached to the sub-communities within which most of their working lives are contained and defined. ... Where cross-membership of sub-groups is rare, induction into one tradition means exclusion and distancing from other, different ones. Communication between staff and consistency of expectations among them are casualties. (p. 214)

### 3.5.2.3 *Communities of practice*

Wenger (1998) observed that we make meaning in our lives through our engagement with the world, and a community of practice provides one means through which we can negotiate meaning. This negotiation of meaning leads to learning. A community of practice can thus be seen as a “shared history of learning” (p. 86) where “learning is the engine of practice, and practice is the history of that learning” (p. 96). The construction of knowledge takes place in relation to specific practices and the engagement in practice “in its unfolding, multidimensional complexity – is both the stage and the object, the road and the destination” (p. 95).

Wenger (1998) contended that at its deepest level, education – “a process of becoming” (p. 97) – always involves the opening of identities. Thus there is a deep connection between practice and identity, which he viewed as the “social, the cultural, the historical with a human face” (p. 145).

#### 3.5.2.4 *Community of truth*

Palmer's (2007) concepts of identity and of the 'community of truth' share aspects in common with Wenger's (1998) communities of practice. Palmer considers knowing to be relational – a way of making connection. For him, like Wenger, identity is a mix of the personal and the social. "By *identity* I mean an evolving nexus where all the forces that constitute my life converge in the mystery of self ... a moving intersection of the inner and outer forces that make me who I am, converging in the irreducible mystery of being human" (Palmer, 2007, pp. 13-14). Palmer links the concept of integrity to the notion of identity: "*Identity* lies in the intersection of the diverse forces that make up my life, and *integrity* lies in relating to those forces in ways that bring me wholeness and life rather than fragmentation and death" (p. 14).

The hallmark of the community of truth is its claim that "*reality is a web of communal relationships, and we can know reality only by being in community with it*" (Palmer, 2007, p. 97, original emphasis). A community of truth is "held together not only by our personal powers of thought and feeling but also by the power of 'the grace of great things'<sup>29</sup>" (p. 109). The 'great things' are the subjects around which the 'circle of seekers' has always gathered. The subject at the centre of the community of truth is not the discipline that studies the subject – but the subject itself, "the shapes and colors of music and art" (p. 110) for example. Palmer (2007) contends that "at the center of our attention is a subject that continually calls us deeper into its secret, a subject that refuses to be reduced to our conclusions about it" (p. 108). "At the deepest reaches, knowing requires us to imagine the inner standpoint of the subject. ... We cannot know the subject well if we stand only in our own shoes. We must believe in the subject's inner life and enter with empathy into it" (p. 108).

### 3.6 Contexts of teaching

This section presents further theoretical literature which has informed the interpretive understandings presented in Chapter 10.

#### 3.6.1 *Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes*

Clandinin and Connelly (1995) adopted the metaphor of the landscape to illuminate their work on teachers' professional knowledge. They noted that "understanding

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<sup>29</sup> Palmer cites Rainer Maria Rilke, *Rodin and Other prose pieces* (1986, p. 4).

knowledge as comprising a landscape calls for a notion of professional knowledge as composed of a wide variety of components and influenced by a wide variety of people, places, and things” (p. 5). They conceived of the teachers’ landscape as being positioned at the interface of theory and practice in teachers’ lives. Drawing on the work of Crites (1971), Clandinin and Connelly (1995) described the landscape as being embedded in a ‘sacred story’, which privileged theory over practice. Crites’ (1971) theory of the sacred story will be alluded to Chapter 4 (Section 4.6.4) in relation to the *two worlds* metaphor and more fully elucidated in the discussion in Chapter 10.

Clandinin and Connelly’s (1995) conception of the landscape of teaching consisted of two separate, though interconnected places – the ‘in-classroom place’ and the ‘out-of-classroom place’ – within and between which teachers worked and moved. They used the concept of a ‘funnel’ or ‘conduit’ to illustrate how policies, ideas, and materials from outside of the school were ‘funnelled’ into the out-of-classroom place. The two places were viewed as being epistemologically different, with different language forms and values attached to each.

The world inside the classroom was typically a safe place, which was both personal and relational in nature, in which teachers and students lived ‘storied’ lives as they worked together on the business of teaching and learning. This was a place where teachers could be vulnerable – at times weaving ‘secret stories’ which they often felt the need to re-story as ‘cover stories’ when they moved into the more abstract, objective, out-of-classroom place. The out-of-classroom place was heavily influenced by the ideas and policies – often stripped of their own creational life in an “abstract rhetoric of conclusions” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 11) – that were fed into the landscape from external sources via the conduit. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) asserted that the policies fed into the landscape were morally laden, and that the sacred story “required that the descriptive ‘is’ of theoretical knowledge be transformed into a prescriptive ‘ought’ in practice” (p. 11). The necessity to move between the two very different places of the landscape created ‘disturbances’ in the form of “epistemological dilemmas” (p. 4) for the teachers.

### **3.6.2 Codes of knowledge**

Bernstein (1996) developed a typology of school knowledge codes. While the scope of this study does not allow the full use of his theory, aspects of it are of particular relevance. These include Bernstein’s concepts of ‘classification’ and ‘framing’, and

'singulars' and 'regions'. Classification and framing are important, because they make it possible to see issues of power and control that underlie relationships.

Bernstein (1996) uses the concept of classification to "examine relations between categories, whether these categories are between agencies, between agents, between discourses, between practices" (p. 20). Within a school, therefore, a subject might be considered as a category. In this thesis, the areas of classroom music, extra-curricular music, and the itinerant programme, each of which has historically had a separate purpose and role within the school, are considered as separate categories and the term 'category' is used, where relevant, as a descriptor for them.

Classification examines issues of power and enables an analysis of the relative strength of the boundary, or insulation, between two categories. Bernstein (1996) makes it clear that the crucial space is not internal to each category, but *between* categories. "A can only be A if it can effectively insulate itself from B. In this sense, there is no A if there is no relationship between A and something else" (p. 20). Thus where subjects operate as distinct and discrete entities, with their own timetabled classes and subject specialists, their boundary strengths are strong, and they are therefore considered to be strongly classified. Conversely, where boundaries are less apparent between particular disciplines – such as might occur when subjects are integrated – their classification is considered to be weak. As Bernstein asserts, "Where we have strong classification, the rule is: things must be kept apart. Where we have weak classification, the rule is: things must be brought together" (Bernstein, 1996, p. 26).

While classification refers to issues of power, framing refers to issues of control and explores the legitimacy of communications. In relation to school subjects, framing is considered to be strong when the teacher has control over the choice and delivery of subject content. Framing weakens as students gain more apparent control over what and how they will learn. In 'student-centred' courses, for example, students often have considerable say in the nature of their learning. Bernstein (1996) refers to student control as being 'apparent', because the teacher remains fundamentally in control. Bernstein signalled the implications of framing for teaching in learning: "In general, where framing is strong we shall have a visible pedagogic practice. ... Where framing is weak, we are likely to have an invisible pedagogic practice" (Bernstein, 1996, p. 28).

Bernstein (1996) further conceptualises subject areas as either 'singulars' or 'regions'. The term singular refers to a discipline which operates as a discrete and separate subject with its own practices, specialists, and content; one that is "protected by strong boundaries and hierarchies" (Bernstein, 1996, p. 65). Thus during much of the twentieth century, music in New Zealand secondary schools could be termed a 'singular'. Regionalisation occurs when a group of singulars are drawn together in relation to a wider context. "Regions are constructed by recontextualizing singulars into larger units" (Bernstein, 1996, p. 65). Thus, the ANZC can be said to have recontextualized the four disciplines of dance, drama, music and the visual arts into the region of 'the arts'. Bernstein points to a major implication of regionalisation in his assertion that "Regionalization necessarily weakens both the autonomous discursive base and the political base of singulars and so facilitates changes in organizational structures of institutions towards greater central administrative control" (Bernstein, 1996, p. 66).

### **3.6.3 Organisational stress: Role conflict, overload and ambiguity**

Kahn et al. (1964) studied role conflict and ambiguity within organisations, and proposed a theory of organisational role stress. They defined any given person within an organisation as a 'focal person', and stated that each focal person belongs to a 'role set' which they considered to be made up of all those who might influence a person's behaviour. They considered role expectations to be the "prescriptions and proscriptions" (p. 14) held by members of a focal person's role set. A 'sent role' comprised the expectations for a role that are held by others and communicated to the focal person. 'Role pressures' were deemed to be "whatever requirements and demands are actually communicated to the focal person" (p. 15). The authors noted that everyone receives messages in their own way, thus there is not only a 'sent role', but a 'received role' which consists of the focal person's perceptions and cognitions of what was sent. They also noted that as well as receiving expectations from others, a focal person also sent their own expectations to themselves.

Kahn et al. (1964) defined role conflict in the following manner:

*Sent role conflict* is defined as the simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) sets of pressures such that compliance with one would make more difficult compliance with the other. In the extreme case, compliance with one set of pressures excludes completely the possibility of compliance with another set; the two sets of pressures are mutually contradictory. (p. 19)

They distinguished sent role conflict from the psychological impacts of the conflicts on the focal person, suggesting that both the receiver's personality and working circumstances would influence the ways in which role conflict affected a given person.

Kahn et al. (1964) identified a range of sent role conflicts:

- *Intra-sender conflict*: (conflict *within* the sender) occurs when conflicting pressures are sent from a single person.
- *Inter-sender conflict*: (conflict *between* senders) occurs when conflicting pressures are sent by different people.
- *Inter-role conflicts* (conflict *between* sent roles) occur when the role pressures associated with membership of one organization are in conflict with pressures stemming from membership in other groups.
- *Person-role conflict* (conflict within the *receiver*) can occur when there is a conflict between sent role pressures and the focal person's own moral values or beliefs.

Role overload was considered to be a kind of complex role conflict. It could thus be regarded as:

a kind of inter-sender conflict in which various role senders may hold quite legitimate expectations that a person perform a wide variety of tasks, all of which are mutually compatible in the abstract. But it may be virtually impossible for the focal person to complete all of them within given time limits. He [*sic*] is likely to experience overload as a conflict of priorities; he must decide which pressures to comply with and which to hold off. If it is impossible to deny any of the pressures, he may be taxed beyond the limit of his abilities. (p. 20)

Kahn et al. (1964) considered that the concept of 'boundary positions' was of key importance to role conflict situations. In their terms, a boundary position was "one for which some members of the role set are located in a different system – either another unit within the same organizations or another organization entirely" (p. 101). They considered that a study of boundary positions was critical to an understanding of role conflicts, because "the occupant of a boundary position between two conflicting groups finds that the incompatible expectations of role senders are focused on him, and to the general effects of intergroup conflict are added the stresses of conflict within the role" (p. 101).

Finally, role ambiguity was considered to be “the degree to which required information is available to a given organizational position. ... To the extent that such information is lacking, he will experience ambiguity” (pp. 25-26).

Much of the significance of role conflict, overload and ambiguity, lay in the impacts on the focal person’s emotions and performance. Emotional impacts included low job satisfaction, low self-confidence, a high sense of futility, and a high score on the tension index. The impacts on a person’s performance were not necessarily seen “in the role in which the stress was experienced, but somewhere in the array of roles which constitute the social and affiliative life of the person – as husband and father, as worker, as friend, as citizen” (p. 376). Kahn et al.’s (1964) research suggested that there were three factors within an organisation that tended to determine the degree of role conflict and ambiguity present: “the requirement for crossing organizational boundaries, the requirement for producing innovative solutions to nonroutine problems, and the requirement for being responsible for the work of others” (p. 381).

### **3.7 Chapter summary**

The purpose of Chapter 3 has been to review relevant theoretical and empirical literature that illuminates the practical strategies teachers deploy in response to workgroup, institutional, community and system demands. Although there are relatively few studies into secondary school music teaching and teachers within New Zealand, the studies that do exist tend to reflect the findings of large scale studies from the UK and Australia, which have consistently found music to be a marginalised subject in the secondary curriculum, and its provision to be patchy. Music teachers have typically been seen as vulnerable, in need of additional assistance and resourcing, and as responsible for two areas: music within the curriculum, and extra-curricular music, which has often made a significant contribution to a school’s corporate life, and ‘public face’ within the community.

Several large-scale studies into teacher working conditions conducted within New Zealand since 1990, have reflected the findings of international research which suggest that teachers’ working roles have both expanded and intensified. This has resulted in teachers, and in particular middle managers, perceiving that their workloads have grown significantly since the 1990s, resulting at times in work overload, stress and the loss of job satisfaction. Bartlett (2004) offered a theory of work overload which

proposed that teachers overwork because of the moral imperative created by equating the extra workload with good teaching practice.

Studies into teacher motivations and satisfactions have shown that the classic motivations of teachers are love of their subject matter and a desire to connect with young people, and so influence their lives. Dissatisfactions, in turn, often stem from the frustration of teachers' motivations. Further studies have suggested that stress and burnout now play a major role in the lives of teachers, and that they are derived from a range of factors, many of which stem from large-scale social and educational changes dating back to the 1980s.

Research into the identity of teachers has found that identity is not fixed, that it is influenced by both personal and professional factors, and that a 'core identity' or 'pivotal category' might, however, come to significantly represent a person. Further studies have shown that teachers' identities are also influenced by their subject area, that subject departments can play a significant role in providing specific and differentiated contexts in which teachers work, and that they often provide a community with which teachers become closely identified.

Theoretical literature, which informs the discussion in Chapter 10, was also introduced. This included an outline of Wenger's (1998) theory of communities of practice, and Palmer's (2007) concept of the community of truth. Also introduced was Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) metaphor of professional knowledge landscapes. Bernstein's (1996) theory of the classification and framing of categories, which enables an analysis of relationships of power and control, and his theory of singulars and regions, were also introduced. Finally, the theory of organisational role stress (Kahn et al., 1964), with its concepts of role conflict, boundary positions, role overload and role ambiguity, was introduced.

### **3.8 Summary from Chapters 2 and 3**

An understanding of the tensions of practice encountered by secondary school music teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand requires insight into the lives of the teachers themselves, and knowledge of the contexts in which teachers work.

The contextual, theoretical and research literature presented in Chapters 2 and 3 have shown that the circumstances in which teachers now work are both dynamic and complex. Within music education, it is apparent that the translation of music into the school curriculum has never been entirely straight-forward. School music has been described variously as 'problematic', 'vulnerable' and 'patchy'. Its connection, as one of the arts, with the experiential world of feelings and emotions, has meant that music as a subject has typically occupied a place at the margins of an education system largely based on the dominance of rational knowledge. In a search for legitimacy as an academic subject within the curriculum, music in New Zealand secondary schools, following overseas trends, initially reflected the values and musical canon of Western art music.

Extensive social, economic and political changes which have occurred within New Zealand, in common with other Western nations, since the mid-1980s, have led to considerable change in educational policy and practice. This in turn has significantly increased the complexity of teaching contexts. Within music education, the introduction of the outcomes-based ANZC (Ministry of Education, 2000) broadened the curriculum, enabling music from any tradition, genre or style to be included. At the same time, the focus of the curriculum shifted to include the development of practical skills in performance and composition. These changes were further embedded with the introduction of the NCEA and standards-based assessment.

Changes within their teaching context have been reflected in the expansion and intensification of teachers' roles. Secondary school teachers, and particularly middle managers, have been significantly influenced by such issues as the revision of curriculum and assessment, work overload, stress and burnout. While a range of studies have documented the impacts of their contexts on secondary school teachers, there are very few studies, and no major study from New Zealand, which have taken as a specific focus an examination of the lives of secondary school music teachers.

This current study, which set out to explore the tensions of practice encountered by secondary school music teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand, provides one means of addressing that gap.



# Chapter 4

## Methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

This study of New Zealand secondary school music teachers was concerned with examining the tensions of practice the teachers encountered in their daily working lives. The purpose of Chapter 4 is to present the design of the study, the assumptions on which it was built, and the processes used to undertake the research.

Section 4.2 considers the philosophical assumptions which underpin the research. It discusses the constructivist-interpretive paradigm and the qualitative tradition in which the research is located. It examines the prevailing mood of postmodernism and the concept of research as *bricolage* and the researcher as *bricoleur*. Section 4.3 explores issues of accountability in relation to qualitative research and this project in particular. Section 4.4 presents the research design. It considers first the research aims and questions, and second the *bricoles* employed within the methodology. These include narratives and stories, life story, life history, and reflexivity. The issue of ethical action within qualitative research, and within this project, is discussed. This is followed by a description of the research method, the participants, and the sampling process employed in the study. Section 4.5 describes the fieldwork, outlining processes used to obtain informed consent and for the collection of data. Section 4.6 describes coding, analysis, data presentation and interpretation. The section concludes with a discussion of the development of the *two worlds* metaphor, an interpretive *bricole*, which was later used as an interpretive tool in Chapter 10. Section 4.7 presents a summary of the chapter.

### 4.2 Philosophical foundations of this research

This study draws on two traditions – the constructivist-interpretive research paradigm and the qualitative research tradition. An understanding of each of these is critical to the researcher, for, as Eichelberger (1989) states: “Knowledge exists within the particular philosophy, theory, method, and assumptions used to gain that knowledge”

(p. 8). Thus to make sense of the knowledge presented within this research project, it is essential to understand the framework within which that knowledge is constructed.

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) identify four major interpretive paradigms in qualitative research: “positivist and postpositivist, constructivist-interpretive, critical ... and feminist-poststructural” (p. 31). Other authors, in describing the constructivist-interpretive paradigm, use the terms ‘interpretive’ research (Merriam, 1998) and ‘interpretive-hermeneutic’ inquiry (Eichelberger, 1989). I have chosen to borrow the term ‘constructivist-interpretive paradigm’ used by Denzin and Lincoln (2008) as it captures the interpretive nature of the study and the belief that reality is socially constructed (see Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2).

#### **4.2.1 Research paradigm**

Underpinning all research is the particular paradigm espoused (be it consciously or unconsciously) by the researcher. A paradigm, according to Guba (1990), is a “basic set of beliefs that guides action” (p. 17). Denzin and Lincoln (2008) further describe a paradigm as an “interpretive framework”; the “net” containing the researcher’s most basic premises (p. 31). They assert that a paradigm “define[s] the world view of the researcher-as-interpretive-bricoleur” (p. 245) and that it addresses four key questions which researchers must take account of: How do I know the world, and what is my relationship with it? (epistemology); How can I act as a moral person within the world? (ethics); What is the nature of reality? (ontology); and what is the best means of acquiring knowledge of the world? (methodology) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 245).

Historically, most research was contained within the positivist paradigm whose world view, knowledge claims and methods were all very different from those of the constructivist-interpretive paradigm. Traditional positivist research is built on the premise that there is an objective reality ‘out there’ which it is possible to know. Reality, from this perspective, is considered to be “stable, observable, and measurable” (Merriam, 1998, p. 4). Positivist research practices are therefore designed to enable that ‘stable’ reality to be ‘captured’ in a manner that is as truthful and uncontaminated by the researcher, or the research processes, as possible. Kirk and Miller (1986) assert that in its strongest form, positivism is built on the assumption “not only that there is an external world, but that the external world itself determines absolutely the one and only correct view that can be taken of it, independent of the process or circumstances of viewing” (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p. 14). As Eichelberger (1989) states, “positivists view

researchers as objective observers of events that occur in the universe and on which the researchers have no impact” (p. 4).

In contrast to the positivist perspective, the constructivist-interpretive paradigm in which this research is situated resists the notion that a single ‘knowable’ reality exists that can be ‘objectively’ observed. Guba and Lincoln (2008) assert: “We are persuaded that objectivity is a chimera: a mythological creature that never existed, save in the imaginations of those who believe that knowing can be separated from the knower” (p. 275). By contrast, the constructivist-interpretive paradigm espouses the view that multiple realities exist, and that these realities are constructed by individuals. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) encapsulate this paradigm with their statement that it “assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and respondent cocreate understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures” (p. 32). D. Scott and Usher (1999) further add that interpretive research takes “everyday experience and ordinary life as its subject-matter and asks how meaning is constructed and social interaction negotiated in social practices” (p. 25).

#### **4.2.2 Qualitative research**

This study is also based in the qualitative research tradition. According to Eichelberger (1989), some scholars equate interpretive research with qualitative enquiry, because it shares fundamental beliefs about the nature of human beings and the sources of useful knowledge. The term ‘qualitative research’ has been, and continues to be, used in a range of different ways by researchers. Denzin and Lincoln (2008), who trace the historical development of the tradition, note that the term ‘qualitative research’ is surrounded by a “complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts, and assumptions” (p. 3), although they offer a generic definition that “qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world” (p. 4).

In this study, the term qualitative research takes account of the following:

1. It is situated within the constructivist-interpretive paradigm, as set out in the preceding section.

2. It draws on the work of Denzin and Lincoln (2008), who state that “Qualitative research is a field of inquiry in its own right. It crosscuts disciplines, fields, and subject matters” (p. 3).
3. Rather than reflecting the positivist position of education or schooling as an “object, phenomenon, or delivery system to be studied”, this project considers “education ... to be a process and school ... a lived experience” (Merriam, 1998, p. 4).
4. It is based on the assumptions that reality is socially constructed, and that the relationship between the researcher and the subject is an intimate one through which the inquirer seeks answers to “questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 14, original emphasis).
5. It takes account of the five key concerns for the qualitative researcher as outlined by Sharan Merriam (1998, pp. 6-8). These concerns are:
  - i. The need to understand the phenomenon of interest from the participants’ perspectives, not the researcher’s. (This is the emic, or insider’s perspective as compared with the etic, or outsider’s perspective.)
  - ii. The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this ‘human instrument’. The researcher can be responsive to context and can clarify, summarise and process data immediately.
  - iii. It usually involves fieldwork.
  - iv. The research primarily employs an inductive research strategy, that is, it builds concepts and theories rather than testing existing ones.
  - v. Because qualitative research focuses on process, meaning and understanding, the product of qualitative research is richly descriptive.

### **4.2.3 The postmodern mood**

In Chapter 2 (Section 2.3.4) the influence of the postmodern ‘mood’ (Noddings, 2007, p. 77) on music education was discussed. That mood also permeates the fields of research and philosophy. Noddings (2007) contends that “postmodernism is a mood that shakes the whole structure of modern thought. It challenges cherished assumptions, methods, attitudes, modes of thought, and values” (Noddings, 2007, p. 81). She further suggests that a major stance of postmodern thinkers is that they have “abandoned the Enlightenment quest for absolute truth” (p. 77). Instead, postmodern

thinkers seek understanding of “how knowledge and power are connected, how domains of expertise evolve, who profits from and who is hurt by various claims to knowledge, and what sort of language develops in communities of knowers” (p. 78). In addition, she asserts that postmodernists also “attack the long-standing belief in objectivity” (p. 78). At an extreme end, postmodernist thinking has led to such positions as “the death of the subject” and the call to “abandon metaphysics” (p. 81).

As Section 4.2.1 demonstrated, rejection of one single, objective truth is a position also shared by the constructivist-interpretive paradigm. Some may make the case that this paradigm itself can be considered postmodern. Noddings (2007) offers sound advice to educational researchers in relation to the ‘place’ of postmodernism in projects such as this current study. She states that:

Thoughtful educators should be aware of ways in which [postmodernism’s] proponents help us to think better about educational problems, but they should also be wary of accounts that merely use postmodern buzzwords or that lure readers into accepting potentially harmful moves along with helpful ones. One does not have to accept every pronouncement of postmodernists to be postmodern. Indeed, it might be better, especially from the postmodern view, to reject such labels entirely. (Noddings, 2007, p. 81)

The cautious stance taken in relation to postmodernism in this thesis, therefore, has been to adopt a careful, thoughtful and reflexive approach to all aspects of the project, and to avoid the overuse of labeling. An account of the reflexive stance is included in Section 4.4.2.4.

#### **4.2.4 *Bricolage and the bricoleur***

The previous sections of this chapter have outlined the core philosophical foundations of this study. This section introduces the concepts of the research as *bricolage* and the researcher as *bricoleur*. They are included here, because each informed the methodology and interpretive stance adopted in this study.

*Bricolage* and *bricoleur* are derived from the French verb *bricoler*, which *Harrap’s Shorter French and English Dictionary* (1940, p. 84) defines as to ‘potter’ or ‘tinker’, with *bricoler à la maison* meaning to ‘potter’ or ‘tinker about the house’. A *bricoleur* is

defined as a ‘potterer’, ‘a jack of all trades’<sup>30</sup>. By association, the noun *bricolage* came to mean either the art or process of constructing useful gadgets from whatever bits and pieces come to hand, or its end product. Additionally, the noun ‘*bricoles*’, when used in the plural can be translated as ‘odd jobs’ or ‘trifles’. Thus the *bricoleur*, using a process of *bricolage*, makes use of *bricoles* – the trifles, tools, or things at hand – to fashion the *bricolage*.

According to Bullock and Trombley (1999), the terms were first coined into research by structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1966). In *La Pensée Sauvage (The Savage Mind)*, Lévi-Strauss used the terms *bricoleur* and *bricolage* to explain his ideas on mythical thought. For Lévi-Strauss, the *bricoleur* was adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks:

His [*sic*] universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with ‘whatever is at hand’, that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, or indeed to any particular project, but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or destructions. (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17)

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008), the term *bricoleur* was drawn into qualitative research during the ‘blurred genre’ phase of its history, at a time when researchers drew on a range of disciplines to explicate their research. This project uses the term in the manner used by Lévi-Strauss (1966), and adopted by Denzin and Lincoln<sup>31</sup> (2008), to refer to the qualitative researcher as someone who uses the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods, and empirical materials are at hand. The process of *bricolage* enables a picture to gradually emerge, change, and take shape as the *bricoleur* “adds different tools, methods and techniques of representation and interpretation to the puzzle” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 5).

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<sup>30</sup> However, in the 1966 translation of *La Pensée Sauvage (The Savage Mind)*, the translator notes that “the *bricoleur* has no precise equivalent in English. He is a man who undertakes odd jobs and is a Jack of all trades or a kind of professional do-it-yourself man, but, as the text makes clear, he is of a different standing from, for instance, the English ‘odd job man’ or handyman” (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17).

<sup>31</sup> In common with many terms in qualitative research, *bricolage* has taken on a variety of meanings. Pinar (2001) asserted that within critical research, Kincheloe (2001), embracing a “deep form of interdisciplinarity,” expanded the definition of *bricolage* to “undreamt-of-proportion” (Pinar, 2001, p. 698).

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) contend that there are many of kinds of *bricoleurs*: interpretive, narrative, theoretical, political, methodological. Of particular relevance to this study are the concepts of the methodological and interpretive *bricoleur*. For a methodological *bricoleur*, fieldwork is “a process ... akin to the handyman’s, jack-of-all-trades’s, use of what materials and tools are available and which seem sensible” (Lincoln, 2001, p. 693). Rather than building a research project on one particular methodology, a methodological *bricoleur* draws from a range of practices. Such a researcher becomes skilled at using different strategies and processes “ranging from interviewing to intensive self-reflection and introspection” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 8). An interpretive *bricoleur* is likewise not bound to any particular research process, strategies or methods. Central to the concept of the researcher as an interpretive *bricoleur* is the understanding that research is an interactive process which is shaped by the history, biography, social class, gender and ethnicity of both the researcher and the research participants. The end-result of an interpretive *bricoleur*’s work is a “complex, quiltlike bricolage” and the interpretive structure is “like a quilt ... a sequence of representations connecting the parts to the whole” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 8).

### **4.3 Issues of accountability**

Merriam (1998) reminds us that “all research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner” (p. 198). She further notes that research studies into education “must be rigorously conducted; they need to present insights and conclusions that ring true to readers, educators, and other researchers” (p. 199).

While there is little disagreement amongst researchers in relation to these aims, there is considerable dispute about the ways in which they might be achieved. Traditional research inquiries in the positivist paradigm are conventionally judged according to their ‘rigour’, which “looks at the truth value of propositions, at their validity or generalisability, at their reliability and at their objectivity” (Gherardi & Turner, 2002, p. 90). Although researchers undertaking interpretive research within the qualitative tradition generally agree that such research – because it is founded on different sets of assumptions from traditional positivist research – must find different ways to judge its quality, there is at present no general agreement as to how this may be accomplished.

### **4.3.1 Reliability or dependability**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that reliability in qualitative research may be considered in terms of 'dependability' or 'consistency'. Reliability should be measured not in terms of "whether findings will be found again but *whether the results are consistent with the data collected*" (Merriam, 1998, p. 206, original emphasis). Merriam (1998) provided three techniques that qualitative researchers might use to ensure that results are dependable, and these have been taken account of in this study:

1. *The investigator's position*: In keeping with Merriam's recommendations, the assumptions behind the study have been fully explained and my own values and position as the researcher have been addressed, initially in Chapter 1 (Section 1.3) and then in the detailed account provided of my actions as the researcher within Sections 4.4 to 4.6 of this chapter. Chapters 2 and 3 have furnished a full account of the social context from which the data have been collected.
2. *Triangulation*: Triangulation can be defined conventionally as "using multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings" (Merriam, 1998, p. 204). However, Mathison (1988) contended that triangulation might in fact produce data that are inconsistent or contradictory, and suggested instead that researchers rely on a developing a "holistic understanding [and] plausible explanations about the phenomena being studied" (p. 17). While field data within this current study have been collected using the single method of interview conversations, these data have been analysed and presented in the context of the literature and research relevant to the field. This has enabled plausible explanations to be developed.
3. *Audit trail*: "In order for an audit trail to take place, the investigator must describe in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry" (Merriam, 1998, pp. 206-207). Such descriptions are provided in Sections 4.4 to 4.6.

### **4.3.2 Internal validity or credibility**

Internal validity or 'credibility' – the term preferred by Lincoln and Guba (1985) – deals with the question of how research findings match reality. This question itself is problematic for interpretive researchers, because for them there is no single, objective, measurable reality. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that reality is "a multiple set of mental constructions" (p. 295) that are both made by humans and accessible to them. Since the 'research instrument' of interpretive research is also a 'human instrument',

such researchers are closer to reality than if there was some other research instrument interposed between the researcher and the phenomenon being researched. Merriam (1998) suggests that this situation makes internal validity a strength of qualitative inquiry, and offers six basic strategies that can be used by the researcher to enhance internal validity: triangulation, member checks, long-term observation, peer examination, participatory or collaborative modes of research, clarifying researchers' assumptions. While it was not practicable for this project to involve long-term observation or to include the participants at every stage of the inquiry, Merriam's other strategies were built into the study. Triangulation and the clarification of assumptions have already been discussed. Provision was made for member checks at the time that transcripts were sent to participants. The data and findings have been a matter of ongoing discussion with peers who have knowledge of secondary school music education and music education research.

#### **4.3.3 External validity, generalisability and transferability**

The concept of external validity is also one that belongs to the positivist paradigm, where it is used to measure the degree to which findings can be generalised to a wider population. Merriam (1998) comments that "the question of generalisability has plagued qualitative investigators for some time" (p. 207). Lincoln and Guba (1985) eschewed the concepts of generalisability and external validity, preferring the notion of 'transferability', commenting that "the best advice to give to anyone seeking to make a transfer is to accumulate *empirical* evidence about contextual similarity" (p. 298). Cronbach (1975) suggested that generalisation be replaced by the concept of 'working hypotheses', which would take account of local conditions. Stake's (1978) concept of 'naturalistic generalisation' suggests that "full and thorough knowledge of the particular" (p. 6) can provide sufficient detail for similarities to be drawn between the research and other contexts.

This study employs the term 'generalisability' and takes account of Merriam's (1998) three strategies to enhance generalisability. The following were built into the research design:

- *Rich, thick description* and *typicality*: Findings of the study have the potential to be transferred to other situations when readers are provided with descriptions of sufficient detail to enable them to perceive similarities between the research and their own situation. Much care has been taken in this current project to present the teachers' stories in detail, and where possible in their own words,

within the five data chapters. Details of other related empirical research have also been included (see Chapter 3).

- *Multi-site designs*: Generalisability is enhanced by the use of a range of sites or situations that enable diversity within the researched phenomenon to be captured. As will be seen in the next section, nineteen participants each working in different settings, and at a different point in their career, were included in the study.

## 4.4 Research design

The purpose of Section 4.4 is to present the research design.

### 4.4.1 Research aims and questions

This study set out to explore the tensions of practice that secondary school music teachers in New Zealand encounter in their working lives. The concept of 'tensions of practice' was discussed in Chapter 1 (Section 1.2). Given the paucity of literature on the lives of secondary school music teachers, the study was designed to explore the situation, or 'map the terrain' (Donaldson, 2005, p. 6), of New Zealand music teachers. The research questions were thus designed to enable a broad exploration of the experience of working as secondary music teacher. The questions were:

1. What are the expectations attached to the role of secondary school music teacher?
2. What do secondary school music teachers perceive to be the tensions of their practice?
3. How do secondary school music teachers experience their working lives?
4. How do secondary school music teachers go about resolving their tensions of practice?

### 4.4.2 Methodological bricolage

The research design, grounded in the constructivist-interpretive paradigm and the qualitative research tradition, owed much to the methodological approach of *bricolage*, which was introduced in Section 4.2.4. It drew on Merriam's (1998) description of a basic or generic qualitative study and on the concept of reflexivity. The study was influenced too by narrative and storied approaches to research, including life stories and life history. The data analysis utilised the concept of interpretive *bricolage*, which

enabled interpretive frames to emerge as the teachers' stories were examined in detail. Each of the methodological *bricoles* (tools) that were woven into the study is introduced below.

#### 4.4.2.1 *Basic or generic qualitative study*

At its core, the study can be described as a *basic* or *generic qualitative study* as described by Merriam (1998):

Many qualitative studies in education do not focus on culture or build a grounded theory; nor are they intensive case studies of a single unit or bounded system. Rather, researchers who conduct these studies, which are probably the most common form of qualitative research in education, simply seek to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved. (p. 11)

The written proposal for the study suggested two phases: "Data will be collected from in-depth interviews with selected teachers (Phase One), and from a 'follow-up survey' (Phase Two) to be sent to music teachers in all New Zealand secondary schools" (Donaldson, 2005, p. 14). The second phase was to act as a means of triangulation, to increase the generalisability of the findings. In practice, however, the second phase was not undertaken. In 2009, MENZA announced an online survey with New Zealand secondary school music teachers, to gather data about teachers' experiences within the classroom and in the wider school. I contacted the organisers and, with their agreement, worked with them to shape some of the questions to elicit data relevant to this study. The organisers agreed to provide me with access to the findings, which have informed the discussion in Chapter 10. The findings from the survey were included in Chapter 3 (Section 3.2.2).

#### 4.4.2.2 *Narrative and stories*

Mary Catherine Bateson (1994) posits that "our species thinks in metaphors and learns through stories" (p. 11). During the past 30 years, narrative inquiry, which hinges to a large extent on both story and metaphor, has been developed into a qualitative methodology in its own right. Clandinin and Connelly (2000), who are amongst its pioneers, comment that "simply stated ... narrative inquiry is stories lived and told" (p. 20).

Narrative methodologies require "collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social milieus" (Clandinin & Connelly,

2000, p. 20). They hinge on the telling and retelling of stories of experience. While the use of such a methodology was not applicable to this current inquiry, the project, nonetheless, was significantly influenced by narrative thinking and by story. Narrative thinking rejects what Clandinin and Connelly (2000) call the 'grand narrative', which evokes "an unquestioned way of looking at things" (p. 22). Instead, it conceptualises life experiences in terms of story, and the ongoing evolution of personal identity, as stories to live by. Narrative inquiry also necessitates ongoing reflection or 'wakefulness' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), a process which has been employed throughout this study. (See Section 4.4.2.4 for a discussion of the reflexive stance.)

The use of metaphor is an aspect of many narrative texts. This can be seen in Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) own metaphor of teachers' professional knowledge landscapes. Metaphorical thinking has been central to the interpretation of the teachers' stories in this study. It led to the development of the *two worlds* metaphor which informed the discussion (see Section 4.6.4 and Chapter 10). A narrative approach also informed the research method, in which interviews were conceptualised as a form of conversation (see Section 4.4.4).

Narrative thinking has informed the language used within this thesis and, to some extent, its style. For example, although the term 'data' is used to describe the interview-conversations held with the teachers, these are often referred to as 'teachers' stories', which reflects their conversational and storied nature. The commitment to making this thesis accessible to teachers, as outlined in Chapter 1 (Section 1.2), has meant that the written text has been influenced by narrative style. It also avoids, where possible, the use of technical language. My personal story presented in Chapter 1 (Section 1.3) was written as a narrative and the outline of the development of the *two worlds* metaphor also owes much to narrative style.

#### 4.4.2.3 *Life story and life history approaches*

As stated in Chapter 1 (Section 1.2), it is sometimes argued that educational research has not been useful to teachers. Life story and life history are approaches which represent attempts by researchers to "sponsor new voices – [through] the world of 'stories', 'narratives' and 'lives'" (Goodson, 2003, p. 5) and thus to bring teachers more firmly into the world of educational research. Goodson (2003) maintains that "the great virtue of stories is that they particularize and make concrete our experiences" (p. 28).

In a life story inquiry, a researcher works with participants in order to understand and present aspects of their life experience. Goodson (2003) states that “life story gives provide data for the researcher, often in loosely structured interviews. The researcher seeks to elicit the teacher’s perceptions but is generally passive rather than actively interrogative” (p. 47). A hallmark of life stories is the lack of theoretical interpretation. According to Goodson, concerns about ‘colonising’ teachers’ accounts, and thus potentially creating an abusive power relationship, have confined the researcher “to the role of ‘scribe’, recording in faithful and exact form the teacher’s voice and limiting commentary to a minimum” (p. 58).

While such stories of experience do have a place, the lack of interpretive analysis has been seen as a major weakness. It is because of this that Goodson (2003) urges researchers to explore their data within their studies to find both thematic and contextual understandings. This can be achieved through life history. Life history, thus:

begins with the life story that the teacher tells, but seeks to build on the information provided. Hence other people’s accounts might be elicited, documentary evidence and a range of historical data amassed. The concern is to develop a wide intertextual and intercontextual mode of analysis. (Goodson, 2003, p. 47)

Goodson (2003) describes life history as “*a story of action within a theory of context*” (p. 47, original emphasis).

Both life story and life history have influenced the orientation of this study. The semi-structured interview-conversations (see Section 4.4.4), and the relatively low key way in which the interviews were conducted have something in common with life story. However, it is life history that has provided the greater influence. Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis demonstrated that a deep contextual understanding of the music teachers’ lives has been sought. Furthermore, while the five data chapters (Chapters 5 to 9) present the teachers’ stories without evaluative commentary, the data have been interpreted in Chapter 10 using a range of interpretive frames. This is in keeping with life history approaches.

However, this study differs from typical life story or life history inquiries. Such inquiries are often conducted over a long period of time, involving ongoing contact between the researcher and the participants. Given that the aim of this study was to seek an understanding of the experiences of a range of teachers working in diverse settings at

a particular historical juncture, this study did not follow a typical life history methodology.

#### **4.4.2.4      *Researcher as instrument: A reflexive stance***

Reflexivity is included amongst the methodological *bricoles* that fashioned this study, because of its significance for the way in which I worked throughout the project. Reflexivity relates to an ability to think about one's own thinking. Reflexive thinking differs from reflective thinking in that reflection involves thinking about our actions, whereas reflexivity requires us to reflect on our own processes of reflection (Moore, 2004, p. 148).

In the research context, reflexivity can be seen as the “process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the human as instrument” (Hodges, 2001, p. 278). Reinharz (1997) links reflexivity to the notion that we have many selves, and so not only do we *bring* our own self into our field of research, but we also *create* our self within the field. Guba and Lincoln (2008) also endorse the concept of multiple selves, considering it to be essential that we ‘interrogate’ each of our selves in order to discover the relationships between ourselves and our research enterprises.

An interpretive research project such as this, drawing on methodological and interpretive *bricolage*, places high demands on the ‘researcher as the instrument’. Section 4.2 has demonstrated that as the researcher I could not be a ‘dispassionate observer’ of ‘objective reality’. Instead, my own background, history, knowledge and attitudes have all played a role in shaping every aspect of the research journey. My own extensive experience within the field of secondary school music education made me especially alert to the importance of challenging my own perceptions, attitudes, values and thinking at every stage of the process.

Early in the research journey I set myself a reflexive project, to reflect on and interrogate my own thinking in relation to three of my ‘selves’ – teacher, musician and emergent researcher. That project, outlined in Chapter 1 (Section 1.3), helped sharpen my awareness and establish reflexivity as a core disposition to bring to the study.

#### **4.4.3    *Ethical action***

Research undertaken through Massey University must follow the university's rigorous ethical procedures. This project was screened against Massey University's protocols, and deemed to be low risk. It was thus not necessary to obtain approval from the

university's ethics committee. A standard University statement detailing the low risk status of the project was included on all information supplied to potential participants. (See Appendices for participant information sheets.)

Lincoln and Denzin (2003) consider that "in interpretivist social science ... ethics has been reembedded in the practices, politics, and presentation of research results [and that] ethical considerations have come to the forefront" (p. 5). Thus in interpretive research, the issue of 'ethics' does not simply involve gaining ethical permissions at the outset of a study; ethical action is woven right throughout the project. That was true of this study, and ethical considerations, particularly those involving participants, were addressed at each phase of the study.

An unexpected ethical issue arose during the data analysis. In explaining how their schools managed the provision of itinerant instrumental lessons, many of the teachers reported that their school charged parents, either directly or indirectly, for music lessons, despite the fact that it is not legal for schools to charge for curriculum instruction or materials (Ministry of Education, 1998). The teachers were aware that such a practice contravened regulations, but reported that without it they were unable to provide students studying music with adequate instrumental teaching, which was a core aspect of the curriculum.

The resourcing of itinerant lessons was an issue of considerable concern to participants, and it was important to include it in the study. To ensure against accidental identification of participants, identifiers have been withheld from the excerpts of conversation used in the relevant section of the study (see Chapter 8, Section 8.3.2). In addition, no extra details have been provided at that point, and the gender of the speaker has not been revealed. The issue of resourcing of itinerant instrumental lessons has been taken up in the policy recommendations in Chapter 11 (Section 11.5). Identifiers have also been withheld on a few other occasions when the details of the conversation may have led to identification of the participant.

Other ethical considerations are discussed later in this chapter in the context of the relevant research processes and decisions. Section 4.5.1 outlines the process used to obtain informed consent. Section 4.6.1 explains the use of pseudonyms. Section 4.6.1.1 outlines procedures used in relation to transcription of recordings. Section 4.6.2.1 discusses participant confidentiality.

#### **4.4.4 Research method: Semi-structured interview-conversations**

Goodson and Sikes (2001) state that “the key reason for using any research method has to be that it is the most appropriate one, the one most likely to produce data which address, answer or otherwise meet and fulfill the questions, aims and purposes of a specific enquiry” (p. 20). The research method of semi-structured interviews was chosen for this study as this had the potential to provide rich and detailed information (Denscombe, 2003). The choice to use interviews rather than a survey or questionnaire did limit the number of participants and, as Denscombe (2003) contends, that was an issue to be taken into consideration. However, the chosen method enabled me to discuss with the participants the kinds of matters which are best handled through interviews (Denscombe, 2003, p. 165). These included participants’ experiences, feelings, emotions, and responses to sensitive situations.

In the written research proposal, I had stated:

My current thinking is that there will be two kinds of interviews. Initial one-to-one ‘interview-conversations’ (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 27) with each teacher will focus on aspects of the teachers’ ‘career histories’. These interviews may be relatively unstructured. Subsequent semi-structured interviews will focus on the actual work experiences of the teachers and the decisions they make in relation to the four stated research questions. I plan to tape record each interview and either transcribe it myself or have it transcribed for me. (Donaldson, 2005, p. 16)

Before commencing the data collection I reconsidered the purpose of two interviews and made the decision to have a single interview with each participant. A number of factors underpinned the decision. Reflection had suggested that the rationale for two interviews was rather simplistic and may have prevented teachers from weaving together aspects of their past and present experiences. Additionally, an invitation to teachers to talk about their ‘career history’ – their musical background and previous teaching experiences – seemed to be a concrete place from which to start an interview and an easy and natural way to open the conversation. At a pragmatic level, two interviews may also have exploited the goodwill of busy teachers and would have made it difficult to include participants from rural and urban settings within both main islands of New Zealand. In fact, the decision to have one interview served well. Participants were generous with their time and the single interview provided very rich data.

The meetings with participants followed the semi-structured 'interview-conversation' format. Their conversational nature enabled the establishment of a relationship with the participants (an important aspect of practice for qualitative researchers). Additionally, as Denscombe (2003) suggests, the use of semi-structured interviews, allowed for the use of questions. A set of core questions was developed and then particularised for current and past practitioners and advisors (see Appendices).

Denscombe's (2003) contention that semi-structured interviews also provide flexibility that may be missing with structured interviews and so "let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher" (p. 167) proved to be the case. The questions did not dominate the interviews and the participants were given the freedom to highlight and discuss issues that were of most importance to them.

#### **4.4.5 Participants**

The written proposal set out my intentions in relation to the choice of participants:

The research interviews will be limited to secondary school music teachers who are employed full-time in one secondary school, and who have the primary responsibility for the delivery of the music programme in their school. The teachers selected will teach classroom music, although their teaching may not be limited solely to classroom music teaching. Such teachers may, for example, teach another subject in the school in addition to music, or they may teach partly in the role of an instrumental or vocal itinerant teacher.

Participants will include, but will not necessarily be limited to, teachers who hold the middle management position of 'Head of Music'. In some smaller schools, the teacher who has the 'de facto' responsibility for music may not be a head of department. That teacher may have the title of 'Teacher in Charge of Music', or they may not even have that title. In some cases, especially in smaller rural schools, a beginning teacher may find that they are the only music teacher on the staff, and so it falls to them to teach classroom music and organise and run the extra-curricular music programme of the school.

I also plan to include interviews with people who have left secondary music teaching during the past five years. This group will be chosen so that

their most recent employment as a secondary music teacher would have met the criteria set out above. Although my 'energy' is largely to work with current practitioners, the resignation in August of this year by a local head of music, who cited burn-out as the reason she was leaving the teaching profession, along with a fragment from a conversation reported to me that 'all the music teachers in Wellington are leaving because of burn-out' has convinced that it is important to talk to this group of former teachers as part of my study. (Donaldson, 2005, pp. 17-18)

When undertaking the study, I was largely able to meet the goals I set in relation to the choice of participants. The study included nineteen participants of whom fifteen were current practitioners and four were not practising as school music teachers at that time. Every current practitioner was responsible for the delivery of music their school, and each of the former practitioners had also held that responsibility. Although I had initially determined that the current practitioners in the study would all be teachers who were employed full-time in their school at the time of interview, I did later include two teachers who held a job-share position as head of music. My decision to include these teachers was based on their circumstances, which I believed would provide rich and diverse data for the study.

Every current practitioner held the primary responsibility for the delivery of the music programme within their school. Some of the teachers taught music as their only subject, others taught music alongside subjects such as drama, social studies or mathematics. A further group combined classroom music teaching with instrumental or vocal teaching in their school. Apart from the two teachers who held the job-share position, the study did not include, amongst the current practitioners, music teachers who were employed either in a part-time capacity within their school or solely as an itinerant music teacher. Nor did it include teachers who assisted in teaching music, but who did not have the primary responsibility for the delivery of the school music programme. The decision to include only teachers responsible for music in their school was governed to a large extent by the limited numbers of participants who could be included in the study. While assistant teachers without the responsibility for music could have made a valuable contribution, the study focused on teachers who held the responsibility for music, as empirical evidence has demonstrated that tensions of practice encountered by teachers who act as middle managers are heightened (see for example Ingvarson et al., 2005) and anecdotal evidence has suggested that this is particularly true for music teachers.

In terms of the position that they held in the school, the current practitioners fell into two different categories: middle managers who were either a head of department (HOD), or head of faculty (HOF)<sup>32</sup>; and assistant teachers, who did not hold management units<sup>33</sup>, but nevertheless had the responsibility for music in the school. In New Zealand such teachers are usually referred to as a teacher in charge (TIC) and they operate as a de-facto head of department, but without the status, time allocation or extra allowance given to HODs. (Typically these are younger teachers teaching in smaller schools and often in smaller centres.)

#### **4.4.6 Sampling process**

The proposal for the study had established that participants would be selected largely through purposive sampling; that is, “the sample is ‘hand-picked’ for the research” (Denscombe, 2003, p. 15). Following Denscombe (2003), I justified the use of purposive sampling by the fact that the selection of the participants was on the grounds that they “were likely to produce the most valuable data” (p. 15). Denscombe comments that “interviews are generally conducted with lower numbers [of participants] than would be the case with questionnaire surveys, and this means that the selection of people to interview is more likely to be based on non-probability sampling” (p. 172). I also made some use of ‘snowball sampling’, a process whereby “the researcher works with an informant who tells them of friends or colleagues who might be prepared to participate” (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 25).

I used my own networks with current practitioners and music advisors to identify initial participants. Every teacher approached was willing to be interviewed, and gave generously of his or her time. Next, I contacted a colleague in a major city, who suggested names of possible participants to me. When these contacts were followed up, it was gratifying to find that everyone approached was willing to become a participant. The final participants were also identified through my own wider networks.

The research proposal did not stipulate the number of participants to be included, relying rather on the process of ‘saturation’ (Bertaux, 1981) as a way of determining when a big enough selection had been made. Goodson and Sikes (2001) suggest that

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<sup>32</sup> Traditionally New Zealand secondary schools have been organised into subject area departments such as maths, science, music, visual arts. In an attempt to break perceived ‘silo’ thinking, increasing numbers of schools are aggregating departments together into a faculty. A typical such grouping is a performing arts faculty – including dance, drama, and music.

<sup>33</sup> These are salary units which can be allocated to staff who undertake areas of responsibility.

“adequacy is dependent not upon quantity but upon the richness of the data and the nature of the aspect of life being investigated” (p. 23). Although it did not stipulate numbers, the proposal stated that I wanted to interview up to five teachers in each of four categories. The first three categories would represent current practitioners who had from one to five, six to fifteen, and more than fifteen years of classroom experience. The fourth category was to comprise teachers who had left classroom teaching during the past five years and/or worked in a music advisory capacity. Additionally, I wanted to ensure that participants included a reasonable gender balance, were representative of both New Zealand Māori and Pākehā<sup>34</sup> populations, and reflected a range of school contexts in relation to factors such as decile rating, school size, type, and location.

In undertaking the research, I was largely able to select participants in accordance with the proposal, although the practical realities of finding willing participants meant that the numbers were not exact. Of the fifteen current practitioners, four had one to five years experience of secondary school music teaching, five had six to fifteen years experience, and six had been teaching secondary music for more than fifteen years. All of the former teachers in the study had taught music in more than one school, and had also held the position of HOD Music. Of the four former teachers interviewed, three were now working in some kind of advisory capacity in the area of secondary school music education. I was particularly pleased to be able to interview the advisors, as they added an ‘expert’ dimension to the study which I was keen to include. Two of the practitioners had close affiliations with Māori, with Māori musical practices such as kapa haka, and with teaching and learning in English/Māori bilingual settings. The school settings represented in the study were very diverse. Table 1, set out on the following page, provides details of the participant sample.

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<sup>34</sup> Pākehā is the name the indigenous Māori people gave to European settlers, and it has remained within New Zealand parlance.

*Table 1: Participant details*

<b>School type</b>	State schools	12
	Integrated schools	2
	Private	1
<b>Gender of students</b>	Co-ed schools	9
	Single sex boys	2
	Single sex girls	4
<b>Location of schools</b>	Major city	6
	Provincial city	4
	Small town/rural area	5
<b>Decile</b>	Decile 1 - 5	4
	Decile 6 - 8	5
	Decile 9 - 10	5
	No Decile	1
<b>School size</b>	Up to 500	4
	600 to 1200	6
	Over 1200	5
<b>Location of interviews</b>	Interviews at the teacher's school or place of work	10
	Interviews at the teacher's home	1
	Interviews at a 'neutral' venue	5
	Interviews in my office	3
<b>Years of service of current practitioners</b>	Fewer than 5 years of teaching	5
	6 - 15 years of teaching	6
	15+ years of teaching	4
<b>Music advisors</b>		2
<b>Former teachers</b>		2

## **4.5 Fieldwork**

The purpose of this section is to outline the fieldwork phase of the study.

### **4.5.1 Informed consent**

University practice requires all researchers to gain informed consent from participants. All participants were provided with an information sheet, which gave details of the project, outlined the nature of their involvement, rights, and confidentiality procedures. A copy of the interview schedule was also provided. Participants signed a consent form prior to the interview. In the case of practising teachers, a courtesy letter was sent to the school principal outlining the study and requesting permission to access the teacher. Once interviews were transcribed, they were emailed back to participants who were invited to make any alterations they wished, and confirm that they were happy for the data to be used.

### **4.5.2 Data collection**

Once participants had agreed to become part of the study, we negotiated, usually by email, a time and place that suited us both. Seven of the participants lived in the other main island of New Zealand, and the others lived in a range of locations, so interviews had to be scheduled at times when I had the opportunity to arrange visits. I had informed the participants that the interview would take up to an hour and a half, and that it would be helpful to choose a time and place where we would not be interrupted. While nine participants chose a venue other than their workplace, ten chose to schedule the interview at their work place, and those interviews were generally slotted into a very busy working day. While some of the participants managed to put interruptions on hold during the interview, in a number of cases the interview was interrupted several times by everyday business that couldn't wait. Although the interruptions at times broke the flow of the interview, they did highlight the multi-layered nature of the teacher's working life.

Every interview was audio-taped for later transcription. On one occasion, an interview spanned several hours of a particularly busy day and I lost concentration as the tape was being changed over. I was mortified to discover when transcribing the tape that the first eight minutes of the interview had been erased. I informed the participant, and chose not to redo the interview, as the data lost were biographical in nature, and could be checked if necessary at later date.

Once the interview process had begun, it became apparent that the data reflected a more diverse range of contexts than I had initially imagined would be the case. Because the majority of the current practitioners had previously taught in other schools, they brought their experience of those schools to our conversations. The former teachers had also taught in a range of schools and, additionally, the music advisors were able to share perceptions gained from working with large numbers of secondary teachers and music departments across a wide area of both the North and South Islands.

Initially I had anticipated that the interview process would take place within a period of twelve to eighteen months. In fact, seventeen of the nineteen interviews did take place within twelve months: five in December 2006 and twelve in 2007 (three in April, seven in June, and two in October). However, when I started working with the data in 2008, and mindful that “in qualitative research, the investigator samples until repetition from multiple sources is obtained” (Morse, 1994, p. 230), it became apparent that further data from a first year teacher and from those working in mid to lower decile schools would strengthen the data set. Unfortunately, no interviews took place in 2008 and I was not able to set up the final interviews until 2009. Heavy commitments in my workplace precluded me from making the progress that I had anticipated in 2008, and I chose to suspend my PhD enrolment (which was part-time in nature) for six months.

Early in 2009 I was in a position to approach two further teachers – one a first year teacher working in a decile 3 school, and another who had taught overseas and was now teaching in a decile 6 school in a major city. Both agreed to become participants in the study and were later interviewed. I also approached a teacher who had trained and taught overseas. He initially agreed to become a participant, but unfortunately he left the area before I was able to interview him and he did not respond to follow up emails. At that point in time, no new themes were arising in the data and I chose not to seek further interviews.

Although initially disconcerted by the fact that the interviewing process spanned three years, I later decided that this was a positive feature of the study. It meant that the sampling took place over a period of time, so the danger of the practising teachers all reacting to any particular ‘issue of the day’ was minimised. In this regard, one of the teachers interviewed in 2007 commented, three years after his interview, that he had just reread his copy of the transcription and still stood by what he had said. Analysis of

the data determined that there was no difference of any significance between the early or later interviews in terms of the kinds of themes that came through.

## **4.6 Data analysis, presentation and interpretation**

Wayne Bowman (2005a) alerts us of the need to take care when engaging in music education research, but also of the need for flexibility.

To engage responsibly in human practices like music and education and research requires vigilance, care, an abiding concern for right action in light of one's potential fallibility, and much creative imagination. The habit of changing habits is crucial; and so is the recognition that there can be no formula for determining when change is required. (Bowman, 2005a, pp. 162-163)

This statement sums up my experience. I had to have the habit of changing habits throughout. On some occasions the changes took little time, on others, my way of thinking and interpreting lead down a pathway that did not stand up to further scrutiny. It was a very iterative process.

### **4.6.1 Data analysis**

Recognising that the outcomes of interpretive inquiries are always influenced by the particular person conducting the research, I took great care when working with the teachers' stories to ensure, as far as possible, that I did not overlay my own biases onto them. To this end, I spent considerable time listening to the tapes from each participant, getting to know the nuances of their language, so that I was able to connect the stories back to the person, rather than considering them out of context. Relatively early I assigned a pseudonym to each participant. I quickly found, however, that this was unhelpful, as I lost the connection with the person. I therefore abandoned those pseudonyms, and chose to work with the participants' real names until the final stages of the project, and I believe this to have been a strength.

#### **4.6.1.1 Transcription**

Although some qualitative researchers do not transcribe spoken conversations into a written text, working rather from audio texts, I considered it essential to create a written text of the interviews. The written transcriptions captured the nature of the spoken language, which often did not adhere to the grammatical conventions of written language. Riessman (2002) suggests that "transcribing discourse, like photographing

reality, is an interpretive practice” (p. 226) and that “there is no one, true representation of spoken language” (p. 225). While acknowledging that it was not possible to capture all of the nuances of spoken language in a written text, I nevertheless considered that the creation of written transcriptions of conversations with teachers provided the best means available for me to stay as close as possible to the teachers’ stories. This was particularly important, given my ‘insider’ status within the field of secondary music education. In the interests of capturing the participants’ meanings as closely as possible, the written texts were emailed to them once transcribed. Participants were invited to make any alterations they wished to the script, before providing me with approval to make use of it. Interestingly, very few alterations were made by participants to their transcripts. Permissions for transcription were built into the official documentation and the transcribers signed a written confidentiality document.

#### *4.6.1.2 Coding, categories and themes*

Bernard (2006) states that analysis “is the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place” (Bernard, 2006, p. 452). In order to achieve this, Denzin (2002) advocates “bracketing the phenomenon, or reducing it to its essential elements and cutting it loose from the natural world so that its essential structures and features may be uncovered” (p. 349) prior to reassembling it and relocating it back into the social world. To achieve this end, I followed Saldana’s (2009) process of working from codes to categories and themes, and heeded his advice to novice qualitative researchers to “code anything and everything that was collected” (p. 15).

I chose four written transcripts, and annotated them closely trying to identify codes, each of which consisted of “a word, or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana, 2009, p. 3). I used the NVivo computer program as a data analysis tool and was reassured by Saldana’s (2009) comment, that “rarely will anyone get coding right the first time. Qualitative inquiry demands meticulous attention to language and deep reflection on the emergent patterns and meaning of human experience” (Saldana, 2009, p. 10). I found, in fact, that it required several ‘coding cycles’ to refine my concepts. Typically, the material I coded was small chunks of written text, related to a particular idea and I coded text into several codes simultaneously.

I chose not to use NVivo for the next stage of assembling coded material into categories and themes. Instead, I created 'evidence tables' in Word landscape documents, which enabled me to progressively assemble together the chunks of the teachers stories into broader categories and then themes, and provide my own comments on them. I found working with the tables powerful, because they enabled me to draw together the teachers' experiences, reported in their own words, with my own thinking about them. More importantly, the tables provided a means of ensuring that the teachers' perspectives and stories remained central to the analysis, thus lessening the possibility of potential 'colonisation' (Goodson & Sikes, 2001) from my insider knowledge. (An example of an evidence table is included in the Appendices.)

#### **4.6.2 Data presentation**

In relation to presenting the data, I had to be both patient, and cognizant of Bowman's (2005a) 'habit of changing habits'. My initial intention had been to structure the data chapters in relation to the four research questions and, in fact, I wrote a draft chapter addressing the first question, which explored the expectations attached to the teachers' roles. However, I was deeply dissatisfied with it. At one level, everything a teacher does, is by way of response to some kind of expectation, and it became impossible to know where to draw the line. I next followed a growing sense that the 'whole' in terms of the teachers' experiences, was more than the sum of the parts, and experimented with creating vignettes of the experiences of three teachers to use as an introduction to the data chapters. This too was flawed, as it pre-empted and weakened data that needed to be introduced later. As a point of interest, my conviction that the whole was more than the sum of the parts grew steadily throughout the time I worked with the data, and ultimately led to the development of the *two worlds* metaphor which is set out later in this chapter.

Finally, a structure which best served the teachers' stories and the research aims emerged. The five data chapters are not structured in relation to the research questions. Instead the teachers' experiences in relation to the questions are explored through themes which emerged from their stories. The research questions, however, are used as a structural basis for the discussion.

##### **4.6.2.1 Confidentiality**

The ethical issue of confidentiality of the participants required careful negotiation. The secondary school music teaching community in New Zealand is relatively small and, theoretically, it could be reasonably easy for participants to be identified from details of

their personal background and teaching context. While many of the participants made it clear that they were open to such identification, I wanted to take all reasonable steps to safeguard their anonymity. Each participant has been provided with a pseudonym, and in the data presentation, when deemed necessary, general rather than specific details have been provided. For example, the instrument played by the teacher is not always named, and at times specific information about their particular teaching context has been withheld.

The pseudonyms chosen all begin with a different letter of the alphabet. To interrupt the written flow as little as possible, participants are referenced by an initial and the page number of an electronic transcript. Thus a reference to page 20 of Leith's transcript is referenced (L:20).

Particular care was taken with the presentation of data from the music advisors and the two teachers who held a job-share position. The job-share teachers have been treated as individual participants. As a number of the participants also had music colleagues on the staff, reference a colleague was not out of the ordinary. There was a very small group of advisors in the country at the time the fieldwork was undertaken and to protect the confidentiality of the advisors as far as possible, each was referenced in two different ways. In common with all other participants they were provided with a pseudonym, and this was routinely used in the data presentation chapters. At times in their interviews, however, the advisors spoke from their knowledge or perspective as an advisor, and I wanted to capture that. In such situations, the advisors were referenced as MA1 (music advisor 1), MA2, and so on. At those times the gender of the speaker was not indicated. Thus it is not possible for the reader to identify any of the participants as music advisors.

In keeping with my expressed intentions of presenting, where practicable, participants' experiences in their own words, I have used many quotations in the five data chapters. In drawing on quotations, I have on occasions made small changes in the spoken idiom to align it with written language. This has been done carefully to ensure that the changes have not altered meaning. The rationale was that teachers would not themselves have presented a written document in the spoken idiom. It was more respectful towards them to make the minor changes necessary.

### **4.6.3 Interpretive bricolage**

Gherardi and Turner (2002) remind us that in research concerned with *discovery* rather than *verification*, “theory is the ‘jottings in the margins of ongoing research’, a kind of research in which order is not very immediately attained, a messy, puzzling and intriguing kind of research in which the conclusions are not known before the investigations are carried out” (p. 90). This was certainly my experience as I sought to “illuminate” (Denzin, 2002, p. 362) the data. As an interpretive *bricoleur*, I heeded the advice of Miles and Huberman (2002) to be open to innovation, expect iteration, seek formalization and distrust it, and stay self aware.

The teachers’ stories covered a very broad range of experience, and I explored many possible interpretive *bricoles* before settling on theories expounded by Bernstein (1996) and Kahn et al. (1964) as useful means of interpreting aspects of the teachers’ experience. However, neither theory provided a means of explaining the ‘whole’ of the teachers’ experiences.

### **4.6.4 Development of the two worlds metaphor**

As I sought further ways to illuminate the meaning of the teachers’ stories, I was constantly reminded of the story, often recounted in musical circles, of the great Russian composer and pianist Sergei Rachmaninoff. Following the performance of one of his own piano concertos, Rachmaninoff left the stage profoundly dissatisfied. Despite the brilliance of his playing, the careful shaping of each phrase, the building of tension within each section of the music, and the warm reception of the audience, Rachmaninoff’s own experience was that his performance had ‘missed the point’. The ‘point’ rested with his understanding of the ultimate meaning of the music, which lay, not within individual phrases or sections, but in the integration of all of the parts into one coherent and meaningful whole.

This story repeatedly took me back to my intuition that there was a ‘whole’ that sat beneath the teachers’ day-to-day experiences, and that this ‘whole’ was indeed greater than the sum of the parts. But although I had found ways of interpreting aspects of the teachers’ stories, I did not yet have the means of connecting up their experiences into one meaningful whole; the ‘gestalt’ was missing<sup>35</sup>. In seeking to illuminate the whole, I returned to Clandinin and Connelly’s (1995) metaphor of the teachers’ professional

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<sup>35</sup> *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Brown, 1993) defines ‘gestalt’ as “an integrated perceptual structure or unity conceived as functionally more than the sum of its parts”.

knowledge landscape, which throughout the course of the inquiry had consistently attracted me as a way of making sense of teachers' experiences.

In common with the teachers in Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) studies, the music teachers occupied in-classroom and out-of-classroom places, in which there were typically different expectations and ways of looking at things. The out-of-classroom place bore strong resemblances to the out-of-class place on Clandinin and Connelly's landscape. It was a largely objective, cognitive world, dominated by the language and values of rational thinking and typified by systems, policies and structures. For example, the lives of all of the individuals within the study were governed by timetables, which divided the day into discrete 'blocks' of time, and by clocks and bells which ensured that at the end of the allocated time, students and teachers moved on to their next 'block'.

The out-of-class place of the teachers was also influenced by policies, ideas and documents funnelled through the conduit from outside. External policies created an objective, outcomes-driven climate. The ANZC established outcomes for learning, and external credentialing requirements, such as NCEA, dictated outcomes for assessment. Furthermore, as the data chapters had demonstrated, the teachers in my study were all, to some extent or other, 'disturbed on the landscape'. These 'disturbances', in fact, pointed to the tensions of practice encountered by the teachers.

However, despite these obvious correlations with Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) metaphor, there were still issues. The metaphor, as it was, did not account for several important aspects of the teachers' stories and so did not provide an adequate lens through which to explore, and understand, the music teachers' tensions. In musical parlance it did not completely 'ring true' in relation to my study. Acting as an *interpretive bricoleur*, and working with the 'habit of changing habits', I re-examined the metaphor. I returned to the sketches of the landscape – the *bricoles* – that I had drawn when I first encountered Clandinin and Connelly's work, and re-imagined them in the light of the music teachers' stories, exploring the places where the two did not connect.

One issue was that the metaphor did not adequately account for the teachers' work in the extra-curricular arena. Although strictly speaking, extra-curricular music groups operate outside of timetabled classroom time and so might be considered to belong to the out-of-classroom place, the teachers spoke of their experience with these groups in a manner that had much more in common with the in-classroom place than the out-of-

classroom place. I returned to the image I had drawn of the landscape, and tentatively split the in-classroom place into two parts, to accommodate the extra-curricular music groups. However, this was not convincing. Although the image could now accommodate the extra-curricular groups in the in-classroom place, it did not take account of the fact that the in-classroom place – with good reason – was often a source of major tension for the teachers.

A second issue pertained to the nature, or quality of the landscape that the music teachers occupied. Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) landscape is embedded in a sacred story which they consider gives rise to one of the core dilemmas of teaching – the divide between theory and practice. When I examined my teachers' stories closely and reflected on their experiences, I came to the conclusion that while they were influenced and 'disturbed', along with all teachers, by the experience of negotiating two epistemologically different spaces, there was something else, which I suspected was for them even more fundamental, that sat at the heart of their 'disturbance'.

A third issue with the metaphor was the position of the teachers in relation to the in-classroom and out-of-classroom places. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) envisaged the teachers as moving between each of the places, by crossing a semi-permeable boundary. It was this movement from place to place across the boundary that gave rise to their disturbances. While the teachers in my study certainly occupied each place, the image of teachers apparently moving with relative freedom between the two places did not adequately account for the level of pressure and constriction that was evident in some of the teachers' stories in my study.

For a time, it appeared that these three issues would render the metaphor unhelpful as an aid to understanding the experiences of the teachers in my study. Yet, I was unwilling to abandon it; its power as a tool for understanding the teachers' experiences still attracted me. I returned to the images I had sketched on paper and explored them further. At the same time, I explored the concept of the two separate places on the landscape – which I began to see as different worlds – and the relationship of the teachers to those places. In one of those seemingly miraculous 'aha' moments, the metaphor and its role and significance in my study snapped into place. I had, indeed, laid bare "a secret that [was] hidden in plain sight" (Palmer, 2007, p. 3). As I cautiously tested out the slightly modified metaphor, my experience was as if the component parts of a musical chord had come together, each resonating at its exact pitch. When each

note in a chord is in its correct place, the chord locks together, and the resultant harmony is crisp, clear and satisfying.

The re-envisaged metaphor still owes its existence to the work of Clandinin and Connelly (1995), being built from their landscape metaphor. It retains three main features – two separate and contrasting places, and the teacher who must negotiate them both. The two places on the new landscape share much in common with the places of the original metaphor. One still has an ‘inside’ or interior quality, and the other an ‘outside’ or exterior quality, and each place still has its own language and ways of looking at the world. However, the two places in my metaphor, rather than representing the in-class and out-of-class places, instead represent the ‘inner’ world of music and the wider ‘outer’ world of the school – the two worlds that the music teacher must try to successfully navigate and draw together. As in the original metaphor, the ‘out-of-class’ place – the world of the school – is still influenced by policy and ideas from outside, but this study does not focus on the conduit as outlined Clandinin and Connelly. For the purposes of this study, the conduit and policies which are transported through it, have been subsumed into the outer world of the school.

The position of the teachers in relation to the two places on the landscape has also undergone a change. The fundamental role of music teachers in their schools is to enable the provision of music – be it in the classroom or in the wider school. They must ‘translate’ the experience and thought forms of music into the school setting. It is possible, therefore, to conceive of the teachers as being positioned at the interface between the world of the school and the world of music. Following Kahn et al. (1964), the teachers can be seen as occupying a ‘boundary position’, in this case between ‘systems’ within the wider organisation of the school. The model where music teachers are positioned at the interface, ‘between the two worlds’, makes it possible to explore in detail, and make sense of, some of the tensions that they encounter in their daily working lives.

The *two worlds* metaphor makes it possible to go to the heart of the teachers’ experiences and explore the fundamental tension of practice experienced by them all. Their stories of the importance of music in their lives, which motivated them to ‘enable’ music within their schools settings, suggested that they share a ‘sacred story’ (Crites, 1971) – a story which at once underpins and elucidates their connection with music. The sacred story is however, neither widely held, nor necessarily even understood, by others on their professional knowledge landscape. The sacred story and the *two worlds*

metaphor are revisited in depth in Chapter 10 where they serve as part of the interpretive *bricolage*.

## 4.7 Chapter summary

The purpose of Chapter 4 has been to present the design of the study, the assumptions on which it was built, and the processes used to undertake the research. The study is situated within the constructivist-interpretive paradigm, which holds different assumptions and premises from those on which traditional positivist research is based. It rejects the notion that one single, objective reality exists, and that the role of the researcher is to stand apart from the research subject. This inquiry reflects the interpretivist belief, and postmodern thinking, that no single reality exists, and that it is not possible to separate the knower from the known. In keeping with the qualitative research tradition, the current inquiry examines an aspect of the lived experience of the participants, seeking to understand their world from their own perspective. It utilises the concepts of *bricolage* and the researcher as *bricoleur*.

Issues of the trustworthiness of this project were also discussed. The rigour of research is conventionally tested using the concepts of validity and reliability. These measures, however, are built on positivist assumptions, and need to be reframed for qualitative research. While currently there is no consensus amongst qualitative researchers as to how to do this, within this project, tests devised by researchers such as Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Merriam (1998) have been used to examine, as far as possible, the reliability and validity of the research.

The second part of the chapter discussed the research design, outlining the aims of the project and the research questions. It also discussed the methodological *bricolage* of the study, which was informed by narrative and story, life story and life history approaches, and reflexivity. The research method of interview-conversations was explained and issues of ethics were addressed. The research processes were also examined. These included procedures used to select participants and obtain informed consent, and to collect, analyse, present and interpret the data. The final section discussed interpretive bricolage and described the development of the *two worlds* metaphor.

# **Chapter 5**

## **Teachers and their role expectations**

### **5.1 Introduction to the five data chapters**

The purpose of Chapters 5 to 9 is to present the data, or teachers' stories, from the study. As was outlined in Chapter 4 (Section 4.6.2), the data chapters are not structured in terms of the four research questions. Instead the teachers' experiences in relation to the questions are explored through major themes which were present in the participants' stories. An examination of the tensions of practice encountered by secondary school music teachers must have at its heart the background experiences and beliefs of the teachers themselves, as these constitute the referents against which teachers measure their own lived experience. Chapter 5 thus presents the participants in the study and examines the core expectations associated with their role. Chapter 6 explores aspects of music as a classroom subject, and then examines the teachers' work in the junior classroom. Chapter 7 focuses on the senior music classroom and Chapter 8 explores the teachers' work beyond the classroom. Chapter 9, the final data chapter, examines the teachers' daily working lives.

#### ***5.1.1 Introduction to Chapter 5***

The purpose of Chapter 5 is twofold. First, it presents a representative sample of the participants in the study, describing their musical backgrounds, their beliefs about the value of music, and the motivations and expectations they brought into teaching. This enables a picture of the teachers' wider contexts to be developed. Second, the chapter explores the core expectations of the teachers' roles that were held by senior managers.

### **5.2 Musical backgrounds of the participants**

The participants in this study came into secondary school music teaching from very varied backgrounds. Some grew up in musical families, where their parents and/or grandparents were actively involved in music. Music making was an aspect of their family culture and thus an integral part of their childhood, and many were provided with

opportunities to take instrumental lessons with private music teachers from an early age. Such participants often followed a fairly direct route into music teaching, with their many years of private music tuition leading them into university study in music. From there it was a logical step into the role of a specialist music teacher in a high school. For other participants, however, the pathway into secondary music teaching was much less direct. Some discovered a love of music apparently almost by chance and at times through rather unlikely circumstances. Others found their love of music kindled by secondary school music activities. A number worked in other occupations – some music related, some not – before deciding to become secondary school music teachers.

Leith, who described herself as being “passionate about [music]” (L:31), was one of the teachers whose pathway into secondary school music teaching was direct. Her parents were both music educators and she was one of four siblings, all of whom learned two instruments. A family member gave her lessons on one instrument, and she had lessons on the other from a private teacher. By the time she left school, Leith had sat diplomas on both instruments and, following a master class with a leading musician, was offered a place to study performance in a New Zealand university. Although initially studying both maths and music, her maths “sort of fell by the way a little bit” (L:1) and Leith eventually completed an honours degree in instrumental performance.

Leith’s experiences of her music teachers were positive; she wanted to become a teacher herself from a young age, and although not initially sure whether she would prefer to teach in a primary or secondary school, she completed a Graduate Diploma in Secondary Teaching before becoming a classroom music teacher. In common with a number of the teachers in the study, at the time of interview, Leith had spent some years teaching full-time in secondary classrooms. She had also worked as a primary school music specialist and as an instrumental teacher, in schools and in a private capacity.

Darryl’s story had threads in common with Leith’s. He, too, came from a musical background. He commented, “My musical background stems from being encouraged to do music by my parents, which is probably typical” (D:1). Darryl began learning ‘instrument A’ at five, through the Suzuki method. At eight, he started lessons on ‘instrument B’. Darryl’s story of his experience of learning ‘instrument B’ recounted below, provides insight into the role that secondary school music teachers often play in mediating their students’ choice of musical instrument.

I had a passion for [instrument C] when I was about seven or eight and I don't know why. I didn't have a role model that played [it] or anything. I just wanted to learn it; so I was taken along to the local secondary school. I was put in front of the [instrument] teacher and he took one look at me and said, "You are too small. I will start you on [instrument B]". I started [that instrument] when I was eight, I think, and still playing [instrument A]. And that is a bone of contention for me as a music teacher. ... I loved [instrument C]. I didn't love [instrument B], and I was told I couldn't play [instrument C] because I was too small. I picked up [instrument B] and I was very good at it, so they never ever encouraged me to change to [instrument C]. That is, my parents and my teachers. And looking back, that is incredibly frustrating because I forgot that I loved [instrument C] at the time because everyone was telling me I was good at [instrument B]. And just to skip quite a few decades, I remembered that I loved [instrument C] two years ago and thought, "Oh, I'm the head of music at a high school with a cupboard full of [instrument C]. I am going to learn [it] – teach myself [instrument C]." So I did. So now I can play [it], and I love it. And I have advanced quickly because of my [instrumental] training. ... I quit [instrument B] when I was about 20 and barely ever touched it since. And I am just curious to know whether the passion of an instrument is the driving factor of keeping something going. Because I changed to [instrument D] at [age 20]. I was always [performing], but at tertiary institutions I went from [instrument B] to [instrument D]. (D:1)

It is clear from this that Darryl's story has provided him with considerable food for thought as a secondary music teacher himself. In this role, he used his passion for an instrument as one of the yardsticks by which he made decisions and helped his students to make decisions. "If kids come asking to learn a particular instrument, I ask why. And if it is something they really would love to do, or they have a passion about, then that is the obvious choice of the instrument" (D:2).

Darryl's decision to become a secondary music teacher did not happen, as did Leith's, at the end of his university years. Although he had studied classical performance, and had already amassed much experience in solo performance, choral and orchestral music, participating in a number of regional and national youth music groups, he chose not to follow many of his friends who were heading overseas for further study in classical music. Once again, passion played an important role in Darryl's life. Reflecting

on his decision not to continue his study in the classical genre, he commented, “It wasn’t an absolute passion of mine, classical [performance]. I really love pop [and] rock [performance] so I kind of went down that track” (D:4). He became a professional rock musician for ten years, spending much of his time overseas, before choosing a more secure lifestyle and becoming a secondary teacher.

Leith and Darryl each received formative musical education within the tradition of classical music, though this did not prevent Darryl from later choosing to embrace popular and rock idioms. Martin, however, grew up in a very different musical world – the world of jazz, with its complex musical conversations often woven – even in the moment of performance – on top of a strict harmonic foundation. Martin’s father was a jazz musician, and there was always live music in his home. Martin commented in an aside, that that situation had continued for his own son, noting, “My father and my brother were there, and [my son] and I played every day, and other people would come and visit, and we were just always making music” (M:3). Martin learned several instruments as a child, later settling on one which he studied at a tertiary jazz school. Martin’s first experience of teaching was as an itinerant music teacher, and he spent the first seven years of his working life as an itinerant music teacher and semi-professional musician before training to be a primary teacher in bilingual settings and then moving on from primary teaching to the position of a music specialist in a secondary school.

Like Martin, Elisha’s early musical experiences were not in the classical music tradition and they also embraced bilingual settings. Like Leith, Darryl and Martin, Elisha too had grown up with music in her home. She commented, “We always had music playing at home and it was usually Dad’s Led Zeppelin and Alice Cooper records, but Mum used to play the organ, so we had a piano and organ at home that we used to tinker around on” (E:1). Her pathway, however, initially took her along a very different route from any of the other participants. Her music education was strongly influenced by the teaching she received through her participation in kapa haka. Whereas classical musical traditions provide students with access to music – and music literacy – via the reading and writing of musical notation, kapa haka is built on an oral/aural tradition, in which the student learns music and movement experientially and by ear within the kapa haka group. Elisha described her experience this way:

I got to intermediate, Form 1, where I joined the bilingual Māori class and they were doing kapa haka and [I] got into singing through that. And then I

did music at high school, where I joined a choir ... and yes, got into the high school music without having any lessons or anything. (E:1)

She recalled her experiences fondly, “I remember in third form we had to do pentatonic composition, and that was quite fun; and I ended up having to play mine in front of the school assembly” (E:1). She had also enjoyed the many hours spent working on her own songs, commenting that once she had “figured out how to write everything down” (E:1) she had used her own songs for assessment in composition and performance. She noted:

I used to hole up in the practice room and just play [an instrument], just little things over and over and over again. ... All self taught. Not to any great standard, but I can figure things out if I’ve got enough time. It’s mainly though memorising things, rather than being able to sight read to any great – I can’t sight read actually, but, yes, I try to sight read. (E:2)

Elisha’s background meant that at the time she started her studies at the university, her dominant musical tradition remained an aural one. She discovered that the kind of music she had engaged with had not necessarily set her up for the kind of music she would encounter at university and that she had many gaps in her musical knowledge. She commented, “Our first listening assignment, we had to listen to some piece and write an A4 page about it, and everyone else was going on about the ‘mode’ it was in. I didn’t even know what ‘modes’ were” (E:2).

Elisha’s love of music, however, had stood her in good stead, and she completed a degree in composition and then enrolled in a post-graduate qualification in which she was able to draw together threads from the disparate musical worlds she embraced. She commented that she “ended up doing a post-grad degree in Māori music. So I put the kapa haka stuff and the music stuff together and wrote songs in Māori for choirs and mashed it all into fun things” (E:1).

Tracy was another participant who found his secondary school years to be of significant value. Like many young people, he grew up in difficult circumstances, and he found a haven in music. He was fortunate to attend a school which had access to a composer in residence, and the small size of his senior classes meant that he had the benefit of one-on-one tuition. He commented that it was “a huge formative experience” (T:1) for him and helped to set him on a pathway which included overseas study in music. He reflected:

I suppose in my school years the reason why I got more and more into music is because mum developed [an illness], quite a serious one, while we were kids, so for me it was a little bit of escapism as well. I just used to lock myself away and practise and I used to always make up things. So in many ways I think that just helped keep me sane in what was becoming around me, sort of, something that at that age I couldn't really understand, or work out why I was being farmed off to my auntie's and you know, things like that while mum was in [hospital]. So that was hard, but I think it was the music and also the friends that I developed through music making, that made my world sane and real and enjoyable. (T:2-3)

A few of the teachers had found their way into music, and thence into secondary school music teaching, via a rather informal pathway, often discovering a love of music almost by accident, through participating in informal group music making activities.

Nicki, for example, started learning the piano at around 8, because her father had a pianola (a 'player piano' which played music by itself) and he wanted a 'live' person to play for the singing around the piano which he particularly enjoyed at rugby parties. So Nicki was taken to piano lessons with a prominent music teacher. Her story of those lessons echoed the stories a number of the participants told in relation to their own early piano lessons. She didn't enjoy them, stating, "I was an awful student, I messed about, and I suppose I didn't really get very far ... and probably made [my music teacher] feel total despair at times" (N:1). Nicki, who later went on to complete a diploma in the classical genre, 'discovered' music through playing in a dance band, which she was initially asked to do because no one else was available. The foundations of her composition skills were also laid down in that setting.

And so I had some lovely teenage years playing in the dance bands and we were a very good dance band, we had quite a tight little group and the man that was in charge had a background in Music Hall in Britain. He was an Englishman, played the clarinet and saxophone, lovely background. And at that stage I sort of, used to scramble around writing arrangements and doing things, I didn't even know what they were called in those days, but it was just all practical. (N:2)

I found it fascinating that another of the participants, Kelly, who several decades later had [music] lessons with Nicki, recounted a similar experience to Nicki's in relation to his own early piano playing, stating, "I was probably her worst ... student. I think she

just kept me because she needed to keep me plugged in” (K:1). Kelly’s experience of being kept ‘plugged in’ by Nicki elucidated a comment she made during her interview, that she often ‘conned’ students into their initial engagement with music – almost despite themselves. This theme of ‘conning’ students into music participation was echoed by other study participants, and is explored later in the thesis.

Kelly obviously survived his early experience of music lessons, becoming a fine contemporary musician on another instrument. Like a number of other participants he spent several years working as a professional musician before he decided to train as a teacher. He placed huge value on the ongoing mentorship he still received from his own music teachers, speaking of “the passion that comes from those people to help when you need it ... [and] the learning and the musicality of those people [that] lifts me and just takes [me] outside of the classroom” (K:2).

Fran was another teacher who failed to thrive with early piano lessons. Her teacher was, in fact, a negative role model for her, actively turning her off music. Fran, however, had the good fortune of attending a secondary school with a strong music teacher and her love of music was awakened when she started playing an instrument that she could connect with. Fran was clear that her career as a musician and music teacher had come about as a direct result of her secondary school music experiences.

She noted:

I learnt piano for a year when I was seven and hated every minute of it. That was my first musical experience. I learnt off [a local private teacher] who used to rap my knuckles with a ruler and [I] decided I was never going to do music. Got to high school and learnt [an instrument] and that was – I don’t know why I learnt [that instrument]. I have absolutely no idea why, but I learnt [it] and then my music teacher, who was absolutely amazing, put me on to [another instrument] after a couple of years and said, ‘You are playing in the jazz band’. And that was it. I learnt pretty much every instrument over the three senior years at high school, so I decided then music was what I wanted to do forever. (F:1)

Fran in fact had set her heart on a career as a professional musician. When a health issue had put an end to her performing career, Fran had made the decision to continue with her music through secondary music teaching.

Perhaps the most whimsical story of musical background came from Hilary. Hilary’s story once again illustrates the significant role that secondary school music

departments can play in the musical development and ultimate career choice of students.

I got into music in a very strange way when I was about ten years old. And my aunt rang up one day, and my aunt used to haunt the auction houses. She phoned up one day and said to my mother, "I was at the auction house today and I bought you a piano". ... It was three dollars. It cost more to have it carted out to the house, than the piano, and it was a wooden framed one, and from that came my music career ultimately. I can remember my parents, well Mum, being really worried at the time because they had just bought the house and a business and basically had no liquid cash floating around, but three dollars was OK. And so the piano duly arrived and I got a beginner music book and I started teaching myself. I got myself through the book and at that point, Mum and Dad said did I want lessons. So I said yes. So I started formally learning when I was at intermediate school. I learnt piano privately and then when I went to high school, I hadn't particularly thought of being hugely involved in music, but I was one of those students, I was told, who had a very good Bentley test<sup>36</sup> and I should be learning an instrument. So at that point I signed up for itinerant lessons [in another instrument] while I was at school. So I did [two instruments], and ultimately I also did a little bit of guitar. And I got more and more interested in music and both in a performing sense, in that I enjoyed the interaction with other players. I'm not a particularly good player at all, I'm a hack player basically. But I enjoyed being in the school orchestra, school choir that sort of thing. And I was good at the academic side. And from there, I kept following my heart basically, went to university intending to do a degree in languages, and ended up kind of instead doing a degree in French and music. ... So that was how I got into it, very strange. I have to thank my aunt. (H:1-2)

### **5.3 Motivation to become a secondary music teacher**

As I listened to the teachers' stories, I was interested to discover what the motivation was that had led them to become music teachers. Their stories indicated that one thing which they all shared in common was their passion for music and the high value they placed on the presence of music in their own lives. Many of the teachers spoke of the

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<sup>36</sup> A musical aptitude test created by Arnold Bentley (1966).

power of music as a means of communication. It was clear too that they particularly valued making music with others in bands, orchestras, choirs and informal groups and that this often had a profound impact on their lives. Kelly, for example, described his experience of participating in a national level music group as being “almost like a religious experience, it’s just like finding god – it was just *huge*” (K:2).

Nicki spoke of her belief in “the sheer communication of music, as well as the joy of it and the creativity of it” (N:13). She pointed to the power of music to communicate when she described working with primary school age children, before becoming a secondary teacher:

You could just feel the vibes, you could feel the atmosphere and I would know that quite often working ... just with the kids alone I could achieve all sorts of things through the music that were unspoken. But it was there, it was in the air, the kids could feel it, I could feel it. It was a communication through music that was there. (N:13)

In addition to their own passion for music, one core motivation that seemed to drive all of the teachers was the desire to share with young people the joys of music that they themselves experienced and so draw them too into the world of music. Nicki reflected, “If I can send the kids out getting as much out of music as I have had out of it, I’ll be achieving what I set out to do” (N:13).

The previous section of this chapter has indicated that for teachers such as Leith, the decision to become a secondary music teacher was a logical ‘next step’ in their musical life. This was also substantially the case for Rae. Rae’s impulse to become a music teacher was a lifestyle choice, and stemmed from his desire to be able to continue with his own music performance, but not as a full-time professional musician. In common with some of the other participants, he saw himself as both teacher and professional musician, and he was very clear about the value that this had for his own students. Reflecting on the impulse that had led him to become a secondary music teacher, Rae said:

Well I studied as [an instrumentalist] full-time for five years ... when I left school ... so I didn’t do anything else much than full-time [instrumental study]. And I made a life decision, I think, at the end of that time, deciding that I didn’t want to be a full-time professional [musician], although I liked music and playing ... but it wasn’t the right lifestyle that I really wanted to continue in and I did have a teaching scholarship. ... So I decided that I

would follow it through. ... And I think a lot of my success as a teacher has been the fact that I was quite a high level performer myself, so I could see standards involved and demonstrate what the students could achieve as well. So, you know, I still regard myself as a professional musician, as well as a teacher. And that's important, especially in the type of schools that I have taught in, there's been an expectation there from students and parents, the music teacher, a music teacher, will be some sort of practitioner. (R:1)

Jami's decision to become a secondary music teacher took account of her own unhappy experiences in her secondary school music classes. In essence, she had two strong reasons *not* to become a secondary music teacher: the negative role model of her own school music teacher, and her own lived experiences of growing up in a household of teachers. In relation to her parents, Jami stated:

Both my parents are teachers, and I swore I'd never do it, because of the stresses that a teacher goes under. You know how tiring teaching is, and the lack of recognition that is in the public arena to what teachers actually go through. And I knew, as a child growing up, that was the case and I swore I'd never do it. (J:5)

Despite those strong reasons not to teach secondary music, Jami had 'succumbed' and become a secondary teacher. What drove her into teaching was her own love of learning in music, and her desire to share her knowledge and joy with secondary school students, which were coupled with an almost crusading zeal to assuage the memory of her music teacher and replace it with the model of her much loved English teacher. She told me:

I loved learning music so much, and my best teacher was an English teacher when I was at school. And he was fantastic and I just wanted to be like him. My worst teacher was a music teacher however. And I wanted to change that, I wanted to go "right, no well I want to go in and be a better music teacher". There is far more out there that students at high school level are not made aware of. There's so much learning that can take place that they, a lot of students, don't have access to. And I wanted to put myself in there so students could have access to more information. And I just found a joy with learning music in myself, that I discovered through university, that I wanted to share. And share earlier. (J:5)

For Ashley and Martin, who had both trained as primary school teachers, the impulse to move into secondary school teaching came in part from their desire to work in music at deeper levels than was possible at primary school. Ashley commented:

I realised that my passion for music and, I guess, my expertise, was wasted a bit at a primary school, in doing things like school singing – it's not really my idea of fun. I wanted to get more technical and do things like analysis and [the] sorts of things we did at high school. ... I still continue to play ... and I sat my ATCL [Associate of Trinity College of London] last year and I'm still interested in learning, myself, I guess, as a practising musician.  
(A:1)

Martin's comments echoed Ashley's. He noted, "The kids are older and they are more capable. It feels a lot more rewarding. You are with kids for a long time. You are an important part of their daily existence and it's all going a little deeper" (M:2).

Nicki's entrée into secondary school music teaching came about as a natural extension to her work as a private music teacher in a small town. A visionary local primary school principal asked her 'help out' with music in his school, and this led to Nicki spending many years as a voluntary, unpaid school music teacher, eventually implementing a programme right throughout the school. She became a secondary teacher almost reluctantly. She stated:

I was asked by the principal of the high school if I would go and literally babysit the year 9 and 10s, for two years while the music teacher was overseas. ... I said, "I know nothing about the high school!". My daughter was there at the time she said, "Oh come on Mum. If [the music teacher] can do it, you can do it, and you'll do it, and the kids all know you and you won't have any trouble with them." And it was basically her that talked me into it. (N:5)

Nicki, in fact, did not enjoy her first year as a secondary school music teacher at all, noting of the students, "They just did those adolescent things that I learned were adolescent things as time went on, but at that stage I didn't expect them" (N:5). She learned to deal with them however, and continued to work in the secondary school.

For some of the participants, the motivation to become a secondary music teacher was pragmatic. Darryl, for example, after ten years as a rock musician, at times "living in a six tonne truck and doing the whole nine yards, making a real effort" (D:5) and at times

bumping “into corners all over the place” (D:6) decided to become a teacher and so have a more secure lifestyle.

Hilary, having made a decision to become a teacher, went to teachers’ college, and there decided that the nature of music, and her enjoyment of it, would make teaching music a much more stimulating and enjoyable career than teaching in her other subject area.

And at teachers’ college I made the decision I actually didn’t want a [job in a different subject] because I actually thought it would be quite, relatively boring in relation to music, because music is always changing, it’s dynamic, it’s evolving, there’s never a dull moment. ... So when it came to applying for jobs I only applied for music jobs. (H:2)

#### **5.4 Teachers’ beliefs about the value of music**

The value of music as a creative art was acknowledged by many of the participants. Nicki, for example, commented, “I do believe that it’s a hugely creative area and that kids that really will study music and be involved in music they get started on that creative aspect [of their lives]” (N:13). Their desire to draw students into music reflected the participants’ beliefs that, just as music was of intrinsic value in their own lives, so it had intrinsic value in the lives of their students. In addition to acknowledging the intrinsic value of music, teachers also pointed to other benefits that active participation in music provides for students.

Several of teachers indicated that participating in music provided their students with a place to belong, somewhere to help them explore and discover their own identity. Tracy, for example, commented, “In the arts you get kids who hang around the music department, who hang around the art department, and that is their identity. And teachers nurture that. So that is a huge positive” (T:47). Jami went a little further commenting that “kids pour their souls out in music” (J:30).

There was general agreement among the participants that studying music assists students with their other subjects. Viv commented:

I believe we can give them a help with *all* the other subjects. ... It’s a very intellectual pursuit. ... I’ve had a look at the research which suggests that

playing music probably does help stimulate the brain for other subjects, so I think music has a really important role to play. (V:16-17)

Jami shared Viv's experience that music assists students with their other learning. She provided her own explanation for this:

I look at prizegivings, all the top students who go up on stage all come out of the orchestra. ... And how can you not value that? It's not that we attract the smart kids, as we give them something to actually chew on, to continually develop on, never to be an expert in. And also, students who are not necessarily considered the bright, bright students, also learn self-discipline, and all those fascinating wonderful skills that you can gain – personal skills – to do with patience, to do with listening, that music offers, that can fall through the cracks. I think it falls through the cracks more and more now. (J:29)

Teachers also pointed to the self-discipline that learning an instrument requires from students, to the social skills that they learn through the need to work together in music groups, and to the self-esteem that performing well engenders. Viv could have spoken for all of the participants when he commented, "I mean, music, if you succeed in it, you've succeeded phenomenally well" (V:40).

It was clear that along with their beliefs in the value of music for individual students, the participants also believed that music had a great deal to offer the corporate life of the school. Fran articulated a view that was widely held by the participants:

I think having that strong music department in a school is so good for a school. It's very healthy you know, having all that, artistic stuff happening, that drama, music, art thing, you know, dance – if you have got it – and it really just lifts a school. You know, sport's great, but having that other stuff as well is a really good balance, because those are the things that the kids remember when they leave school. You know, very few of them will talk to you about their geography, or their history or their maths. And someone will say, "Oh I did a great show, it was an amazing show". (F:28-29)

Teachers enacted this belief in many ways, through events such as musical productions and concerts available to the school community.

## 5.5 Core expectations of the teachers' roles

Although, at face value, it might seem to be a simple matter to establish the core expectations attached to the roles that the teachers fulfilled in their schools, in practice, this was not such an easy task. The question, "What are the core expectations of the music teacher's role?" invites the immediate response, "Whose expectations?" There were a number of parties who could, with justification, hold expectations of the teachers in this study. This included the body which employed the teacher, the board of trustees, and those entrusted to manage the school on its behalf, generally the principal and senior management team. It included the students, with whose education the teacher was entrusted, and the students' parents and whānau<sup>37</sup>, who could also claim a legitimate interest in the role that the teacher fulfilled. It included the teacher's immediate colleagues and, in particular, the itinerant teaching staff, whose main point of contact with the school was generally the music teacher. It also included the teacher's own expectations of him or herself.

Conversations with the teachers revealed that, in fact, the expectations held by the various stakeholders were not necessarily always consonant, and indeed, some of the tensions of practice that the teachers encountered stemmed from a clash of different expectations. These will be discussed during the ensuing chapters. In the meantime, it is possible to provide an initial response to the question, by focusing on the core expectations that were held by the school management which was usually represented through the principal.

### 5.5.1 Classroom teaching

All of the practising teachers in the study were employed full-time in their school. At the core of their terms of employment, lay the expectation that they would teach music in the classroom. As Darryl said, "First and foremost I am a classroom teacher" (D:27). Inside the classroom, music teachers saw that their basic role was the same as for other teachers in the school. As Kelly stated, "The expectation as a teacher is the same as any generic teaching situation. You have control of your kids and you prepare and deliver work according to the curriculum, and do all those lovely straight-forward things" (K:6).

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<sup>37</sup> Extended family grouping.

Kelly's statement, however, belied the fact that many of the schools expected the teachers to deliver the curriculum in the junior school under less than ideal conditions, and that senior music classes were often multi-level and contained students who were all on individual programmes. These themes will be explored in the following two chapters.

At the time of interview, nearly all of the teachers were teaching music as their only classroom subject, although a number had previously taught music in combination with other subjects, such as English or mathematics. Amongst the teachers who combined another subject with music, Cam was teaching one half-year class in another subject, in order to enable his colleague to have a better balance in her teaching programme. Sasha had her 0.8 first year teaching workload made up of a mix of music and another subject, because there was insufficient music in the school to warrant a full-time music position.

The teaching workload for several of the participants, although made up entirely of music, included some out-of-class instrumental music teaching. Viv, for example, who had recently taken over as HOD Music in his school, was teaching six hours a week in the role of a music itinerant, teaching group instrumental lessons. Gene, who taught in a state integrated school, also had a mix of classroom and instrumental teaching. The difference in that case, was that the instrumental teachers in the school were employed as private music teachers (working with individual students rather than small groups), and not through the itinerant instrumental scheme. Payment for their instrumental teaching came from the parents, and not through the Ministry of Education itinerant funding (see Chapter 8, Section 8.3.3).

### ***5.5.2 Head of music department***

Every practising teacher in the study stated that they were responsible for the music programme within their school. In all but three cases, responsibility for the school's music programme was formally devolved to the teacher through a middle management position for which there was some extra recompense by way of management units. These teachers headed the music department within the school, and were known as the HOD Music. In common with other departmental heads in the school, they were responsible for implementing the curriculum within their subject area, managing other staff in the department, managing assessment within their department, and day-to-day departmental administration.

However, every teacher also spoke of additional responsibilities, unique to their position, which they perceived made theirs a bigger job. All stated that they were responsible for the extra-curricular music programme within the school, for organising and administering the itinerant scheme, for managing the often large group of part-time itinerant teaching staff, and for providing music for school events, such as prizegivings and open days. Cam could have been speaking for all of the practising teachers when he stated:

As music teachers, I think we have quite significant calls upon us that other subject teachers don't have. Recently we had our information evening for next year's year 9 intake, and so we're called upon to obviously have some party pieces prepared for that. Term 2 was a nightmare in terms of festivals and competitions; we've had students in Rockquest, in the Barbershop Competition in the Big Sing tonight, plus we've had a series of lunchtime concerts to celebrate New Zealand Music Month in the city council library. We've also got our production in a couple of weeks' time, so we have so many other things that are happening which makes it quite a tough job.  
(C:9)

While all of the HODs were able to clearly articulate what they perceived to be the school's expectations of them as HOD Music, it was interesting to note that in some cases, those expectations had not been clearly spelled out to them in writing. Darryl, for example, in reflecting on his own position, noted, somewhat ruefully, that he had not been provided with a written job description; a situation which he clearly felt acted in the school's favour. When asked about the expectations attached to his job, he replied:

That is a very good question, because I have never seen a job description and I would love to. Because I am sure I do more than what would be on any job description. Okay, so I am in charge of a pretty large music department. Large, not necessarily just in classrooms, but in extra-curricular as well. So we have hundreds of kids who either learn instruments, play in school groups (and we have lots of school groups), or take music as a classroom subject. I have got one other full-time staff member who teaches classroom music full-time plus all the extra-curricular as well, and about seventeen itinerant part-timers. (D:8)

Kelly, HOD Music in a large urban school, in considering the expectations attached to his role as HOD proffered, "I actually think the school is a little bit unclear about what

the Head of Music is. I would suggest that most schools are. I think you just get on with it" (K:6).

### **5.5.3 Additional responsibilities**

Several experienced HODs who taught at larger schools held, in addition to their role as HOD Music, the position of head of faculty, which gave them oversight of a number of departments. These were arts or arts related departments. The head of faculty role usually carried extra management units, along with extra status and responsibility. As Pat noted:

The faculty involves the music, dance, drama, visual arts, graphic and design departments of which I'm the head of the faculty, so that's a newer role if you like, that I picked up along the way. Each head of faculty carries four management units. ... This hasn't been any personal increase [of management units] for me, but in terms of the status of the positions within the school, they're seen as management positions and involve quite regular management meetings and you know the responsibilities that go with that. (P:30-31)

Two teachers reported that in addition to their roles as HOD and HOF they had previously held a third management role: one teacher was a dean, and the other was the school's learning coordinator. At the time of interview, both had relinquished this extra role, as it had become impossible to meet the expectations of all three roles.

Cam reported:

For the previous four years to this I was also the learning co-ordinator for the school, which had the overall overview of curriculum in teaching and learning, and after some serious thought I resigned that position last year, because I found that something had to give. It either had to be the music, it had to be the curriculum coordination, or it had to be my sanity, and so I made a call to ditch the curriculum job. (C:8)

### **5.5.4 Teacher in charge of music**

Three early career teachers, all teaching in mid to low decile schools, did not hold a middle management position. Two of these were first year teachers, and one was a third year teacher. All were the only classroom music teacher in the school. They were all clear that although they didn't have the status, or extra remuneration, afforded by a

middle management position, the tacit expectations of senior management were that they would carry out all of the functions of an HOD Music. First year teacher Sasha noted, “And I’m the sole music teacher, my title is teacher in charge of music (TIC). So I’m in charge of everything” (S:2). Elisha, another first year teacher, spelled out her situation very clearly:

I was given an altered job description which had all that stuff [HOD responsibilities] taken off it, but if I don’t do it no-one else will, so of course I get to do it. ... It has to be done, and the principal said when we had a job interview “Because you’re a first year teacher you won’t have to this, that bit and that bit” and I was under the impression that he would have organised someone to do it, but he hasn’t, so it was all kind of just talk, really. (E:10-11)

Third year teacher, Ashley, was very unhappy about what she perceived as management’s very unreasonable expectations. Her attempts at gaining recognition through a management unit had been unsuccessful. She was feeling the weight of the expectations on her, and had just resigned her position at the school. She commented, “You’re still being expected to file an HOD report when you’re not an HOD, or do those extra things that are just blanket – they’re expected of you, you know. It’s just put in your pigeonhole and you’re expected to do it” (A:44).

## **5.6 Chapter summary**

Chapter 5 was the first of five data chapters. Its purpose was twofold: to present the musical backgrounds, values and motivations of the participants in the study, and to examine the core expectations attached to the role of secondary school music teacher. The chapter has shown that music was an integral and highly valued part of the participants’ lives. For some, their love of music dated back to early nurturing in their home, which was further developed by their teachers. For others, a love of music was discovered as part of their schooling, with their school music teachers and the opportunities afforded by the school music department playing a critical role. The musical traditions of the participants were diverse and embraced classical, jazz, contemporary and Māori traditions. Despite these differences, all of the participants had found a place as secondary school music teachers. The motivation to become a secondary school music teacher was in every case built onto a love of music, and contained within it the desire to share music with others. Participants reported that they

brought to their teaching the belief that music was of value as a creative art form in the lives of their students and school communities, and that additionally, it had much more to offer students in their learning and personal growth.

The core expectations attached to the teachers' roles within their schools were also examined. Every teacher considered that they were first and foremost a classroom practitioner. In addition to their role in the classroom, every teacher was also responsible for managing the music department, which involved an oversight of all of the music classes and of the curriculum delivered at each class level, along with the oversight of all extra-curricular music within the school. In all but three cases, management was formally devolved to the teacher, who occupied the role of head of music. Three of the participants, all of whom were early career teachers, were not heads of department, but none-the-less fulfilled the same function as teachers in charge of music.

The chapter introduced a theme which ran through the teachers' stories – their perceptions that the life of a secondary school music teacher is in some important respects different from the 'norm'. This theme is further explored in the ensuing data chapters.



# Chapter 6

## The music classroom and junior music

### 6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 is the second of the five data chapters. Together with Chapter 7, its purpose is to explore tensions that the teachers encountered in their role as classroom practitioners. The chapter is structured into three main parts. Section 6.2 explores the teachers' perceptions of the nature of music as a secondary school classroom subject. Themes include the music curriculum, the nature of learning in music, the resourcing of music as a classroom subject, and the provision of teaching spaces, teaching materials and classroom computers. Section 6.3 examines the teachers' perceptions of the position of music as one of 'the arts'. Section 6.4 explores four tensions related to teaching music in the junior school. These include the amount of time available to teach junior music, the nature and number of music classes desirable and possible in year 9, the range of prior learning which students brought into year 9, and the impacts for secondary teachers of the state of music education in primary schools.

### 6.2 Teaching music as a classroom subject

Many of the tensions of practice that the teachers encountered arose in relation to the teaching of specific class levels. However, the nature of learning in music, and the ways in which that is translated into the music curriculum and resourced within schools, presented some particular challenges to the teachers. These are presented in the following section.

#### 6.2.1 *Nature of the music curriculum*

Since the publication of the ANZC (Ministry of Education, 2000), music has been situated within the New Zealand curriculum as one of four disciplines in the learning area of the arts. In the classroom, the four strands of *Developing Practical Knowledge in Music*, *Developing Ideas in Music*, *Communicating and Interpreting in Music*, and *Understanding Music in Context*, are embodied in a wide variety of musical activities, many of which are practical in nature. Students learn to compose, improvise and

arrange music, to play, sing and perform individually and within a group. They also learn aural, listening and theoretical skills, and they develop an appreciation of music works within their social and cultural contexts.

In discussing the breadth of the music curriculum, the majority of participants articulated a theme which ran through all of the teachers' conversations with me – that the situation for music, and music teachers, within NZ secondary schools is in many respects different from 'the norm' of teaching subjects. This theme that 'it's different for the music teacher' has already been introduced in Chapter 5 and these differences are teased out throughout the data chapters.

Teachers in this study noted that the official music curriculum is now intended to be broad and inclusive. Jami, for example, pointed to this in her comment, "We have one of the broadest subjects" (J:24). One of the music advisors noted, "There's huge diversity [of music] in our schools, and that's why I say music is just like nothing else" (MA2:14).

In part, the breadth of the music curriculum is derived from the fact that it should be inclusive, allowing students and teachers scope to study music of any genre, style or period: from rap, rock and reggae, to the Renaissance and Romantic eras; from popular song and 'popera' to grand opera; from symphonies and sonatas to sound tracks and samba; from Beethoven to the Beatles; and from Liszt to Ladyhawke.

Teachers in the study were generally very positive about the potential benefits for students of such a curriculum. Elisha, who wanted to create a music programme which reflected the Māori cultural heritage of many of her students, was delighted to discover that she was able to include a study of waiata<sup>38</sup> in their cultural contexts and to link this study to the Māori performing arts standards in the senior school.

Leith spoke of the validation that the inclusive curriculum provided for her students:

I think it's fantastic. When I went to school you took music if you were a classical musician and that was it. And if you were anything else, well you weren't a musician. ... So I think it's fantastic that it doesn't matter what area of music that you are interested in, it's valid. It's been made valid and you can do it for NCEA. Wonderful! (L:19)

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<sup>38</sup> Māori songs.

Clearly, the breadth of the curriculum also enabled teachers with non-classical backgrounds to become music teachers. As Chapter 5 demonstrated, not all of the teachers in the study did have a background in classical music. Martin, whose background was in jazz, spoke of his initial trepidation in entering the secondary music classroom. “I thought, well I’m going to have to deal with these people and what do I know?” (M:5). Once in the classroom, however, he discovered that his jazz background did provide him with the requisite skills and knowledge to work within the music curriculum. He commented, “Of course it didn’t take me long to realise that I what I had was enough. I occupied *this* part of the world of music, and that’s what I can give” (M:5). What Martin’s comments point to, is the fact that music departments can, and often do, reflect the particular area of the world of music occupied by their own teacher/s.

However, the potential for breadth and inclusivity of the music curriculum contained within it the seeds of tensions that study participants encountered in their teaching practice. The enormous scope of the curriculum could be overwhelming for music teachers and one of the music advisors acknowledged that when commenting, “I would like to say it’s a strength of the curriculum, but the point is that you’ve got to have strong people to run it; and you know, we haven’t always got people that can cope with it” (MA2:15). The advisor added, “It’s too huge. It could be broken up into all different sorts of [subjects]” (MA2:15). This view that music could be broken into a range of subjects was echoed by a number of other participants. Jami, for example, compared music with the visual arts. “Art splits into painting, sculpture, photography, art history – it has a multitude of subjects – yet we all still have to teach them all within the one class”<sup>39</sup> (J:24).

Many of the teachers spoke of the logistical difficulties of trying to accommodate students wanting to study the diverse range of musical genres and styles that the curriculum made possible. Leith, for example, had noticed that although the music courses in her school still attracted classical musicians, an increasing number of students wanted an entirely different focus for their study. She commented:

The problem comes when you have the two different strands in the same class, and it’s quite different and the emphasis has to be different. We

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<sup>39</sup> NCEA has, in fact, created two domains in senior music and some schools do offer two different option lines in music at year 12 and 13 level. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

almost need an alternative course – still an NCEA course but with a different focus. Okay, so we were talking about year 13 music and I'm just finding in our school, because we have strongly classical musicians, but also quite a few coming through that are singer/songwriter guitar players, that I'm almost at the stage where I'd like to go run two parallel courses; NCEA, but with different emphasis. (L:19)

Leith added that the issue was starting to present itself much earlier than year 13 and that she could not see the possibility of running parallel courses in her school, as the numbers of students taking music were not sufficient to allow two classes.

This question of how to cater for the increasingly diverse needs of senior students is examined in more detail in Chapter 7 (Section 7.2).

### **6.2.2 Nature of learning in music**

Learning in music is incremental. It takes place over time and, as Tracy noted, the music curriculum is spiral in nature, to allow for the steady development of skills and knowledge throughout compulsory schooling, from National Curriculum level 1 to level 8. It was taken for granted by all of the teachers that, in order to succeed in music, students have to work hard over sustained periods of time. As Viv noted, "They *have* to work hard at music, it's not something you can do once every two or three months, it's a constant thing" (V:16). Teachers however sometimes found that this was easier said than done. Leith's experience was that her students expected music to be 'fun', and were often not open to situations where they had to work too hard. She reflected, "I think that kids nowadays expect to be entertained and so that if it's not fun and we're not doing something that they can instantly identify with, they switch off" (L:20).

Every participant in the study reported that school timetable structures, particularly in the junior school, often did not provide any possibility of sustained periods of learning in the music classroom. This issue is explored in detail in this chapter (Section 6.4.2) in the context of the junior school, and in Chapter 7 (Section 7.2) in the context of the senior school.

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on practical music making and at the senior levels music courses were, with few exceptions, predicated and dependent on instrumental learning in the junior school. All of the teachers reported that they valued very highly the practical nature of the subject. It became apparent that most saw

playing music as the foundation on which their music courses rested. Many participants made similar observations. Viv, for example, noted, “If you don’t perform you’re not doing music. I mean, that’s the point of learning music anyway – to perform” (V:18). Kelly echoed this. “Performance is obviously [the] focus of what we’re doing” (K:16), and Sasha, who taught in a decile 3 school, added, “What I saw with a lot of kids, is that school is their opportunity to play. They might not have a keyboard or a piano at home, they won’t have a guitar at home, drums at home, whatever, so [we are] giving them that” (S:19).

Most teachers reported that their students really enjoyed the practical nature of the subject, and that they were keen to play. Sasha commented:

When we had parent interviews parents were always saying that the kids were really enjoying music. And I think that’s because they get a lot of the practical time. They’re enjoying that and that means they’ll also happily do theory because they know they’re going to get the practical time. (S:17)

Sasha also articulated a perspective shared by others in the study, that she had, “Found the benefit of playing in groups from a teaching perspective as well” (S:2). She commented, “The kids are always different if they are playing with each other” (S:2). This was in line with teachers’ perspectives that music can be a powerful element in the lives of their students.

Conversations with the teachers revealed that while they embraced the practical nature of the curriculum, it also created some major challenges for them. Kelly pointed to the dynamic nature of music classes:

Basically it means that lots of people are going their own way and exploring. ... It means you can’t all be sitting there doing the same thing. It’s an active, kinaesthetic subject. It’s emotional, it’s meta-cognitive, it’s all those things. It’s just like a ping-pong ball in a blender really. It’s going around and it’s all over the place. You never know what angle it’s going to fly at and where it’s going to hit and if it gets shredded. And, you know, anything could happen at any time. (K:26)

An outcome of the practical nature of music classes was that classroom music teaching required a high input of energy from the teachers. In fact, all of the teachers in the study mentioned the amount of energy required. As Nicki commented, “You’ve just got to have *boundless* energy” (N:12). She pointed to one of the aspects of music teaching

that set it apart from other subjects – the degree to which music teachers gave of themselves with every class:

At the end of a day, you know, every class you have for music, you've got to give yourself, because if you're not giving, it's not going across to the kids. And people don't realise that. It's not just sitting behind a desk and [thinking], "Ok, I feel tired today, so I'll just take it easy". You don't get away with that, here. (N:20)

Nicki's comment, "and people don't realise that" is an example of the teachers' experience that the true nature of their work was not always understood.

It was clear that the teachers in the study considered that the constant active engagement required in the music classroom made heavy demands on them personally. Viv commented:

It's a really intense subject. ... And you've got to be on the ball the whole time, even when you are not feeling well, you've got to be there, you've got to be cheerful, and it's like putting on a performance every single day. And it's quite challenging I find. (V:42-43)

Kelly spoke frankly of the impacts on him stating, "It's a reasonably stressful style of teaching, because you are *doing*. Eyes in the back of your head at five or six different tasks and you know, you can get emotionally run down pretty quick" (K:29). Kelly later mentioned that he had twice been diagnosed with exhaustion – one episode leading to a stay in hospital. He had also twice been on medication for depression, and commented that "a large chunk" (K:29) of that was work related. In relation to exhaustion, he said, "It is an animal of stealth, because you don't know how bad you are until it gets really bad" (K:29). Kelly counted himself as fortunate, because his partner was able to see the warning signs of exhaustion and signal to him that he needed to take some pressure off himself and slow down.

The practical nature of the music curriculum also meant that students were required to receive instrumental tuition. The majority of teachers commented that while they included a little basic instruction in guitar, keyboard and sometimes percussion in junior classes, it was not possible for them personally to teach the wide range of instruments that students chose to learn. Teachers reported that not only was it not possible for them to teach all of the instruments personally, but that there was simply not enough time during music classes for instrumental teaching to take place. Leith's comments provide insight into the issue:

Music is so highly specialised. Even in our year 9 performance music programme, I get parents ringing up and they say,

“Oh, now, will she be able to learn such-and-such [an instrument], because she is doing performance music; she’ll be able to learn such-in-such in class?”

And I say, “Well, no, she can’t actually. She’ll have to go and have lessons in it.”

“Oh, but isn’t that what you *do* in performance music?”

I say, “No, I can’t teach them the piano and flute and the French horn and the guitar all on two hours a week – just with one teacher.” And they don’t seem to understand how highly specialised it is. (L:37)

Thus, even though practical music-making sits at the heart of the music curriculum, systematic instrumental instruction (even in schools, such as Pat’s, which offered an in-class band programme) had to take place outside of the classroom. Students typically received lessons from itinerant instrumental teachers either employed by the Ministry of Education through the Itinerant Programme (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4.4), or by individual schools, or (predominantly in more affluent areas) from private music teachers. Leith summed up the situation when she stated, “The itinerants are the backbone of our programme” (L:36).

Conversations with the participants made it clear that the inter-relationship between the students’ learning within the classroom, and their instrumental learning outside of the classroom, was highly complex and often tension-laden. The itinerant programme required continual oversight by the music teachers and every teacher in the study acknowledged that managing it generally constituted a significant aspect of the role of the HOD Music or the TIC. In this thesis, the inter-relationship of itinerant music lessons with classroom music is explored, where relevant, in the context of the teachers’ work within the classroom. However, a detailed examination of the significance for teachers of running the itinerant programme is contained in Chapter 8 (Section 8.3).

### **6.2.3 Resourcing the music classroom**

There were very significant variations in the range and scope of the resources available to the study participants for classroom music teaching. One of the music advisors

commented, “There is a huge inequity ... [and] it comes back down to funding” (MA1:16).

Typically, high decile and private schools had better facilities. The best of these included purpose-built teaching spaces which tended to be larger than a standard classroom, designated rehearsal spaces, sufficient practice rooms, a suite of music keyboards and computers set up with midi equipment and music software such as Sibelius and GarageBand, a class set of guitars and percussion instruments, good storage for instruments and music, ample office space and at times even a purpose-built auditorium. Teachers working in such schools were very aware of their good fortune. Rae, who worked in such a school, observed, “In our school we are fortunate that music is recognised as being an expensive subject to run” (R:16).

Although there were some obvious correlations between the relative affluence of a school community and the quality of the facilities available to the teacher, this was not predictably the case and some of the lower decile schools were also reasonably well equipped. This was the experience of Tracy, who found that in moving from a decile 4 school to a decile 9 school, facilities were not nearly as good in the decile 9 school. There was in fact just one classroom, right at the end of a block, with a small storeroom that housed a few broken guitars and an assortment of other instruments. Further discussion of instrumental resources is contained in Chapter 8 (Section 8.2.4).

#### **6.2.4 Teaching spaces**

The issue of teaching spaces was raised by all of the teachers, because classroom music courses, with their heavy emphasis on the practical areas of performance and composition, demanded a range of appropriate teaching spaces.

Rae was teaching in a very large school. Even so, in relative terms, his department was undoubtedly amongst the best equipped. He commented:

Physical resourcing, I think, is very important for music, because it makes such a lot of noise that you have to be able to physically separate the spaces of what’s going on in the day. In our department we have four specialist rooms for classroom teaching. (R:27)

Other teachers were not so fortunate. Where facilities for classroom music were inadequate, teachers reported that this had a major impact on their ability to implement

the curriculum in meaningful ways and on them personally. Leith described the personal impact of small, noisy classroom spaces:

I asked the timetabler not to put two core classes on at once, but she did. So, if we have two core classes going at once, and all the studios are full, we have a bit of a nightmare on our hands. So we have kids everywhere. But, I don't know, we tend not to notice the noise, but some days it gets to me, and I just have to go and hide myself away. (L:39-40)

Two teachers noted that the quality of teaching spaces was a factor in their decision to work at a particular school. Fran, talking about the decision to accept a new position stated, "The building was awful and I said I wouldn't sign until the pegs were in for the new building; and so I made that deal" (F:4). Three teachers reported that they had in fact remodelled unsatisfactory physical spaces in their departments themselves in their own time.

### **6.2.5 Teaching materials and resources**

When speaking of their classroom music programmes, teachers mentioned the importance of making their courses meaningful to their students. As Kelly commented, "We're all looking for ways to hook kids into music and to make them passionate about it" (K:14). He underlined the importance of using appropriate resources, when he added, "and so you can't be teaching them from outdated texts, you've got to be on the money, you've got to be engaging" (K:14).

A number of teachers commented that, in their experience, the resources available for teaching music were inadequate and uneven in quality. Kelly, for example, initially commented, "The resources just aren't there" (K:15), though he later added, "Some things do come along that are reasonable, but you're never going to get to a situation where you can just hand a kid a book and [say] 'There's your stuff'" (K:15).

Several teachers spoke of the need to build up their own collection of musical resources and use these in their teaching. Kelly, for example, noted, "So if you're looking at specific things for your kids, then you've got to create them specifically for them" (K:14). Kelly believed that the need to create their own resources was one thing that sets music teachers apart from other teachers on the staff. He commented, "You can't be a music teacher from 8 to 3.30. You just can't. I mean *most*, I won't say most,

the *majority* of [teachers] don't have to spend the time hunting for stuff that we do" (K:14).

In common with other participants in the study, Kelly was accepting of the fact that music teachers do have to spend time finding and creating resources. However, this didn't prevent him from reflecting:

But to have a wall full of resources where you could draw things from when you didn't have time, didn't have two hours tonight to sit down and chart something out in three parts and have accompaniment parts written up for your lesson tomorrow, it'd be nice; nice to have something that you didn't have to create. (K:20)

Cam provided another perspective on resource creation when he recounted a conversation he had had with music teachers in New South Wales, Australia. They could obtain a full teaching programme, complete with all resources including audio recordings, which was downloadable from the web. In response to their question of what New Zealand teachers do, he had stated, "We sit in our office and we make up our own course and we gather our own materials and we write our own resources". The response from his Australian colleagues had been, "That's so hard!" (C:38).

### **6.2.6 Classroom computers**

The rapid development of music technology over the last two to three decades has had a significant impact on secondary school music courses. All of the practising teachers in the study reported that their music classes made some use of specialist music software, such as Sibelius, which is widely used as an aid to composition. While the issue for most teachers pertained to the number and age of the computers and software available to them, and to the quality of the IT infrastructure within their school, one experienced and capable teacher reported that she was very reluctant to use the computer. Ira commented "I *hate* it" (I:14) and it was clear that she did not believe she had the requisite skills to run the technology – nor did she have the desire to learn. A large part of her reluctance stemmed from the belief that composition notation programmes such as Sibelius can hook students into a particular way of composing, that she did not endorse. She saw some value in the computer as a means of publishing student compositions, but not as a tool to assist in the creative process itself.

Notwithstanding Ira's position, music teachers generally agreed on the need to be computer literate to a significant degree. Darryl commented that you can't now teach music without technology. "In this day and age, music and technology are hand in hand. No matter what you do, it is hand in hand" (D:18). Teachers, such as Ira, who did not have such skills found the new environment a personal challenge.

In discussing the issue of classroom computers, Pat also made it clear why specific computers are needed for music:

I'm constantly trying to convince our management, our kids are adversely affected when they haven't got access to a computer to do that work [composition]. ... The irony is, that we're probably the best equipped school in the city for computers. There are five full computer labs and quite a lot of other sort of small pods of computers around the school, but we – a bit like art, graphic design and those sorts of subjects – we need our own computers because they're specified differently – they need sound cards, which a lot of just basic computers don't need. They need our own specific software, and if a kid wants to start writing a composition he can't traipse his double bass all the way over to a computer lab, and 30 other musicians with instruments over there to try to compose; it's just not practical. (P:27)

Fran, who had access to a recently built music computer lab running more than 20 computers, was extremely positive about the advantages it offered to the teaching and learning in her department. She commented that her students "Love the computer lab, doing the composition thing" (F:19). She added that she and her colleagues were now able to incorporate a significant amount of the students' learning into their work on the computers, and that this was providing a way of making their learning meaningful.

We use the computer lab the whole time for teaching other things as well. So we are learning structure through the computer lab, because I am saying, right the piece you are going to write today in GarageBand, we are actually going to use this ternary form, so we need (a) and (b). We invite talking about form and structure and all this, so they are learning all those things, but through their own things, through computers and guitars, rather than saying, right we are going to learn about all about ternary form; we are going to listen to these five pieces of music – and *classical* music, that you all hate – to learn about structure. So, we will just do it that way. (F:19)

The number of computers available in the music classrooms, and the nature and age of software in use, varied enormously between schools. Three schools, for example, had a purpose-created music technology room, fitted out with between 15 and 25 computers. Rae, for example, commented:

One of [the four music classrooms in his school] is sort of like our technology room and it's got 15 computers specifically for music and it's got 18 keyboards, piano keyboards, specifically for teaching keyboard on, but mainly used for the core classes, but used for composition teaching the other year levels as well. That classroom, the technology classroom is not timetabled by the school timetable, we timetable that. (R:27)

At the other end of the scale, Sasha's students had access to five old computers, still running the first version of Sibelius. She commented of the computers:

They're old, they're slow, [they] have issues. They're not on the network. ... [The students] used to be able to save and go onto a different computer and get their work, whereas now I have to transfer it with a pen drive and make sure I've got the right copy of work. (S:13-14)

Several teachers mentioned that the inadequate computer resources in their department were affecting their teaching and their students' learning. Darryl was feeling very frustrated about the number of computers that were accessible to his students. He noted, "At the moment I have got ten computers and they have been a battle over the last four years to get. I have just been allowed five more, back in March actually. ... And I still haven't got the five I have been granted by the board of trustees for this year" (D:17). Darryl's computers were not networked, and he described the school's computers as "pathetic" and the IT infrastructure as "just antiquated" (D:29).

Pat, too, was unhappy about the lack of computers in his department. He reflected that the widespread use of computers for composition had led to an improvement in the quality of composition amongst senior students, and he believed that the inadequate number of computers in his department was disadvantaging his senior students.

We're also handicapped by a lack of computers in the department and I'm quite open with the students in saying that it's really difficult for them to compete on a national level without access to Sibelius or something equivalent, because since so many schools use software for composition, the bar has been raised. (P:26)

### 6.3 Position of music as one of ‘the arts’

The introduction of the ANZC (Ministry of Education, 2000) was described in Chapter 2 (Section 2.5.2). At its inception, all four arts disciplines found themselves vying for the time and space which had formerly been occupied by two disciplines only. Cam, in commenting on the introduction of the arts as a learning area stated, “By the time I’d left [my previous school] they’d changed the option subjects at year 9, and the students got to choose between drama, art and music, and music turned out to be the really big loser in that” (C:4).

Many of the teachers expressed significant concern that the creation of the arts as a learning area had, in fact, been at the expense of music. Jami, in reflecting on the impact on music from the other arts, commented:

In fact we would be silly to ignore it. My teaching has mostly been under ‘music as the arts’. So I haven’t really experienced music as a stand-alone, other than when I was at school myself, and what I have seen in other places. Music as part of the arts has done wonders for art and drama ... [and] that’s actually really negatively impacted on music. (J:30)

Of serious concern to nearly every practitioner was the impact of ‘the arts’ on the amount of time that teachers had available to teach music. Pat commented, “So it’s going to become a huge balancing act between performing arts *all* being valuable and music losing the time it needs in order to be taught adequately” (P:22). Pat’s concern over the lack of time available to music was reflected by every other participant in the study, and all but two of the practising teachers were facing the impact of the lack of time for music in their own school. The issue of the time available for music teaching is discussed later in this chapter (Section 6.4.2) in the context of the junior school, and in Chapter 7 (Section 7.2) in the context of the senior school.

Nearly all of the teachers commented on the rise of drama in their schools. Pat commented, “Drama over the last three to four years would be *the* fastest growing subject in the school” (P:22). Teachers expressed concern that not only had the rise of drama affected the timetabled time available for music, but that it was also influencing the subject choices of students. The teachers provided a number of reasons for this. One related to the students’ perceptions of the level of difficulty for them of music, as compared to drama. Pat commented:

I think some students see [drama] as being an option that they can easily do without prior experience, if they are short of subjects. ... Just by its nature, it doesn't require the same level of prior experience or skill levels in terms of learning an instrument and everything that goes with that, as say music does. And there *is* a perception among students that it is relatively easy to gain credits in the subject. (P:23)

Cam, who taught both music and drama, echoed Pat's opinion, adding, "I believe that kids see more immediate success in some of the other arts than they see in music" (C:5). Cam was particularly concerned about the situation of students who did not have formal learning in music when they began year 9. He commented, "And I think that some of the other arts offer the potential for kids to succeed even if they have just begun at year 9" (C:5).

By way of contrast, many teachers made it clear that music is a challenging subject to study, and that it can be perceived to be a much more difficult subject to succeed in. Kelly, for example, commented, "Music takes a lot of assessing and a lot of work from the kids to get the credits. So you know, kids are starting to opt with their feet a little bit. If they're arts-based, they can get a lot more credits with a lot less effort in something like drama" (K:34).

One of the music advisors suggested that some schools were encouraging drama rather than music, in part because music is a very expensive subject to run. The advisor commented that there were "Huge numbers of kids wanting to do drama, huge numbers being encouraged to do drama. Quite deliberately I think, because I think that principals recognise that drama is not a high financial cost" (MA2:22). The advisor remained optimistic, however, about the long-term situation for music, stating, "But I think it will swing back, because I think they will realise all of a sudden that there's not the expertise coming out of the music area we once had" (MA2:23).

Not all of the teachers were concerned about the impact of drama on music. Viv, for example, commented, "I have actually thought that it enhances music, because they're both performance areas" (V:37). He sounded a note of caution, however, in adding, "It depends on how it's timetabled" (V:37). His school did not timetable music and drama in the same option line, so it was possible for students in his school to take both subjects. Rae, while acknowledging the impact of the increase in other arts subjects on

music in other schools, commented, “It’s not my actual experience” (R:32). In his school, music was positioned very strongly.

One of the music advisors commented about the rise of drama, “It was an issue, but we’ve had that new subject peak I think, now. And it’s starting to drop off and we’ve got increased entries in music” (MA1:40). So while some music teachers reported that they had experienced a direct impact from the pooling of the four arts, others were more cautious about making absolute judgements.

## **6.4 Teaching music in the junior school**

Teachers found the delivery of music programmes in the junior school to be problematic. Although one teacher did express satisfaction with the programmes that he was able to offer junior students in the music classroom, the majority of teachers in the study were deeply concerned about the situation of junior music within their own school in particular, and within New Zealand schools in general. It became clear that the situation pertaining to junior music was an ongoing cause of significant tension for most of the participants in the study.

Teachers reported that it was extremely difficult – at times impossible – for them to meet the needs of all of their junior students. This situation seemed to be influenced by a complex set of factors which, although contextually dependent, were nonetheless present for most of the teachers in the study. The most pressing issue for the teachers related to the amount of time available to teach junior music classes, and in particular classes at year 9. A further issue concerned the number and kinds of courses that they were able to offer at year 9. Allied to these issues were related concerns about the very wide disparity of prior learning in music of year 9 students, and the adequacy of primary school music education. All of these issues underpinned a further major concern for the teachers – their ability to ensure that students wishing to study music in the senior school received adequate preparation in the junior school.

### **6.4.1 Nature of year 9 music classes**

Conversations with the teachers revealed that year 9 music classes can have two distinct and not necessarily compatible functions. They provide a means for schools to meet their legal requirements in relation to the provision of compulsory arts learning in

the curriculum. However they must also act as a foundational year of study for students who wish to take music as a subject in the senior school.

Teachers reported that their schools addressed this issue in a number of ways. Just over half of the current practitioners stated that their school offered only one course in music at year 9 – and that they had therefore to manage both functions in a single class. Typically such junior classes introduced students to basic practical skills in guitar and keyboard, and included some study of music works which were often drawn from popular idioms. Several teachers commented that it was very difficult to meet the needs of all the students in these ‘one size fits all’ classes. Darryl, whose school offered a course for half a year, reported, “We get three days a week and it is pretty elementary stuff and it is hard to extend the really bright ones or the musically talented and skilled ones” (D:19).

#### **6.4.2 Time available to teach junior classes**

The amount of timetabled time available to teachers for their junior classes varied widely among the study participants. For example, in three schools in the study, the only timetabled time for music learning in the junior school was one term in year 9 and two terms in year 10. Cam, the HOD from one of these schools – a school which, ironically, took great public pride in the musical accomplishments of its students – noted that in the junior school, “Our students have less than three eighths the amount of time in music as they have, say, in social studies or science or mathematics” (C:12). Cam’s experience was in sharp contrast with that of the teachers at the two schools which offered full-year courses in both years 9 and 10. Rae, whose students had full-year courses in both years 9 and 10, was satisfied with the time they provided to prepare students for senior music. He noted of his year 10 course, “It’s quite an intensive course they go through, but I think they’re well set up to face anything in NCEA by having completed that course” (R:9).

The experience of the majority of teachers in the study was, however, much more akin to Cam’s situation than Rae’s. They reported that the time they had available to teach their junior classes was inadequate and, in many cases, seriously inadequate. The situation was particularly difficult at year 9.

A music advisor highlighted the core problem, stating, “Very few schools have whole year courses these days and often they are the private schools” (MA1:41). Only four of

the current practitioners in the study worked in schools which offered full-year courses in music in year 9. Of these, one was a private school, and another was a large music-focused, high decile state school, which in fact offered three distinct year 9 music courses. In a further school, the year-long course had been sanctioned by a principal who was a former HOD Music. In the final school the year-long course was due to be replaced the following year by a short course.

At year 9, for the majority of teachers, the 'norm' was a short course, usually of one to two terms in duration, providing perhaps 20 to 30 hours of learning time. Short courses – often termed 'taster' courses – appeared to be a pragmatic response by school management to the imperative to fit more subjects into their curriculum than there is adequate time for. Ironically for music, the amount of time available for year 9 and 10 music in fact represented a reduction to the number of hours that were available prior to the introduction of the arts as a learning area. One of the music advisors, drawing on experience at regional and national levels, provided a perspective on the introduction of 'tasters':

I am appalled, and perhaps it's starting to settle now, as I'm less appalled as time has gone on, but there is a huge shift especially at year 9 and 10, and year 10 especially is impacting NCEA. And schools started bringing in the 'tasters' at year nine. And they refer to them as 'tasters', which upsets me something terrible; short blocks, six weeks, or one ten week term and "We'll do one of music, we'll do one of drama, we'll do one of dance and then we might put it all together for Christmas and do something for the end of the year". (MA2:13)

The advisor contrasted this situation with past practice, where year 9 students had "perhaps half a year of an hour a week, or two hours a week, or a whole year of even one. At that stage they did have that flow through" (MA2:14). In commenting that the amount of time at year 10 had also been reduced, the advisor pointed to the implications for senior students, and also to the fact that school management often did not take account of the fact that the level 1 NCEA standards in music pre-suppose two years of prior learning at secondary school:

The time has been taken from the year 10s as well, and schools don't seem to realise that the music standards are actually written from year 9. You know, the requirements are set at two and half to three years [of] tuition and they're assuming, or taking the attitude, that they can actually pick them up for [NCEA] level 1 at year 11. (MA2:14)

When NCEA standards were created, such assumptions might have been reasonable. The teachers' comments suggested that the crowded curriculum has made teaching to the standards problematic.

The majority of teachers commented that the limited time available in the junior school made it impossible to cover sufficient content, or to target learning effectively. Cam, for example, commented that he had been forced to cut back the amount of content taught at year 9. He stated, "It's not enough [time] in year 9 to do very much at all. We've really pared back our course because we found that we were trying to get through too much content" (C:13). "You get this big batch of students all in together and they could be spread out far and wide" (C:13). He added that although he did try to differentiate learning where possible, even that was difficult. "Having them for such a short amount of time, you're barely getting to really know them well before they leave" (C:13).

Several teachers reported that the lack of time in the junior school deterred many students – especially those without prior learning in music – from studying music. Cam commented:

It limits the students who might opt to take music, because I think that music attracts the students who have had outside tuition or perhaps have done music lessons from the itinerant system. I don't think it attracts as many students who might have started at year 9 with their first formal study of music, and then believe that they can actually have a chance of success further up the school. ... I think in music they see where they fit, and their inexperience stands out. (C:5)

Teachers were particularly concerned that the one-term and half-year courses provided insufficient time to prepare students for years 11, 12 and 13, and in particular to meet NCEA level 1, 2, and 3 standards which are set at levels 6, 7 and 8 of the curriculum respectively, and require accelerating degrees of sophistication. New Zealand's four term school year means that by year 11, students will have completed eight terms of secondary education. Cam however reported that in music, "My students were actually in their fourth term of study – beginning their fourth term of study, when they started NCEA 1" (C:36). He added wryly that, the problem for music teachers is that no one has ever specified what "a year's worth of study" (C:36) is, in relation to the music standards.

Even where a full-year course operated in year 10, if the time for music in year 9 had been cut short, there was still insufficient time to prepare students adequately for year 11 study. Darryl observed of the year 10 class, “So it is a full year, three days a week. So three days isn’t enough. It simply isn’t enough, especially with the nature of NCEA, focusing on performance. You need to give them time to play in groups and do solos” (D:20).

Cam identified another major impact of short courses saying, “It’s also disjointed because you may have a student taking music in term one of year 9, and then maybe in terms one and two in year 10, and then wanting to begin in year 11. So they’ve had significant gaps in their learning” (C12-13).

Tracy identified other, less obvious, consequences of disjointed junior music courses for teachers. The NCEA assessment standards in performance, which generally constitute a central part of year 11 music courses, are set at level 6 of the curriculum and require a student to be at a standard equivalent to a “third year of study through itinerant lessons” (AS90012). Year 9 students who are not timetabled for music until later in the year may not have been alerted to the need to start learning an instrument at the beginning of the year and so may not have covered the requisite ground on their performance instrument before Year 11.

A further critical issue for the teachers, and one which had the potential to greatly affect the often fragile numbers in senior music classes, pertained to the choices junior students made in relation to their following year of study. Tracy outlined the problem succinctly, stating, “The half-year [courses] are difficult too, because kids make subject decisions halfway through the year and if they haven’t had music yet they’re not going to choose it” (T:42).

The problem of insufficient time to prepare for senior study was greatly amplified in the ‘one size fits all’ courses. In these courses the teachers had to juggle the imperative to address major gaps in learning of those students who had entered year 9 with little prior learning in music, while still covering significant new ground in a very short period of time to provide an adequate pathway into senior music. At the same time, teachers also had to provide meaningful musical experiences for the group of students taking music as part of their core arts requirement, rather than because they wanted to continue on to senior study. Issues of what to focus on abounded. For example, the extent to which to music notation skills – which become increasingly important for

students as they move into senior music study – should be included in such courses was an ongoing cause of tension for a number of the teachers.

Schools within in the study which provided two separate courses at year 9, typically ran a core music programme as part of their provision of the arts, similar in nature to the ‘one size fits all’ programmes. Alongside this, they ran a music option class for students wishing to continue their music studies in the senior school. Typically teachers ran a broad course, introducing students to the activities they would meet in the senior school.

Two schools offered a band programme, based on programmes such as the American ‘Standards of Excellence’ in which music classes operate as a band, with students playing music together each lesson, gradually building skills and repertoire. In such cases, the teacher acted as music director and conductor. Viv, who had taught in such a programme at a previous school, was determined to introduce it at his new school. He saw the band programme as a way of ensuring that students would become involved in the extra-curricular music programme, which would in turn provide them with much needed continuity in their musical learning. He commented:

The difficulty with year 10 is that to get them to year 11, you mostly get them from the ones that have just finished doing music. And you’ve got to work hard getting them from the ones in their first semester, and that’s why we’ve *got* to get them into these band classes because that means they’ll be involved in extra-curricular stuff, which means that they still become part of the music. (V:24)

Whereas the teachers representing most schools in the study shared the experience of having insufficient time in their junior classes, there was one school, known for its focus on music education, which in fact offered three different year 9 courses: compulsory core music for all year 9 students, option music for students serious in their intention to study music, and an auditioned extension class for able musicians. However, in sharp contrast to this, not all schools made music a compulsory subject at year 9, choosing instead to offer a smorgasbord of arts subjects from which students could choose. In such schools, year 9 students who did not opt into the music class, did not receive any secondary music education.

Music teachers were aware that they are not alone in the expectation that they would have to ‘make do’ and manage their junior teaching with what they saw as an

inadequate allocation of time. It was an issue that impacted on some other subject areas as well. A music advisor noted in this regard:

I feel powerless in many ways as an advisor. I've sat in on discussions with timetablers and principals and management and you know, it's the whole overloaded crowded curriculum thing, and balance. "Be thankful that you're getting as [much as] you are." That sort of thing. (MA1:42)

### **6.4.3 *Prior learning in music***

An issue which had an impact on every teacher in the study was the huge disparity in prior learning that students brought into year 9. Teachers reported that, although the curriculum signals that students entering year 9 may be presumed to be around level 4-5, the teachers' own experience was very different. Rae put it very succinctly, stating, "We would have students coming in at year 9 from all 8 of those [curriculum] levels" (R:33). Cam, whose school offered its year 9 students a single term of music, reported:

We have huge disparities in knowledge in year 9. We have students who don't know anything at all about music – who ask questions like, "What do you mean by 'beat'?" – to students who have got Royal Schools or Trinity qualifications to grades 6 and 7. (C:13)

The problems of prior learning encountered in year 9 flowed through to year 10, especially when learning time in year 9 was short. Darryl commented, "So you end up getting a year 10 class, and some of them might be grade 6 on whatever instrument, and this guitarist over here doesn't even know where to put a crotchet on the staff" (D:20).

While expressing concern over the gaps in prior learning of so many of their students, teachers also did welcome the fact that some students come into year 9 with well-developed instrumental skills. There was, however, acknowledgement that this situation was uneven, and teachers in lower decile schools consistently reported that only small numbers of their students had accessed private music tuition.

Paradoxically, students' prior instrumental learning did, at times, also provide tensions for teachers as they created and managed junior music courses, and for some students within those courses. Several teachers reported that capable students who were interested in music, but lacking in any formal background, easily became demoralised and opted out, when they measured themselves against their more skilled classmates.

This seemed to be particularly true when all year 9 students, regardless of their prior learning, or their desire to continue studying music in the senior school, were timetabled into a 'one size fits all' class. Cam commented:

What they see is your top level grade 5 flute player, or experienced piano player, in year 9 and [they] measure themselves against that person. And I think they often see these fantastic players in their classes and don't realise that they're the exception. And it's a really tough job for music teachers to say, "Well, look, you're doing really well at the level that you're working at and you can progress forward". (C:5-6)

#### **6.4.4 Primary school music**

Given the imperative for year 9 and 10 courses to build onto primary school music education, the nature and quality of that education was a matter of great significance for the teachers. Leith's comment, "I have tremendous concerns about what is not happening in primary school music" (L:33), reflected the concerns of all of the participants, as did Cam's statement, "I really believe that we have a lot of catch up to do when the students come to secondary school" (C:36).

A complex array of factors appeared to underlie the vexed question of primary school music education. The lack of dedicated time in a crowded curriculum, with its strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, appeared to be as much an issue in the primary school as it was in secondary schools. Darryl, speaking of primary students in the large city where he lived, stated:

They just don't get [learning in music] at primary school. They simply don't get it. ... Primary school teachers – I don't know if it is nationwide, but I imagine it is – are scared of teaching music, so they go with those pathetic sing-along CDs and say, "Yes, we have done music for eight hours this year". (D:19)

The musical expertise of primary teachers, who must cover every aspect of the curriculum in all official learning areas, was also of major concern to participants. One music advisor observed that it was hard for teachers to guide learning in music if they were only on level 1 or 2 of the curriculum themselves. Several teachers echoed Darryl's observation that primary school music often consisted of singing along to a CD, and that this did very little to meet the requirements for study in all four strands of

the curriculum, or to prepare the students adequately for the kinds of musical experiences that they would meet at secondary school.

It was Cam's belief that his students' primary school music experiences often had a negative influence on the choices they subsequently made in relation to studying music at secondary school:

I think the students choose their subjects based on their experiences of primary and intermediate and I think perhaps what's offered at some of the primary and intermediate schools is not the same as the sorts of things we offer in secondary schools. (C:4)

Considerable understanding and appreciation of the position that many primary school teachers found themselves in was evident. As Darryl stated, "I don't blame them, that's just the way it is" (D:19). Some of the teachers acknowledged that the situation was not totally one-sided, and while observing that a few primary schools were able to employ music specialists, they also paid tribute to generalist teachers who had well-developed music skills, and who, against the odds, provided students with an excellent music education. Hilary's comment, however, resonated with the views of all participants: "A lot of primary stuff is very piecemeal, very bitsy, inconsistent. Kids might get a good go one year, then they won't see anything for two or three years" (H:31).

Such was the concern about students' musical learning at primary school, with its flow on consequences for learning at secondary school, that several teachers reported they were taking matters into their own hands and providing direct, or indirect, musical assistance to contributing schools. Some were themselves going into the schools and taking music lessons, while others were saving up one or two precious itinerant music hours in order to provide instrumental tuition to year 7 and 8 children. Others were actively involved in organising and running primary school music festivals in their area. What this ultimately meant, however, was that they were necessarily stretching their personal resources even further, in order to address on a local level, a situation which is national in its scope.

## **6.5 Chapter summary**

Chapter 6 was the second of five data chapters. Its purpose was to examine the participants' perceptions of the music curriculum and their experiences of working in

junior music classrooms. The teachers perceived the potential breadth and inclusivity of the music curriculum to be a strength. However, it could also challenge their ability to manage the diverse musical styles their students represented. While embracing practical music making as the heart of the curriculum, many teachers also found such teaching to be personally demanding, and highly dependent on specially created resources and the availability of facilities such as a range of teaching spaces and classroom computers. Teachers perceived that the current position of music as one of the four disciplines comprising the arts, has influenced the amount of teaching and learning time available in music, which many found to be inadequate, particularly in the junior school. Many of the teachers in the study faced other major challenges in relation to their year 9 classes. These included the need to address the disparate learning needs of their students who typically came with very different experiences of prior learning in music. The teachers expressed concerns about the state of primary school music. While they were understanding of, and sympathetic to, their primary colleagues, they nonetheless considered that, in general, music teaching at primary school level was both patchy and inadequate and did not prepare students for the kinds of musical experiences they will encounter at secondary school.

# **Chapter 7**

## **The senior music classroom**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Chapter 7 is the third of five data chapters. Its purpose is to report the teachers' experiences of working in the senior music classroom. It is structured into two major sections: course design and assessment. Section 7.2 begins with a discussion of course design in the senior school, examining the issue of student numbers and the resultant requirement to teach multi-level classes. It further explores the widespread practice in senior music classes of every student working on their own individual programme, and then examines the changing role of the teacher in senior music classes. Section 7.3 examines the teachers' experiences of working with assessment in the senior school. It explores tensions between learning and assessment, the focus on credit gathering rather than learning, and gaps in student learning. The teachers' experiences of internal assessment and the manageability of performance and performing arts assessments are also considered. The section continues with an examination of the impact of NCEA workload on both the teachers and their students. Finally it discusses issues of moderation. Section 7.4 presents a summary of the chapter.

### **7.2 Course design**

In designing and delivering their music courses in the senior school, teachers had to work within the same kinds of constraints they encountered in relation to the junior school. These included the obligation to cater for the very diverse needs of the students, and the necessity of working within the constraints of school policies, structures and timetables. Added to these was the overarching presence of NCEA. Conversations with the teachers quickly underlined the fact that although NCEA was intended as a system of assessment, in practice it drove curriculum teaching and learning in the senior school. NCEA has modularised learning in the senior school. The teachers' stories demonstrated that NCEA also determined how and when students' work was assessed and heavily influenced the way the teachers designed their

courses and delivered the curriculum. Furthermore, it impacted on the nature and manageability of their workload and the learning experiences of their students.

Every current practitioner in the study stated that their school offered a course which enabled their senior students to sit NCEA. The modular nature of NCEA, along with the very diverse needs of students and differences in school policies, meant that there were significant differences between schools, and sometimes within schools, in the courses that teachers designed.

Typically, teachers offered a full NCEA level 1 course for year 11 students, which comprised either all achievement standards, or a mix of achievement standards and unit standards. Cam, for example, commented that at year 11 his students all did a 'standard' NCEA music course in which he offered the full set of level 1 music achievement standards, worth 24 credits. He further commented that his school was quite conservative, and that he did not have any demand for unit standards. Several teachers commented that they offered composition unit standards rather than achievement standards, because the unit standards allowed students to avoid the requirement to provide a notated score, which the achievement standards required.

In years 12 and 13, the picture became increasingly complex. Only one teacher, with large classes in the senior school, stated that he offered a full year 12 NCEA course in which all of the students studied the same achievement standards. The majority of teachers constructed courses which included music achievement standards and unit standards and at times also performing arts unit standards.

Several teachers reported that in order to meet the diverse needs of students in the senior school they were able to provide alternative options alongside of their 'regular' NCEA classes. For example, in addition to their separate level 2 and 3 music classes, Cam offered a half-year class for year 12 and 13 students, which was based on group performance, and Rae offered a full year performance class, in which students could concentrate largely on their own solo instrument – although they also worked towards a group performance standard based on choral performance. Darryl offered alternative practical music courses which attracted STAR (Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource) funding. A number of teachers also provided their students with additional classes so they could enter for other qualifications such as Scholarship and the International Baccalaureate and Cambridge exams.

### **7.2.1 Course design for small numbers of students**

Senior music classes often did not attract large numbers of students, and this could create difficulties for school managers, who must work within funding constraints and endeavour to balance student/teacher ratios as equitably as possible. Teachers spoke of three ways in which schools typically dealt with this situation. If there were only one or two senior students, they might take music through the NZ Correspondence School. None of the teachers mentioned that they currently had students taking senior correspondence lessons.

Ashley's school, located in a rural community, was exploring a second way of managing small senior school numbers in music. They were involved in a trial in which specialist teachers from one school taught students from other schools in the region via video links. To enable her two year 12 students to take music, Ashley had agreed to be the regional music teacher. Though aspects of the course which relied on written materials, such as music works, had proven to be relatively straight-forward, Ashley had found practical aspects much more challenging. Particularly problematic was the teaching of composition, where the two way video link did not allow her to engage with a student and the score from which they were playing at the same time. Her solution had been to visit the other schools on occasions so that she could spend one-on-one time with the students.

### **7.2.2 Multi-level classes**

The most usual response by senior management to small numbers of students opting to study music in the senior school, was to combine different year groups together into multi-level, or composite classes. The positive side of this for the teachers was that they were able to ensure that there was a pathway in music for their students from year 9 to year 13. However, teaching multi-level classes was not necessarily an easy undertaking. Jami's comment was astute, "We do a lot of multi-levelling. It's the blessing and burden of NCEA" (J:19).

The participants reported that in year 11, the greater numbers of music students opting for music meant that single level NCEA classes were the norm. Only four teachers were teaching composite classes that included year 11 students. These composites included a combined year 10 and 11, a combined year 11 and 12, and a combined year 11, 12 and 13.

In years 12 and 13, however, only six teachers had single level NCEA classes. These teachers taught either in private and integrated schools, where there was an acceptance of small single level class sizes, or in state schools in which there were larger numbers in the senior classes. Leith, for example, teaching in a private school, had a separate year 13 class of 8 students. Ira had been allowed a year 13 class of just three students. Rae, teaching in a very large school, had full classes in both years 12 and 13.

The remaining teachers had to teach composite classes. Jami, teaching in a large, high decile city school, noted that:

This year they've combined things, through various management reasons. ... They've combined classes. So we had a combined class at year 12 and 13. Almost every single student had their own programme. ... Very few were doing the same programme as their neighbour. (J:21-22)

Jami was unusual amongst the study participants, in that she also had a combined year 10 and 11 class.

In teaching composite classes, teachers were again faced with working with students who had very different levels of prior learning. Elisha, a first year teacher, had inherited a situation where there were two senior music classes, each of which contained a mix of year 11, 12 and 13 students. One was a more typical 'academic' class of 20 students, most of whom were having lessons on an acoustic instrument, and were working towards either NCEA level 1, 2 or 3. Her other class, Elisha described in this manner:

And there's a performance class which I think up until last year they just came along and they just jammed on their guitars, and they haven't had lessons. They all just think that they're going to come along and play their guitars, which I'm slowly changing. I don't know [if] they did any credits last year. I don't think they had any offered to them – they just came along and they played; and there's 33 in that class, which is interesting. ... And about 12 of them are year 11s from the bilingual unit and the way that it works at our school is that the 7, 8, 9 and 10 have the bilingual Māori-English class that don't take part in the mainstream school's option rotations. So I've got these 12 kids who haven't done music before in terms of music with a music teacher, who are now suddenly in my NCEA Level 1 class. (E:6-7)

Elisha was not the only teacher who reported that students who had not previously studied music had been placed into year 11 music classes. Given that the level 1

standards are written to take account of learning in the junior school, this was a significant issue for the teachers.

For some teachers, it was the very diverse musical interests of their students that made composite classes challenging. Kelly described the composite year 12 and 13 class that he would be teaching in the following year:

This coming year I'm going to find it really interesting, because I've got some quite exceptional national level [students]. I've got a double bassist and a violinist and one who's in the national youth choir, that'll all be in the same class, and three guys that are part of a nationally ranked barbershop quartet. So you've got all those ones that are in their style, and my whole year 12 class, bar two, are rock musos – and very narrow minded rock musos. They're not interested in anything outside of the genre, and now I'm supposed to be teaching them as a composite [class]. I've got no idea. ... I've got no idea! I don't know, I really don't know! (K:24)

### **7.2.3 Individual learning programmes**

Faced with such diversity, and the proliferation of NCEA music and performing arts standards, a number of teachers reported that they allowed their senior students, especially those in year 13, to create their own individual courses, by choosing the particular standards that interested them. Darryl's experience was typical, "We make IEPs<sup>40</sup> and use [them] especially in my alternative class. But the year 13 one is a real loose one. We make up the course just pretty much for every single kid. There won't be one identical course" (D:24). Cam too noted, "At level 3 we give them all of the music studies and all of the practical music making achievement standards, and they construct their own course after that" (C:17).

Fran's description of how she and her colleagues set up their individual programmes at the beginning of the year, was typical of the way in which teachers worked:

So what we do at the beginning of the year is we sit down with them and say, right, what do [you] want out of this course? Where is it heading for you? Are you heading to university to do music, are you heading to jazz school, are you heading to any other tertiary institution to study music, or do you want to play in a band on Saturday night, or are you wanting to have

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<sup>40</sup> Several teachers used the term IEP, a word usually reserved for special education, to signify the individual programmes they created for their students. IEP has not been edited from direct quotations, but elsewhere the term 'individual learning programme' has been used.

a bit of music as something extra that you could do in a degree. So we find out what they are actually wanting from it ultimately and then we say right, if you are going to university you *have* to do this, this and this. These are the things that you must have and there is no choice. If you are just playing on Saturday night you have to have your performance and your composition and we are doing a PA [performing arts] thing of bits and pieces because it's a useful skill for them to have and we do a study of the New Zealand music industry as well, so that they have that knowledge if they want to go out there and start writing songs and performing songs that they have that background. (F:10)

Because of the logistics involved in managing individual programmes, many teachers did not offer them at year 11, where class numbers were typically higher.

Pat mentioned that in the previous year his colleague had experimented with offering independent programmes to his year 11 class, saying with a laugh that his colleague had said, "Here are all the unit and achievement standards available, design your own course" (P:25). Their experience had been that although it had largely worked for the students, the large class size had made it very difficult for the teachers to manage. The following year they found a compromise. "We use more of a system now where we generally set the course but we don't stick rigidly to the achievement standards, because in some cases they're not necessarily the best" (P:25).

Fran, however, working in a decile 2 school, offered her students individual programmes right from year 11, regardless of the class size, stating:

Well we do some strange things. I think my staff always say, you just do things so differently – and I do. We have a real range of students in our classes and so basically as soon as they get to year 11 they are pretty much on individualised programmes. (F:9)

To meet the diverse needs of her year 13 students, Leith had offered them an individualised programme, despite her assertion that, "I'm not totally comfortable with it" (L:18) and that it was "a bit of a logistical nightmare" (L:15) for her as a teacher. She acknowledged that it was her small year 13 class size of eight students that made it possible. She commented, "I suppose, if I had a class of 20 it would be different. I don't have a class of 20. If I had a class of 20, they wouldn't be doing an individual programme" (L:18). Although she did not at that time offer such choices to her year 11

students, she could see that “in a couple of years we may have the problem [of meeting very diverse musical needs] at level 1” (L:18).

#### **7.2.4 Management of individual learning programmes**

Conversations with the teachers revealed that individual learning programmes could be viewed as a very mixed blessing. An immediate issue was the complexity involved in having to teach and administer classes in which students were studying such diverse programmes. Jami, managing a combined year 12 and 13 class in which almost every student had their own programme, reflected:

It was difficult and I do not like teaching like that, because I feel like I’m always delivering second rate teaching. Because it’s very difficult to split your time between the groups within one classroom when it’s combined like that. ... The [year] 12 and 13 [class] was in some ways quite difficult in the fact that the year 13s were so split in what they were doing. Often the year 12s were ignored because they were competent. And they didn’t deserve that, and because the level of work expected at level 3 is demanding and so they took more of my time, that was completely unfair on those year 12s. ... It’s not what I want to deliver, and it’s not what I want the students to experience, but it’s very difficult to find ways to solve that without actually having another body in the room, without having someone who’s actually there to converse with the students and talk, and to guide them. I did have meetings with them every two weeks. They’d keep a notebook of goals, what they were hoping to achieve over the next two weeks, and then they would discuss how they went with these goals, and where they thought they were at. And that was invaluable for me, because I think I would have completely lost track of those students otherwise. (J:22)

#### **7.2.5 Role of the teacher**

What became apparent, too, was that the move to an individual programme model in the senior school had some significant consequences for both the teachers and their students, especially in terms of their roles in the learning, and their working relationships.

Teachers experienced a change in their role, from ‘up-front’ teacher, to facilitator, administrator and mentor. Gene commented:

It's like your role as a teacher in year 13 seems to have changed. You're more of an administrator and a mentor for guiding the students through what they are doing to achieve the credits they need. You can end up with not doing very much teaching all year in year 13, if you choose that way. It is all very credit focused. That's my experience of it. (G:10)

It was apparent that the change in role brought with it, at times, a sense of loss for the teachers. Leith commented:

But I find level 3, although I think it's wonderful that the ... students can work to their strengths and interests, I find as a teacher that I don't enjoy it as much. I feel that I'm not teaching enough. And, because the girls who are doing Scholarship, you know, the music works and the harmony, that's quite a lot of work and it's teacher-directed work, so I have to spend a lot of time with them. The girls doing composition and arranging, we're doing their pre-task things and then they're off, and they just check in with me every now and then. I sort of feel as though, "I'm not teaching you anything, girls". (L:16)

For the students, too, there were implications. An obvious one was that they needed to be much more self-directed. Pat commented that he warned his students "not to expect to see a teacher up at the whiteboard all the time, doing teacher directed learning, 'coz it ain't going to happen, all the time. In fact, in the majority of the time it's not going to happen" (P:45).

Martin had been offering individual programmes to his students for the past couple of years, and was so concerned about the impact on his students, and on his working relationship with them, that he was thinking of not individualising their programmes so much in the future. He commented:

I know my kids think I'm not doing a good job. I know my senior kids, whom I tend to leave alone, don't like to be left alone. They like it for a little while. They *wish* they could be left alone, but when they finally get it, they don't actually want that at all, but that's what's happened with my senior programme this year – the last two years which are now individualised to a degree – they are IEPs basically. (M:17)

He further commented, "What they see is just this guy sitting and looking into a computer all the time. In actual fact, most of the work I'm doing is either for them – or; it's quite varied – but what they see is the guy at the computer" (M:18).

Martin was certainly not alone in his concern over the loss of the 'corporate nature' of the senior music classes. Cam, too, had thought long and hard about how he would approach the challenge. His decision was to retain a common core of work which all of the class did together, and alongside of that offer some choices to his students. He explained his decision:

And I guess I wanted to go somewhere in between. And, to me music is about working collaboratively, working together; different people's opinions and ideas. And I just needed to find a way that we could do something where sometimes we were together. And that's the best that I've come up with so far. ... Students seem to be achieving okay. And I think they seem to be enjoying the sense of security that brings sometimes, too. (C:20)

### **7.3 Assessment**

Regardless of their years of teaching experience, or the kind of school they worked in, every teacher saw that NCEA had some positive aspects to offer senior music education. Some were firm advocates. Pat, for example, commented, "I love NCEA for music, I think it suits our subject very well. It makes it a very, very versatile subject in that there [is] such a variety of things that you can do that weren't really possible before" (P:24).

Martin, too, was a firm advocate, stating:

I think it's really good. I think that the basic principle of a modularised qualification structure is really sound and really student centred. I think it's fabulous and I highly support it and am a firm advocate of it. It means that you can meet quite specific needs. (M:27)

Kelly noted, "The system is valid for music", and added, "It sets some standards and expectations that are very positive and challenging for kids" (K:35). Darryl spoke of the flexibility that NCEA offered, and Leith added to that by commenting that NCEA allowed students to work to their own strengths and interests.

### **7.3.1 Tensions between learning and assessment**

A matter of considerable concern to many of the teachers was the tension that NCEA had set up between learning and assessment. Although this issue was raised predominately in relation to students, it was also evident that a number of teachers saw it as a much wider issue. Cam, for example, mentioned his experience as the learning coordinator for his school:

And a number of heads of departments simply put the title of their achievement standards down as their course content, and their comment was that why would you teach anything else, because the kids won't bother doing anything, unless it's being assessed. And I think that's something we're really battling with in schools still. Because I always thought we're trying to cling onto the idea that you learn things and you assess that learning later and tie it into the achievement standards. But the assessment isn't the goal of the course for me. And that's hard. (C:22)

### **7.3.2 Focus on credits**

There was widespread concern among all of the participants in the study that the heavy emphasis on assessment meant that students often valued credits as an end in themselves, rather than valuing the learning that the credits were designed to represent. Darryl articulated what a number of other participants mentioned, "So, as far as NCEA goes, I hate the way it is credit oriented. So often kids say, well how many credits is it worth?" (D:28).

Of significant concern was the fact that students often stopped work once they had achieved enough credits in music. One of the consequences of this situation was that they chose not to turn up to the externally examined standards – which in music typically examine aural and theoretical work. Pat commented, for example:

Since NCEA, kids have been very selective about what external examinations they want to sit, and what internal assessments they want to put any work into. And a lot of the kids get to the end of the year finding they have enough credits internally, so why turn up to the external? (P:26)

Another issue related to 'credit gathering' that teachers mentioned, was that students had become very savvy about the amount of work that they could be expected to do in order to gain a certain number of credits. Several teachers mentioned that credits in music were hard to get, and that this was affecting student numbers. As Kelly stated:

You're also aware that music takes a lot of assessing and a lot of work from the kids to get the credits. So you know, kids are starting to opt with their feet a little bit, if they're arts-based they can get a lot more credits with a lot less effort in something like drama. (K:34)

### **7.3.3 Gaps in learning**

One real concern a number of teachers raised was that students didn't always see the 'big picture' of music education, and were often reluctant to take standards that they found challenging (such as the externally examined aural and harmony standards). Leith, for example, recounted the story of her year 12 group who had written to her the previous year, asking to be withdrawn from the end of year external aural examination, because they were concerned that they would not be able to achieve an 'Excellence' in it. She commented, "I can see that it's hard and I suppose it is quite hard, but I'm a bit traditional, I think it's a really important skill to have" (L:13). She added that students often perceived harmony as being "dry and boring" (L:21) and wouldn't do it, which influenced the harmonic understandings that they needed for their composition work. Cam too commented that his students often preferred not to do the external standards. He added, "But I make them, figuring that those skills are really, really important anyway, and if you're going to do the skills, you may as well spend a morning in November doing the exam" (C:18).

Students' reluctance to sit the external standards appeared to be quite widespread, and a number of the teachers were critical of the aural components of the standards. Rae noted that a number of his colleagues in other schools were not offering aural standards because their students would not choose them. He said:

I think that's a real shame. But those colleagues are right though, it is too hard and consequently they're saying it's so hard for students they're not going to pass it, so therefore let's not bother offering that which, of course, educationally is just not right. (R:24)

Gene, too, was critical of the aural exam, drawing attention to the marking criteria:

This year, the girls have flatly refused to do harmony and aural. ... The aural is a frustrating area, because you can work at it and you can teach it and the experience of the students is that it is very hard to achieve in it. ... The way it's marked is so insane, that we have a student in her [mock-exams at school] – one note off from achieving. If she had put one note

differently she would have achieved in the transcription, and yet she had excellence in other areas of the level 2 paper. She didn't achieve full stop, even though if it had been marked in the old way, she probably would have had 80%. And the kids find that discouraging. (G:9)

A tension clearly existed for the teachers between allowing the students the freedom to make their own choices – which potentially led to gaps in their learning – and the teachers' own knowledge that music is a holistic experience, in which all the parts connect, and where background skills such as aural and harmony work are needed to support the practical skills of performance and composition.

A related issue that some teachers raised, was their concern that students opting to study music at tertiary institutions often left school with significant gaps in their knowledge. Gene, for example, commented that universities are now having to run bridging courses, because there can no longer be an expectation that students will enter tertiary courses with the background necessary for tertiary study. She reflected:

I've had conversations with [university staff] about the calibre of students coming through. In the basic grounding in music, they are illiterate. They know very little about music. They don't know how to identify a piece of a composer from the Romantic era. They just don't have that basic grounding. They haven't listened to enough music, and they may have played lots, but it's all in its own little bubble, and there is no sense of relationship, and I just know that our background when we learned music, you're learning it within a bigger context, and it makes sense within a bigger context. (G:10)

This concern over the 'big picture' of learning also became evident in the issue of whether or not NCEA has 'dumbed down' learning in music. A couple of participants were concerned that it had. Leith, for example, reflected, "However, I do feel that there's a dumbing down, and I know that word is used an awful lot, but I do think that we're teaching more and more to a lowest common denominator, which really concerns me" (L:19).

However, a number of other participants did not share that opinion. Rae noted, for example, "There's a lot of talk through the media etc. about dumbing down, but in fact to pass level 3 music aspects is really tough" (R:23). One of the music advisors, far

from thinking that standards had been lowered, suggested that in fact, teachers kept pushing up the standards.

Our expectations for kids are really very high. ... And with Scholarship, a lot of teachers are starting to say, "Why are we so hard on our music people?" We're now expecting them to do a written paper as well as their performance. Visual arts don't do that. Drama doesn't do that. Why are music people doing it? And we wonder, are we our own worst enemies? The better we get at it, the more our expectations come up and up and up and kids' skill levels rise, and the more they do, the more we expect them to go up. (MA2:23)

#### **7.3.4 Internal assessment**

NCEA standards in music are largely internally assessed. Every participant who was teaching senior classes commented on the expectations placed on them by internal assessment. Rae, who had taught under previous systems, stated that teachers now had a great deal more responsibility in the allocation of final grades for students. He noted that this increase in responsibility also came at the price of the flexibility to pursue paths of particular interest:

I think there's a massive emphasis for a classroom teacher doing assessments now, whereas when I was first teaching 20 years ago we had internal exams and things, so the teachers were doing assessment, but it wasn't an assessment, it was a commitment of a mark to those students. [Final assessment] was virtually all done externally. ... So I think that's a massive shift in responsibility onto the classroom teacher and of course it takes out a lot of what was previous teaching time and not just teaching time, it was time where the teacher used to have a bit more freedom to go down particular paths that were topical at the time for the group of students that they happened to have in front of them. They could mould things more readily I think before than what they can now. The reality goes against the principle of NCEA, the principle of NCEA, in fact, is supposed to give the classroom teacher more freedom. (R:19)

#### **7.3.5 Manageability of performance assessments**

While it is no doubt true that internal assessment has produced increased expectations for all teachers, the largely practical nature of music as a subject has brought with it some quite specific expectations for music teachers. Teachers explained that this was

particularly the case with the assessment of both solo and group performance standards at levels 1, 2 and 3. The majority of students studying music at levels 1, 2 and 3 take performance standards. To meet these, they must perform to an audience on at least two occasions during the year. They are usually assessed 'live' during the performance, and in addition, performances must also be videoed for moderation purposes. It became clear that organising and assessing performance standards involved a great deal of time consuming and often hidden work for the music teachers.

In the first instance, the teacher had to ensure that every student was learning an instrument, either from a private music teacher, or an itinerant teacher. They had to liaise with both the student and their instrumental teacher to discuss the choice of repertoire, and check on such things as requirements for an accompanist. In the case of group performances, the teacher often had to be proactive in helping students to organise a group, find suitable repertoire, arrange rehearsal times and organise some coaching. Examples (either written or aural) of each piece of music to be performed often had to be obtained before the performance, so that assessors would be able to judge its accuracy.

The performance event itself required organising. A number of the participants reported that they ran special evening concerts, which were generally open to other students, parents and instrumental teachers. Cam, for example, noted:

We usually do a solo performance ... around about late term 2, which we do usually during class time, as their kind of first one out. And then we have a couple of official recital nights late term 3 or even term 4. We video [the performances]. (C:24)

Other teachers reported that they were able to schedule music performance assessments during the school day, often during the school's own internal exam season. Rae, who taught in a school with quite large senior music classes, noted:

But just at year 11, 12 and 13, for instance, we have about 110 solo performance exams that we have to hear twice a year, and that's a very nice experience actually, when you get to the point of listening to them, but it takes a *massive* amount of time, to timetable it and to then actually sit down and do it. (R:20)

It was usual practice for teachers to assemble a marking panel, which included themselves, and at least one other musician – either a colleague (if there was a second

music teacher in the school), or perhaps an itinerant teacher. Cam's comment also highlights another expectation – that teachers will be able to assess any instrument – from bagpipes to bassoon, from rap to recorder:

We tend to mark together, so both of us tend to mark all the performances together. We sometimes have somebody else come in. If we've got an instrument we're not particularly familiar with, we might invite someone else to come and give us an opinion, or we might show them the video. (C:24)

In addition to providing performance occasions at school, a number of the teachers mentioned that they placed a further expectation on themselves, by allowing their students to make use of performance opportunities offered by music events outside of the school. Gene commented, "We cart our video cameras with us all the time, and build up a library or a bank of their performances throughout the year, so it's good to have those opportunities; much better than just doing it in a classroom situation" (G:3).

### **7.3.6 Manageability of performing arts unit standards**

Although teaching and assessing performance standards was a core expectation for every music teacher, a number of teachers also spoke of internal assessment expectations from a range of performing arts standards, which were becoming increasingly popular in senior music classes, particularly with students who had a contemporary music focus. Darryl provided an example of a unit standard, to highlight the amount of time and organisational effort that he had to put into assessing practical activities, which, in the end, were worth very few credits:

And I teach this alternative class, especially with unit standards. They are just a complete mess, a bloody mess. It drives me to *distraction!* I have sent things to the Ministry about wanting to organise better equity through credits. For instance, I teach these kids how to set up and disassemble a PA [public address] system and set up and disassemble a recording system, which involves a lot of background knowledge about it, and actually setting up a PA system, which is a one person thing. So when I assess them it is 20 minutes of time. I have to pay for a reliever to teach my class for 3 days, just so I can assess this part of the standard – it is worth 2 credits, and setting up the PA system is only a quarter of the assessment involved in the whole standard – so 2 credits, at level 2. And it is the reason I get to take the course, so I have to do it, because it is vocational and that is where STAR funding comes from. We go on, hopefully, to do the next

standard, which is operating a PA system. Again, you have got all this huge equipment. How do you assess it? You have got to set up concerts and all that kind of thing. At level 3, 3 credits and it is a lot of written work as well. It doesn't have to be written, it can be verbal, but then I have to interview them one on one and ask them all the questions. My god, it just drives me to distraction; and it is worth 3 credits, you know, 3 credits. It is *insane!* (D:28)

### **7.3.7 Assessment workload**

The issues of assessment manageability provided some insight into the workload that internal assessment in NCEA has created for music teachers. Leith's comments are indicative of the impact that NCEA has had on the teachers:

Workload? Well, where do I start? *Horrendous!* The paperwork is phenomenal! Everything has to be written up and signed in triplicate and documented and with all the jargon that you have to write and it just – and it seems to take away the joy of teaching, the joy of learning, because everything's towards an assessment. You're teaching towards an assessment all the time. And, you know, everything's so politically correct and has to be so tight and you just can't go off on your little tangents, if you need to. That's just something that I find is phenomenal. And, in this day and age of the computer and, you know, email, and all that sort of thing, and we're meant to be able to do things more efficiently. It's rubbish, it's not happening. It's just so, so much paperwork! (L:21)

### **7.3.8 Student workload**

Alongside their own workload concerns, teachers also voiced considerable concern about the impact of NCEA on their students' workloads. There was general acknowledgement that the workload of students in music was very high. In fact, in the view of a number of teachers, it was unacceptably high. Gene commented, "It seems to me that with the implementation of NCEA, students are just actually generally feeling quite overloaded all year" (G:8). Cam went further:

I think they are strung out and they are horrendously busy. My level 2 class completed a music work task for me this week and for some of them it was their seventh assessment in the four days of school they had this week. ... Their seventh assessment in four days! And that's ridiculous. It's *utterly* ridiculous! ... I think the ones we have now, work *much* harder. Much,

*much* harder. In music we tend to get a lot of the high achieving, really good students, the perfectionist types, who almost burn themselves out. I think it's ridiculous that teenagers are doing all-nighters just to get assignments done. I think it's ridiculous *anyone* works all night. And I just don't know what we can do about it because they still equate it – if it's not being assessed they don't do it. And some of their teachers equate that if it's not being assessed, we don't teach it, and so big chunks of learning are being missed out. ... I think it's this kind of multiple portfolio of stuff they have to get in composition, performance and music works which complicates life. Yeah, I think a major mind shift has to happen, we're here to *learn* things, and we tick off the assessment boxes later. (C:32-33)

Jami, too, indicated that some of her students worked extremely long hours to meet the assessment demands, especially in the composition standards, for which students typically used Sibelius music notation software which was loaded onto computers in music departments.

The students, particularly third and fourth terms, are here as soon as they can in the morning, half past seven, and they don't leave here 'til I kick them out about six o'clock at night. They *live* in this block. And one of my biggest problems is we've only got six computers and so there can only be six in at a time. (J:33)

### **7.3.9 Moderation**

Many teachers expressed concerns over the moderation of internally assessed standards. The majority reported that they relied quite heavily on the informal moderation of performance and composition standards provided by local cluster groups which were initially been set up under the internally assessed School Certificate music qualification. These clusters are no longer formally funded under NCEA, and because of that, not all teachers were able to get release time to attend them during the working day. Teachers reported that because such clusters are reliant on local initiatives, they appeared to be most successful in areas where there was a strong music teachers' organisation. Pat explained the significance of the local moderation cluster for him:

I don't know any music teacher that is an expert in every single instrument that is presented and I rely on being able to go to those meetings and people like [name] that know about the voice, people like [name] or [name] that know about rock music and guitars and drums, things like that. Or

someone like [name] that know about brass. I *rely* on that. And I don't see how the hell you can really be totally confident in your assessment if you don't have that interaction. So that local level moderation, for us, is *critical*. And I believe it should be (a) compulsory and (b) funded in terms of providing the release time. (P:40)

It was clear that the teachers were not all entirely happy with the national moderation of music. Ashley recounted experiences in her first two of years of teaching, in which she had sought advice from experienced local colleagues, and a music advisor, and had been given very different messages about the quality of her judgements from the moderators. Another teacher had been faced with a situation where his judgement was called into question, in this case in relation to a standard which he himself had helped to write. A very experienced teacher, he had been able to put the situation into perspective, but he reflected wryly, "I think that if you're an inexperienced teacher you would have felt devastated. Your year group, or cohort, had failed because you've misread a sentence or not done something" (Identifier withheld). He went on to say:

It's tricky. I also worry. I have got music works being moderated at level 2 for the first time, and even now I worry that I might over compensate for that by getting them to do too much, to send too much. I honestly don't know. So it's a bit of a lottery, and that doesn't make it very easy. (Identifier withheld)

Rae articulated a concern a number of teachers raised, in relation to the tensions involved in making apparently 'objective' judgements about a discipline in which so much is subjectively based. He noted:

But there's not much room anywhere now for subjectivity, whereas in our subject of music there's a tremendous amount of subjectivity really and I do understand that we should be able to explain subjectivity in an objective way, but I think that that's just gone a bit overboard as well. (R:20)

## **7.4 Chapter summary**

The purpose of this chapter was to present the teachers' experiences of teaching in the senior classroom. It has shown that a fundamental tension for the teachers in the study lay in the demands that delivering and assessing the music curriculum within the senior classroom often placed on them. At times this gave rise to tensions between the

holistic music learning that they wished to facilitate for their students, and the students' own focus on gaining credits. Tensions were further compounded by the imperative to accommodate their classroom music teaching and assessment to the institutional practices, policies and structures of the school. This often meant that teachers were required to teach multi-level classes in which students were, to a greater or lesser extent, working to individual programmes. It also meant that assessment activities could take up a disproportionate amount of teaching time and the teachers' own time. The resulting workload pushed the boundaries of manageability, particularly as it often involved planning and administering across an increasingly wide range of responsibilities.



# Chapter 8

## Beyond the Classroom

### 8.1 Introduction

This is the fourth of the five data chapters. Its purpose is to present the teachers' experiences and responsibilities outside of the classroom, providing insights into the tensions of practice they encountered. The chapter is structured into three main parts: administration and management, the itinerant programme, and extra-curricular activities. Section 8.2 considers first the roles of head of music (HOD) and teacher in charge of music (TIC) and second extra-curricular administration and the management of music resources. Section 8.3 examines the teachers' responsibilities in relation to the itinerant instrumental scheme in state schools and instrumental lessons in the private and state integrated schools in the study. Section 8.4 discusses school music groups and the role that such groups play in the corporate life of the school. It explores the relationship between curricular and extra-curricular music and examines musical productions and the role that music teachers played in relation to them. Section 8.4 provides a summary of the chapter.

### 8.2 Management and administration

The purpose of this section is to examine the teachers' experiences of middle management and administration.

#### ***8.2.1 Role of head of music***

The teachers who held the position of HOD Music acknowledged that the demands of their middle management role were in many respects similar to those of other HODs in their school. Kelly commented, for example, "You still always have that time pressure for the paperwork and budgets and things that any department would have" (K:10). The core job involved the management of curriculum in their department. This included the oversight of schemes of work for all class levels, the management of class resources, budgets, assessment (particularly NCEA), and compliance and accountability

documents for ERO (the Education Review Office). HODs were also responsible for the teaching team within their department.

The study participants' experience was that the paperwork sometimes threatened to overwhelm them. A former teacher, for example, in reflecting on the fact that he *really* missed teaching teenagers, gave the paperwork involved as a strong reason not to return to the classroom, commenting, "But again, like most HODs would say, it would be the paperwork that would kill me" (Identifier withheld).

In this connection, teachers noted the increasing amounts of time spent on accountability to bodies such as ERO. Martin, in reflecting on his workload, commented:

I think what would make a difference would be if I wasn't doing a lot of administrative stuff, and if we didn't have ERO breathing over our shoulders, because ... every time we have an HOD meeting ... I come away feeling badly that I haven't done something. I come away with some new job to do, that feels like it's not of any purpose. So it would be quite nice if I could just strip away the stuff that didn't matter. (M:24)

Conversations with the HODs indicated that, no doubt because music departments are often small and sole-charge, many of them had become middle managers very early in their teaching career, and in those circumstances, lacked experience of school systems and policies. Darryl had had to step up into the role of HOD in his first year, because the newly appointed HOD became ill. He was faced with writing a scheme:

There was no scheme in my department. I don't know how they have done it for the last 25 years, but there was no scheme. The new HOD had just started when she got sick, so I had to write a scheme, not even knowing what a scheme is virtually. ... And all of this is on top of my job. (D:14)

Jami's concern was that she had become an HOD before she had time to consolidate her classroom teaching skills. She commented:

I would love to ... just focus on the classroom, just to be that normal teacher like you would be in another subject. You'd just be able to go, "This is what I'm doing", and feel confident in what you're doing in the classroom. Because without being confident in what you're doing in the classroom I don't know what the point is, and I think that's an issue. (J:41)

Jami's comment pointed to recurring themes in the teachers' stories – their perception that music teachers are often 'different' from the norm, and that the work that they do as HODs can get in the way of their classroom teaching.

### **8.2.2 Role of teacher in charge of music**

Whereas the HODs did receive some formal recognition and compensation for the middle management role that they performed, the situation was very different for the three beginning teachers. As the sole music teacher in their schools, they were, at times by default, in charge of music. Each of these teachers was – to quote Ashley – “an HOD without being an HOD” (A:26) and each was significantly affected by the addition of the middle management work onto their own teacher workload. They effectively carried all of the responsibilities of the HODs, but without the prior experience that such a role would normally pre-suppose, and often without any real support or extra remuneration.

First year teacher Elisha was teaching in a decile 2, co-educational year 7-13 school of about 700 students. She confessed that she was finding her role “very tiring in terms of the time spent on paperwork that has to be done out of class, the management kind of stuff for the schemes and what-not” (E:10). She stated that at her job interview the principal had reassured her that as a first year teacher she would not have to do the administrative work. However, she had quickly found that no-one else had been organised to do it. She reflected, “But if I don't do it, no-one else will. It has to be done ... and I was under the impression that he [the principal] would have organised someone to do it, but he hasn't, so it was all just talk really” (E:11).

When I asked Elisha if her workload had been reduced, to acknowledge the extra work that she was having to do, her response was that not only had she not been provided with extra time, but that she had initially been expected to carry a full teaching load, rather than the 0.8 load she was entitled to as a first year provisionally registered teacher.

I started off with a full teaching load and I went to the principal and said, “I've got too many hours” and he looked at the timetable and said, “Yes you do”, and so the year 8s don't get music this year, because he couldn't find someone to teach the class. (E:11)

Elisha's comment, “If I don't do it, no-one else will” (E:10), echoed the situation that all three beginning teachers found themselves in.

Sasha, like Elisha, was also a first year teacher working in a low decile school. Her experience was, however, of a more supportive environment. The school was small, and all of the departments were small. Sasha's workload had been set at 0.8 from the beginning of the year, and of this music occupied 0.5. The music classes were small, the itinerant programme was small, and there were no major music groups operating in the school. "We don't have an orchestra, or a band or a choir" (S:20). The school employed an arts coordinator who shared her weekly two and a half hours between music and visual arts. Even so, Sasha commented, "It was quite daunting to start with" (S:3), and reflected, "Some days it's quite overwhelming, and I wonder what I'm doing to the students in terms of not really being prepared. But other days I feel quite confident in what I'm doing and where I'm headed" (S:3).

Ashley, too, was the sole music teacher at her provincial school. At the time of interview, she was nearing the end of her third year of teaching, and had just resigned her position. Like Elisha and Sasha, she had found clear expectations that she would be the de facto head of department.

And I guess, because you're an HOD without being an HOD, you're expected to do the paperwork, you're expected to hand in schemes and management documents. It's your responsibility to prepare course outlines for the year and give those to students and that sort of thing. (A:26)

Ashley had been looking around at her colleagues, and noticing a considerable difference in the expectations that were placed on her, in comparison with other beginning teachers. She was also noticing that they had support from an HOD, and she did not.

And, so when I was a beginning teacher, the person sort of closest to what I was doing was a social studies teacher and she was in her second year as well. And I thought, all she has to do is teach her classes and go home. And then, even things like careers evening. You've got to organise displays, you've got to be available for those three/four hours – you know, that sort of thing. They don't have to worry about any of that. They've just got to teach their classes. They can get advice from their heads of departments or other colleagues. (A:25)

### **8.2.3 *Extra-curricular administration***

While many of the administrative tasks that the music teachers undertook were similar to those undertaken by other staff, it was in the running of the extra-curricular music programme that teachers continually identified differences between their role and that of other staff members. Regardless of whether they were an HOD or a TIC, the music teachers were expected to take charge of extra-curricular music in their school.

In many of the schools, significant numbers of students were involved, in some capacity or another, with extra-curricular music. When teachers provided a rough estimate of the numbers of students engaged in extra-curricular activities, it was nearly always considerably greater than the number of students involved in music classes.

Regardless of whether or not their school employed other staff to assist, all of the teachers had the oversight of the whole extra-curricular programme, and all were of necessity involved in its establishment, administration and implementation. In general, this involved the management of the itinerant music scheme within the school, the administration of music resources, the supervision of all of the school's musical groups and the musical direction of at least one – and usually more – of the groups, and the planning, rehearsal and musical direction of school productions. An exploration of these responsibilities follows.

### **8.2.4 *Management of instrumental music resources***

Although the management of resources is an aspect of the role of all HODs in a school, regardless of their subject area, conversations with the teachers in the study revealed that management of music resources was a very significant undertaking, even though this may not have been immediately obvious to an outside observer.

Even the music departments in the least affluent schools owned equipment of significant value. In addition to the classroom resources outlined in Chapter 6 (Section 6.2.3), most schools owned pools of orchestral and band instruments, which were available for students to hire. All schools owned a number of pianos – typically from a grand piano in the school assembly hall or auditorium, to upright pianos in the practice studios. They also generally owned at least one drum kit, a range of recording equipment (sometimes housed in a purpose built recording studio), and extras such as amplifiers, CDs, DVDs, music stands, uniforms and sheet music.

According to several of the teachers, they were responsible for more resources than most other departments in the school. Ashley, for example, commented, “I’ve got the most resources in the school; the most expensive resources in the school” (A:43).

Obtaining funding for the purchase and maintenance of music department resources was one of the roles the HOD or TIC had to undertake. Some resources, especially in the more affluent schools, were obtained through school budgets such as a ‘capital items’ budget, to which all departmental heads in the school could apply for contestable funding. Darryl, for example, commented:

I have got quite a lot this year – in this year’s budget in capital items ... I have just made special requests this year for about \$3,000 worth of music stands and \$2,000 worth of performance uniforms that we loan out to the kids, and music lighting for productions and so on. (D:10)

Rae, who counted himself very fortunate in terms of funding, attributed the very significant sums of money available to purchase resources in his department in a large state school, to the value placed on music within his school – and to money obtained from the considerable number of foreign fee-paying students that his school attracted.

And since we’ve had that phenomenon of foreign fee-payers, that has made a massive difference in our school and many others because the school is financially very well managed and has enough extra funds available for any department really to resource what they need. (R:30)

A number of teachers, however, made it very clear that school funding was under considerable pressure, and that they were reliant on sources outside of the school for the purchase of significant capital items such as instruments, music and computers, and that it was up to them to apply for any funding they wanted. Fran’s comments were informative: “We have probably got the most gear of any music department in [her locality], but that’s from pure hard work” (F:6). She went on to explain how she had obtained resources for the newly built music department in her decile 2 school. “We got the new building. So the kids really wanted to be in there, but the building was empty and basically I said, ‘Well, there is nothing in it’” (F:5). The reply from senior management had been that there was no money available to pay for new facilities. Fran’s response had been to apply to community organisations. “I spent probably most of my second year applying for funding and got 24 ... Macintosh computers and keyboards for our computer lab, which sat empty for that first year until we got the funding. ... I just kept applying and kept applying” (F:6).

In some schools, the hire pool of musical instruments was small; in others it contained a significant number of instruments. It was the music teacher's responsibility to manage the hire pool. This task involved setting appropriate rates for the instruments and establishing a priority order amongst students wishing to hire them. Teachers also needed to ensure that accurate records were kept so that instruments could be tracked and students billed appropriately. They were also responsible for the maintenance of all of the instruments, for ensuring that they were returned in good order at the end of the year, and for the purchase of new instruments.

Teachers also saw an important role for the instrumental hire pool in making some of the larger and more expensive instruments, such as bassoons, French horns, oboes, baritone saxophones and drum kits, available. As Rae commented:

We generally try and buy instruments that their parents wouldn't normally buy themselves. Things like baritone saxophones for instance and the bigger trombones, tubas, that sort of thing, bassoons, I suppose the school owns maybe five or six. (R:16)

This policy had two benefits. Firstly, it enabled students to learn such instruments. In addition, it made it possible for the school's instrumental groups to have access to such instruments which often fulfilled an essential role in the musical texture in their orchestras and bands.

Many of the larger schools also had significant libraries of sheet music, which were housed in the music department. These contained sets of music for the school's orchestras, bands and choirs. Rae's school probably had the most extensive music library. The school had recently provided funds for a music library consisting of new roll-away shelving. They also employed a music librarian for four hours a week. Commenting on the facility, Rae noted, "It means that we can house our music collection properly, which is a considerable music collection. I haven't tried counting it actually, but it would be probably more than 500,000 pieces of music in that library" (R:29).

Other teachers in the district confessed to feeling envious of the music library – and librarian – at Rae's school. Darryl, who did not have a librarian, commented that, "Occasionally you would have a parent helper who offers to come in and maybe file some music, because we have got a huge music library of orchestral and concert band and choir music and things from the last 40 years maybe" (D:9).

## **8.3 The itinerant programme**

The purpose of Section 8.3 is to examine the teachers' responsibilities in relation to the administration and management of the itinerant music programme in state schools, and private music lessons in state integrated and private schools.

### ***8.3.1 Itinerant instrumental music scheme in state schools***

All of the state schools represented by the teachers in the study offered music lessons through the itinerant music scheme. The vast majority of these were out-of-class group lessons, provided by visiting part-time instrumental specialists through the itinerant instrumental music scheme. Although some of the study participants, such as Viv, did teach instrumental lessons themselves as part of their negotiated paid workload, the role of the HOD or TIC in relation to instrumental lessons was largely to organise, oversee and administer the lessons provided by the visiting teachers. They were required to establish and prioritise the instrumental teaching needs within the school for the year, to work within budget constraints to place students into classes, to ensure that appropriate instrumental and vocal specialists were employed, to negotiate timetables with the specialists, and to maintain oversight of student attendance and progress. Additionally, the HOD or TIC acted as a point of liaison between the music specialists and others within the school community. Such liaison was critical, because the itinerant teachers were usually in the schools for limited periods of time each week. For example, it usually fell to the HOD or TIC to follow up students who missed lessons. Additionally, because the itinerant teachers were not 'regular' staff members, and did not attend staff briefings, the HOD or TIC had a responsibility to communicate with them regularly about school events, policies, or changes to the regular timetable. It was also critical that the teachers kept close contact with the itinerant teachers about the repertoire of students who were taking music as a subject. Conversations with the teachers revealed that the management of the itinerant programme was a complex, multi-faceted and time consuming undertaking. Even the smaller schools employed about four or five itinerant teachers, while larger schools employed up to 20 instrumental specialists, each with their own weekly teaching timetable. This meant that the HOD or TIC was in fact responsible for managing a large staff of part-time teachers.

A significant issue for many of the music teachers was that other staff often saw one or possibly two teachers responsible for classes, some of which were not large, and

judged the workload of the teacher in charge of music accordingly. The reality for the music teachers, however, was that alongside their classes, they interacted with large numbers of students each week through the extra-curricular programme, and with a team of part-time teachers who were largely invisible to the rest of the school. Kelly spoke of the itinerant teachers as being 'ghosts' in his department, commenting:

You're viewed as a small faculty, or a small department, and so your itinerant teachers are the ghosts. ... [Others] don't see that there's twelve other people who are part of your department, and there's 250 [students] that have interaction every week with these people. (K:10)

The reality was that in terms of the numbers of staff and students who participated in the music programme, music teachers were often running one of the largest – if not the largest – department in the entire school. Certainly, as one music advisor pointed out, "There's probably no other departments in the school that have got as many part-time people working for them as our music departments" (MA2:11). The difference for the music teachers was that other large departments in the school had a team of full-time staff who shared the work, and other HODs had staff members to whom work could be delegated. In contrast, the music teacher often had no other full-time colleagues with whom work could be shared, but instead had a large number of part-time colleagues, who were reliant on him or her to organise their classes of students, create timetables, provide teaching spaces, and follow up any students who missed lessons.

The music teachers needed to have systems in place to communicate with their part-time staff, all of whom came into the school on separate timetables. As Nicki noted, the music teachers needed to have good people skills. She commented that, in her opinion, the ability to manage positive relationships was one of the key attributes needed by music teachers.

### ***8.3.2 Funding and prioritising of lessons in state schools***

Historically, the itinerant scheme enabled students to access music lessons, regardless of whether or not they were studying music as a classroom subject. However, the advent of performance music, which has been entrenched by NCEA, has meant that the itinerant scheme has become of critical importance to the viability of classroom music programmes. All of the state school music teachers mentioned that the funding they received via the Ministry of Education allocation was insufficient to cover the

number of students wishing to take lessons. Cam's comment was typical, "Itinerant music lessons are always way over-subscribed and that's a really tough one" (C:14).

Hilary commented that given the chance, she would "probably triple the time available to itinerant music teachers" (H:30). She pointed to the dilemma many teachers faced, when she reflected:

Some schools at the moment are having to make some very difficult decisions along the line of: my seniors in NCEA need the itinerant time for their practical work, and yet I've got this cohort of 200 year 9s come into the school and if I don't support them, in three years time I won't have any seniors. (H:31)

The teachers appeared to have two major avenues through which to approach this dilemma – to create a system of priorities for places in instrumental lessons and/or to charge for lessons.

All of the state school teachers were operating some kind of priority system. Cam's explanation of how that operated in his school was typical.

I allocate my lessons on an application basis so, at the beginning of every year, any student who wants to participate has to apply to do lessons. And all they do is basically fill out what they'd like to do and what experience they've had. My priority in putting students into lessons are those kids who are taking year 10, 11, 12 or 13 music as a subject, because we have to support their NCEA work, unless they're learning it privately and we usually know that anyway. And then I look at trying to get as many beginners started as I can, particularly the year 9 and 10 beginners. And then I look at those students who have learnt that instrument before, if they have made reasonable progress, and if they fit, then we try to put them in as well. And my lowest priority, are beginners in the senior school who are not taking music as a subject. (C:14-15)

The issue of charging for lessons was a very vexed one; technically it is illegal in state schools to charge for instrumental lessons. All of the teachers appeared to be cognisant of that fact. However, they found themselves 'between a rock and a hard place'. One teacher noted that in his current school they needed fifty percent more itinerant hours than they were funded for, "Because we just couldn't deal with the numbers, relatively, that we had in the school" (Identifier withheld).

One particular school was one of the very few that operated by the letter of the law, and did not make some kind of charge to students for instrumental lessons. When I asked the teacher if the school charged students for their lessons, the response was clear. “No we don’t. We’re not allowed to. We can’t charge students for tuition in state schools” (Identifier withheld). The teacher added, “I sometimes manage to *squeeze* an extra half an hour out of staffing from the general school staffing, so I’m slightly over” (Identifier withheld).

One or two other schools also used some funds from general staffing. One teacher in a smaller school noted, “I did investigate early on what our actual Ministry allocated amount was, and the school was definitely topping it up, by not quite double but certainly close to double the hours that would actually be” (Identifier withheld). The majority of state school teachers, however, reported that their school, in effect, charged students for their instrumental lessons. Charges varied from around \$100.00 per term to \$45.00 per year, although a sum of \$100.00 per year was typical. In schools which did not charge year 9 students for lessons, they were only charged if they hired a school instrument.

One teacher’s response to my question about charging was unequivocal: “Yes [we do]. If we were to rely on the hours provided by the Ministry, we would barely cover our third form [year 9]. So we *have* to charge, illegal as it is” (Identifier withheld). The teacher added, “It purely pays for the additional itinerants that we contract personally, that have nothing to do with the Ministry’s scheme” (Identifier withheld). The teacher also added that the school had made tuition free for year 9 students. This was also the case in a number of other schools. The decision was based on a strong philosophical view that year 9 students should have, as a matter of right, access to instrumental lessons. This access would then, theoretically, make it possible for them to learn music as a classroom subject, and discover whether they would like to continue playing an instrument.

Another teacher noted, “We don’t, technically, [charge for lessons] because it’s illegal, but we charge them a maintenance fee” (Identifier withheld). Even a decile 3 school charged its students \$45.00 per annum. The teacher noted, however, that the fee was listed as covering such things as photocopying, consumables, and repairs and maintenance on school instruments.

### **8.3.3 Music lessons in private and state integrated schools**

For teachers in private and state integrated schools in the study, management of music lessons, although sharing many commonalities with that of the state schools, differed in some respects. Teaching in such a school did not mean a lessening of workload for the teachers; in fact, the reverse appeared to be true. One teacher put her workload into perspective by comparing the time she spent as a classroom teacher with the time she spent administering the music lessons. “[I] would say that the classroom teaching is just a tiny part of the work, a really small part really. It’s the keeping running of the private lessons – that’s *huge*” (Identifier withheld).

Another teacher, whose very large extra-curricular workload was recognised through a lighter than normal class teaching load, commented, “And then there’s the itinerants. We have about 280 music lessons happen every week in school and then about 130 speech and drama lessons, and I manage all of that, from an administrative viewpoint” (Identifier withheld).

Instrumental tutors in the private and integrated schools were in fact not itinerant teachers – although they were generally referred to as such – and typically students learning from these teachers had an individual lesson, often an hour in duration, rather than the 20-30 minute group lesson generally offered through the itinerant programme in state schools. These teachers were private music teachers, who operated like itinerant teachers, in that they provided instrumental and vocal lessons to students during the school day. The difference was that they were paid by the students’ parents and they were able to set their own fees, whereas itinerant teachers were paid according to set pay scales, either by the Ministry of Education or by their employing school.

As with their state school colleagues, HODs in the private and state integrated schools in the study were expected to find suitable instrumental teachers, provide a space in the department for them to teach, set up the lessons, and ensure that the students attended them and that a record of all attendances was kept. They then had the added responsibility of providing all billing details to the school’s bursar, who would bill the parents.

The HODs, reported that they felt a moral responsibility to ensure that parents were not paying for lessons that were not delivered, and so they often found themselves having

to interrupt what they were doing to send for a student who was absent from a lesson. As one teacher explained:

And then [students] forget to come, so you've got to go and find them and there's some problem and of course the itinerants – they're there for such a short time some of them – that they need whatever it is sorting out then. Right now! Right now! So, if you're in a class, and something happens, it has to be dealt with. (Identifier withheld)

There was also a moral responsibility, which was shared by state school teachers – especially those in smaller centres, where it was often difficult to attract good instrumental teachers – to look after the instrumental teaching staff, by ensuring that things ran smoothly for them.

One teacher reported that, in part as a result of all of the private lessons, her department had a turn-over of about seventy five thousand dollars a year, and that although the actual billing was handled by the bursar, the music teacher was responsible for all of the record-keeping. When I asked the teacher if she had administrative assistance to do this, she initially said no. She then clarified her response, saying that for the past two years she had had access to about 10 hours per week of administrative assistance. She noted, however, that her assistant could “keep fairly good control of the timetables [for private music lessons], and that seem[ed] to take most of those hours” (Identifier withheld).

## **8.4 Extra-curricular activities**

Section 8.4 provides details of the teachers' experiences of managing and directing extra-curricular activities.

### **8.4.1 Music groups**

Every teacher reported that their extra-curricular programme enabled students to play in music groups in their school. There was often an expectation that students who learned through itinerant lessons and/or hired their instrument from the school, would 'pay back' by participating in school music groups. The range and nature of these varied widely, from small, informal or semi-formal groups in two schools, to the thirty formally organised groups, many of them auditioned, in another school. While the

nature of groups did vary from school to school, Leith provides a window into the wide range of groups that existed in most of the schools in the study:

We have a big extra-curricular music programme. With our school we have a senior orchestra of 50, and we have a junior orchestra of about 25, a concert band of about 30, jazz band 15, a senior chorale auditioned, (there's about 30 in there), a junior chorale of about 50, an intermediate choir of about 50. I have eight chamber groups going to chamber music contest plus probably another eight or nine ensembles who aren't, two or three sort of ad hoc rock bands, barbershop groups – we've got barbershop quartets and a small barbershop chorus. I think that's all. ... Oh I forgot to mention productions – we do productions too. (L:22-3, 28)

Several teachers mentioned that they had to take whole school singing, at times without assistance from other staff. Pat, for example, had previously worked in a school where this was the case, commenting that while other teachers were at the staff briefing in the morning, he was “in the hall managing six hundred boys by [him]self, trying to urge them to practise the hymn for the assembly that was about to take place” (P:6).

In addition to overseeing the groups, most of the teachers took personal responsibility for at least one – and usually more – of the school's major ensembles, acting as the musical director. This meant that they had the responsibility for procuring the music (at times arranging it to meet the needs of the students in the group), selecting (at times by audition) the students who would participate in the group, establishing regular rehearsal times and venues, running the rehearsals (which frequently involved clearing the classroom of desks and chairs before the rehearsal and re-setting it at the end), setting up performances (at school, in the community, as part of a festival or competition, or on occasions as part of a music tour either within New Zealand or overseas), supervising students, and of course directing the ensemble during performances.

Regardless of whether they were teaching in private, state, or state integrated schools, the teachers whose departments ran a big extra-curricular programme reported that it kept them enormously busy. When I asked Darryl about the nature of his work in his school's extra-curricular programme, he responded in this way:

It is huge. It is just about every lunch time, every week, plus all the events you go in. This term we are doing a major production, so every Tuesday,

Thursday afternoon and Sunday we have rehearsals, so it is over a term. So that is on top of our other group work. Yesterday we went to the Big Sing for the competition, tonight we go for the performance. Next week we have got the Chamber Competition. The following week we have got the major production. The following week – last week of term – we have got the Primary School Festival here, which I have got a couple of groups in, to model what you do, that sort of thing. Two weeks ago we were on production camps and had Rockquest; so it is constant. Term two is always huge. No term is not exhausting. Term three last year we took 55 students to Australia for ten days for a music tour. So one week of school time and into our school holidays for a few days. So there is always, always, something going on. (D:12-3)

Yet, despite the busyness that the extra-curricular groups engendered, all of the teachers highly valued the groups and the opportunities that they provided for students to perform. This desire to provide performance opportunities clearly linked to the teachers' beliefs, discussed in earlier chapters, that performance lies at the heart of musical learning. At times, in fact, the teachers went to very considerable lengths to provide opportunities for their groups to perform. Viv, for example, commented of a previous school he had taught at, "Well, we used to do a lot of lot of play-outs. [In] my last [school], counting the show we did, we did 54 performances in one year" (V:4).

In the schools in which there were few opportunities for students to play in established groups, the teachers provided informal opportunities for students to engage with music making. First year teacher Sasha, for example, had made a deliberate decision to spend her lunch hours in the music department of her decile 3 school, so as to enable students to have access to music resources. For Viv, an experienced teacher with a background of running very successful extra-curricular music programmes in previous schools, the challenge of his new position was to attract students into music through a sense of belonging:

Because kids, they come in during lunchtimes and intervals. I spend a lot of time here, I just sit here and they use it like a hangout room, they practise, they play, and it feels – I'm trying to get that kind of hungry feel – you know, so they feel safe here, they know they can come and practise. ... You make the music people just feel special. I believe we're building things up so the kids *want* to be here, so it's a special part of the school; and it works. (V:16)

Engaging students into music groups was not necessarily always seen as being straight-forward. This appeared to be particularly true in schools where there was not an established tradition of strong music groups. Both Nicki and Viv spoke independently of the need to 'con' students into participating in music activities. 'Conning' students was not seen negatively, and was obviously predicated on the teachers' belief that once 'conned', the students would grow an appreciation of the intrinsic value of participating in a musical group.

I use the word 'con', and I was accused of that over the years you know. Some of them would say, and one local HOD around here said it time and time again, "One minute you said you weren't going to do it and the next [your teacher's] got you conned into it". But that's enthusiasm. If you're not enthusiastic with the kids you know, you've actually got to be enthusiastic, because otherwise they won't buy it. Teenagers are notoriously sluggish, and [it works] if you can sort of wind them up and jolly them along and get them going. (N:18)

#### **8.4.2 Role of music in the corporate life of the school**

Teachers identified that a function of their music groups was to contribute to the corporate life of the school. Typically, this would be for open days, prizegivings, concerts, musical productions, and special assemblies or school events. Ashley could have spoken for every teacher when she commented, "I think it's expected that there will be music at all formal events – prizegivings, concerts. It's expected that there will be a show every year" (A:17).

While the teachers interviewed clearly saw this to be a legitimate part of the expectations of their role, such situations were not without their own tensions. Tracy was one of a number of teachers who reported that the request that groups play for such events was at times issued belatedly, with little understanding of the work that was involved in putting on such events. He reflected:

On open days the principal would wander through and say, "Can we have the orchestra playing at such and such a time?" and some last minute things, which I just refused and said, "Look no, we need time to prepare". (T:19)

Teachers also reported that there was a great deal of hidden work involved in providing music for such events. Leith, for example, commented, "People actually don't

understand the amount of time and physical and emotional energy that goes into producing any sort of musical performance, the hours and hours that it takes. They just think it happens” (L:42). Nor was the personal cost to the teachers always recognised, as Cam pointed out:

Most people at prizegiving complain about having to give up an evening, put on an academic dress and go to prizegiving to sit there for the evening and [they] get to the pub an hour before I do – and have all the supper eaten – while I have to get there, set up, run the show for the evening, change into my old clothes to pack the van. And those kinds of demands are really significant to us. (C:42)

Despite the hard work involved, it was apparent that many of the teachers made efforts themselves to connect their musical activities to the wider school community. Viv and Pat spoke of experiences they had each had at another school earlier in their teaching career, when attempting to connect extra-curricular music activities to sporting events. Viv’s experience was positive:

We used to go to other departments – like the rugby boys, [who] wanted to go on a trip – and I used to say, “Well, can we help you out, put on a series of concerts, you can have the money”. So we didn’t isolate ourselves, we became part of the school. (V:4)

Pat, teaching at the time at a ‘traditional’ boys’ school that he described as “like being time warped back into Victorian England” (P:4) had also tried to connect music to rugby events – with a very different outcome.

I suggested to the management that [the jazz band] should play on the sideline of the rugby field at the annual rugby game with [another school], which was the single biggest event of the school year. It was a week of celebrations and events, costing some tens of thousands of dollars; and so we duly performed on the sideline of the field before the match, at which there were people flown in from all over the country, even harking back to the first fifteen of up to fifty years ago. The net outcome of that was that the boys from both schools, but particularly our own school, threw food at the musicians thinking it was hilariously funny. So I decided very quickly that we wouldn’t try that again and when I debriefed the headmaster on what had happened, the response was basically, “Oh well, you know it was all about rugby, so get hard”. (P:5)

My conversations with the teachers revealed that the position of music in the corporate life of the school was at times a very uneasy and ambiguous one, and that music teachers often felt that they were called upon to provide the ‘window dressing’ and a ‘public face’ for the school. Several of the teachers believed that they were working in a context where music was valued in the school largely, perhaps even solely, for what it could offer to the public image of the school. Kelly summed up the situation quite bluntly, “I would suggest that most, or a great many, principals wouldn’t really have a clue what happens in a music department and really don’t care, as long as everything looks good at prize-giving” (K:10). He added that he believed that the resourcing that his department received was to a very large extent dependent on the fact that his music groups were consistently successful in national competitions and so enhanced the kudos of his school. He commented, “The co-curricular ... expectations, the public persona, the window dressing ... [they’re] huge, absolutely huge. The money flow would stop, my leverage point for resourcing and income would stop, if we didn’t perform well, if we didn’t sell it” (K:7).

Jami, too, offered a similar perspective, “Most schools, most principals ... wouldn’t care, wouldn’t mind if music disappeared as a subject. They *would* care if it disappeared as a co-curricular part of their school” (J:27).

This attitude was not, however, universal. Cam, in recounting his own experiences of teaching in two different schools, pointed to a difference in attitudes between the school managers:

I think that there are very different philosophies in schools and one of the things I’m really pleased about with being *here*, is the school management made it really clear to me when I started that they expected a good music teacher and that they value most highly the work that happens in the classroom. Not, that is not to say, [that] they don’t expect their pound of flesh for their co-curricular stuff, because they do. I think it could have been the time, or it could be the school that I worked at [elsewhere], but they were more perhaps interested in the public face of music as part of the school. (C:6)

### **8.4.3 Musical productions**

In New Zealand secondary schools, musical productions are a regular occurrence. Teachers’ experiences of these differed from school to school. The majority reported

that their school ran musical productions, and that they had some role in organising them. Some, like Jami, acted as both the musical director and producer. This was a huge undertaking, which, in general, was on top of the teacher's regular commitments to the extra-curricular groups which ran throughout the year. Production rehearsals were generally scheduled several times a week, and often encroached on the teachers' evenings and weekends.

The teachers were divided about whether or not school management recognised the work that went into productions. Jami's experience at her current school was that they did not. She did not have a budget to work with. "We have to self-fund ourselves for the shows – there is no money that the board puts in to float you ... and that's stressful" (J:29). In addition, her attempts to limit shows to every second year had been unsuccessful. At the time of interview (near the end of a school year) she was already starting to prepare for the show the following year, commenting, "So that's a lot of work over the next holidays to make sure that I don't let them down" (J:20). Jami felt strongly that the situation was unreasonable, stating, "It's *wrong*, because the school gets a lot of valuable promotion from [the show] and they really should be supporting it as one of *their* major events for the year" (J:20). When I checked if she believed that the school did in fact support the shows she responded

Oh No! No, oh I mean they try to. It's all in name only. They don't actually get behind in a productive manner and that's what's needed. It's all very well having kind wishes. ... That's all lovely, but to be productive about it, to actually recognise the work that does go into it rather than that's just the expectation of what you will do. That's a biggie, and that's something that this school does particularly poorly. (J:20-1)

Ashley's experience was not dissimilar to Jami's, although her school produced musical shows every second year, rather than annually. As a third year teacher, however, she had twice already had to run the school show. She commented, "There's no time allowance and there's no management unit for the person who does the school show at all. There's also no production budget" (A:18).

However, while acknowledging the huge effort that productions required, the teachers were also quick to point to the benefits of the productions for the students, for their own relationships with the students, and for the wider school community. Not one of the teachers suggested that shows were not worthwhile. Fran, for example, commented that one of the reasons that she had left a previous school was because she was not

permitted to run productions there. Her comments typified the thinking of many of the teachers in relation to musical productions:

Yes, they are huge, but I think they are really important. [Shows are] one of the things that you can actually have, to pull your students together, and create a really good bond between students. So, I do think they are important but they are time consuming, very time consuming. (F:29)

Fran was one of several teachers who mentioned that some principals did see the amount of work involved in directing and producing shows, and had made attempts to ease the burden on music teachers. She commented that some schools now employed a musician from outside of the school to run their shows. In fact, Fran herself, at a time when she was not teaching regularly in a school, had been employed by a school to run their shows. However, she believed that while the decision to employ an outsider appeared to solve the problem, it in fact created a new dilemma for music teachers.

I know in other schools, they have employed music directors. I was employed ... at another school to musically direct their shows. I did three years like that. So ... if you have got money as a school, it is a great option, because then your music teacher doesn't get too tied up [with] it. But I also think, in saying that, I *don't* think it's a good thing – because the music teacher doesn't get that bond. ... If you get other people to do it, you don't get the bond, but you are so busy, especially if you are sole-charge, to do it yourself is just a nightmare. (F:29-39)

I also discussed musical productions with one of the music advisors, whose perspective was based on many years of advising over a wide geographical area. Like Fran, the advisor saw the dilemma created for music teachers of asking someone from outside of the school to direct the shows.

And for a little while there, principals were saying, "Well, the teachers say this is too much to do, and it really *is* too much to do and the other teachers don't want to cover the classes and so therefore we'll hire someone to come in; we'll pay them to do the musical". Now it's got to the stage where teachers will say, "Well that's fine, that's a good idea, ok". But then all of a sudden, all the publicity, all the praise and all the credit goes to the person that's come into your school to do the musical and you hear the music teachers say, "Well you know, they didn't do it all on their own. They came to me and said well I want so and so, I want a band and I want this and I want that and I've been running around behind them doing all these things

and they've just been having to do the work [up front] and I've, we've had to do all the rest of it. And next year we're jolly well going to do it on our own, we can do it just as well ourselves, you know." And so, they obviously do like to be in at the end, with the finished product. They get a lot of pleasure and a lot of pride, out of seeing the kids do that. (MA2:18)

#### **8.4.4 Relationship between curricular and extra-curricular music**

All of teachers made it very clear that a core function of the extra-curricular programme was to support the work that happened in the music classroom. As noted in Chapter 6 (Section 6.2.2), the advent of performance music and the inclusion of solo and group performance in NCEA have meant that classroom music has become increasingly dependent on extra-curricular music activities. Viv, speaking about preparing students for performance aspects of the course, noted:

A very significant amount of time is actually done outside the classroom. What can you do in four hours a week? Very little, and things like the itinerant [lessons], the ensemble rehearsals like band and stuff, they've got to be done outside the classroom. (V:35)

The teachers saw the two areas as being complementary, with extra-curricular music providing enrichment for students who were taking music as a subject.

However, although the teachers saw value in the complementary nature of classroom and extra-curricular music, many believed that their principals and senior management did not share their view. One of the music advisors noted:

A lot of schools just see music as being the icing on the cake and they only see music as performance, not realising that the classroom learning and the ITM learning [instrumental learning done through the extra-curricular programme] complement one another to make well rounded musicians. (MA1:19)

While the teachers clearly saw the value of extra-curricular music to their classroom music programmes, a number expressed concern that their heavy involvement in extra-curricular music came at a cost to their own teaching of the curriculum. Leith pointed to her difficulty in balancing the two, saying, "And I bet I don't have to tell you what's losing out. ... Curriculum. It's losing out, you know. Some days it's the last thing I think about in my classes, which is terrible" (L:28).

## 8.5 Chapter summary

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the work that the music teachers typically engaged with outside of the music classroom. All of the practising teachers in the study were responsible for running the music department in their school. All but three were HODs, and as such, received some remuneration and time allowance for their role as administrators. Three of the early career teachers, however, were not HODs and did not receive remuneration, although there was an expectation that they would in fact do the equivalent work of an HOD. Teachers reported that their colleagues often perceived that the music teachers were part of a small, rather marginal department, whereas in practice, the music teachers typically had the largest staff of part-time teachers in the school, and also interacted with large numbers of students every week.

For all of the teachers, the management of the school's extra-curricular programme was a very considerable task. They were responsible for the often complex management and day-to-day running of the music lessons which took place, out of class, either through the itinerant scheme, or through lessons with private tutors. Almost all of the teachers encountered considerable challenges in being able to provide an adequate number of instrumental teaching hours for their music students.

This chapter has also shown that the management and direction of music groups and musical productions made large demands on the teachers' time and energy, and that although school management valued the music groups for the positive spinoffs they could provide to the school's image, they often did not really see, or understand, the amount of work involved. Nor did they necessarily value music itself as a classroom teaching subject.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Teachers' working lives**

#### **9.1 Introduction**

This is the final data chapter. Its purpose is to examine the teachers' experiences of their role and the factors within their workplace that influenced those experiences. It is structured into three main parts: rhythms of the teachers' days, collegial support, and the personal impacts of teachers' work. Section 9.1 considers the teachers' experiences of lunchtime, morning break, form time and duty. Section 9.2 focuses on collegial support, exploring issues of professional isolation and the impact on teachers of being the only classroom music teacher in the school. It examines the significance of other arts colleagues, itinerant teachers, and music colleagues outside of the school. The teachers' perceptions of the support and valuing they received from senior management is the final aspect of collegial support to be examined. Section 9.3 focuses on the personal impacts on the teachers of their working lives. It considers the choices teachers made to remain a music teacher, the impacts of music teaching on their personal lives and their ability to create a work/life balance. Secondly, it explores the impact of their working lives on the teachers' musical lives and on the decision that some teachers made to leave music teaching. Section 9.4 provides a summary for the chapter.

#### **9.2 Rhythms of the music teachers' days**

Although there is some variation among New Zealand secondary schools, they are typically built on broadly similar daily rhythms. The teachers' stories indicated that classes typically began between 8.30 and 9.00am. There was usually a break of twenty to thirty minutes during the middle of the morning. Morning school was followed by a lunch break of at least 40 minutes and, more usually, approximately an hour. Classes typically finished for the day between 3.00 and 3.30pm. Each teacher also had an allocation of non-contact periods which were scheduled into their working week. Unless they held key management roles, teachers were also expected to do regular playground duty and to take a form class. Additionally, the teachers indicated that most colleagues extended their contact time, by perhaps one or two hours a week, running

an extra-curricular activity, such as coaching a sports or debating team. Teachers also extended their working day outside of scheduled contact time to do their own planning, marking and administration. They attended scheduled meetings of the full staff, working groups such as their subject department, and events such as parent/student interviews. Thus teachers' days typically followed a rhythm, with time shared between individual work, meetings with colleagues, and contact with students, all punctuated with breaks – often spent in the staffroom – which enabled them to 'catch their breath', have something to eat and drink, touch base with colleagues, and spend time away from the students.

Conversations with the music teachers indicated that, almost without exception, they saw the rhythms of their own working days as being different from 'the norm' described above, and considerably more intense. In comparing their own situation with that of their colleagues, the teachers were typically very careful to pay tribute to the work of their colleagues. However, this tribute was almost always followed with a 'but'. Jami's comment was typical:

As far as comparing with what the staff do in each of those subjects I *know* other staff work hard, and I don't want to in some ways 'diss' what they're doing, but I don't think they also understand what goes on in a music department as to how much is actually happening. Because we tend to be tucked away, we don't tend to venture out of our offices very far. (J:33)

The music teachers reported that their working days were typically very long. They often started their contact time with students early in the morning – 8.00am rehearsals were standard in many schools – and, especially when productions or special events were pending, the teachers also faced afternoon and/or evening and weekend rehearsals.

Leith described the length of her working days as follows:

Well, at the moment, I would start with rehearsals at eight in the morning and I would get home half past eight, nine o'clock at night. And that was my day. Not every day. Tuesdays and Thursdays were like that. ... And the reason why I was having rehearsals at eight in the morning was that some of the chamber music groups, that was the only time I could get them. So, that's when we do that. And I don't tend to stop for lunch. If I haven't got a rehearsal, I just keep working – it's the time I keep working – and some nights, rehearsals after school. The production rehearsals were always

starting at quarter past six because there was sport and music and all sorts of other stuff, so we did that and then we went through to half past eight.  
(L:29)

Not only were the weekly working days of the teachers long, but their work frequently spilled out of their working days, spreading into their 'own' time – their weekends and evenings, often without significant support. Pat explained the situation he had encountered at one of the previous schools that he had taught at:

Certainly in terms of time requests for doing a major production or musical, prizegivings, public concerts, whatever, it was all meant to be fitted in our own time and, "We want you to do these things because you make the school look good – but please don't tread on anyone else's time". (P:3)

Jami commented that she had kept a log of her hours in the previous year, and she found that she was doing an average of ten hours a week of extra-curricular work. "So that's on top of everything else you're doing teaching wise. And that's lots of hours, every week. That goes on top of your normal teaching load" (J:18). She also noted, however, that, "Through certain parts of the year you are putting in 80, 100 hour weeks, and there's nothing else you can do. ... So in Terms 1 and 2 [when she was rehearsing for the school production] I was putting in ridiculous amounts of hours seven days a week" (J:19).

Cam echoed Jami's concerns about the number of hours music teaching requires. He also pointed to the intense nature of the time spent on the job, and the impact that it often had for teachers on their personal well-being:

I'm sometimes too frightened to add it up. I know that this week I was here Sunday night from five to eight for a production rehearsal. All day on Queen's Birthday Monday, I worked from 9.30am to 6pm on production rehearsals. Tuesday and Thursday nights were both production practices, tonight I've got the Big Sing. Sunday I'm here from four until eight. It's report writing time. The Big Sing was yesterday morning [and] the festival part of the Big Sing was yesterday evening at the town hall. Sometimes it would scare me to actually add up the hours. It would easily top 60 hours. I don't think I work any week less than 50, and one of the concerns with that is that you pack in such an intense amount of time, that it's not unusual to get a teacher sick in the holidays where your body just says, "Enough!"  
(C:9)

### **9.2.1 Lunch time and morning break**

Teachers mentioned that their lunchtimes tended to be taken up with music activities. Leith's comment that she didn't tend to stop for lunch was very typical of teachers in the study, who like Leith, routinely ran extra-curricular music rehearsals during lunchtime. Brook, who had left music teaching after spending 30 years as a sole music teacher, did not appreciate the impact of working through all of her lunchtimes, until she later spent some time relieving in another subject area.

And I suddenly had a lunch hour – and I didn't know what to do. I couldn't sit in the staff room, I just didn't know what to do, and that really woke me up to what my entire teaching had been. ... I'd say there's very few [music teachers] that actually have a lunch hour, unless there are two or more teachers. I was never; I was always a solo teacher. (B:14)

Martin's experience certainly bore out Brook's comments. "Every lunchtime has something. If I could show you my diary, you would see that there was something yellow – all my extra-curricular stuff is yellow – every single lunchtime" (M:25). Although Martin appeared to accept, as did other teachers in the study, that his loss of lunchtime went with the territory of being a music teacher, he commented, "If I could just focus just on being in the classroom, that would be really nice" (M:25).

A number of teachers had made a clear distinction for themselves between lunchtime, when they needed to be available in the music department, and morning break. Jami, for example, had determined that morning break was the only time that she had available to get to know other staff – and even so, this had not been an easy undertaking.

I find I get stuck over here [in the music department]. I'm never there [in the staffroom] at lunchtimes but I *make* the effort to try and get there for morning tea, otherwise I wouldn't get to know staff at all. And it has been a very long slow process here, getting to know staff. (J:16)

### **9.2.2 Form time**

The question of whether or not they were required to take a form class was raised by almost every teacher in the study. Many of the teachers saw form time as one small period of time (usually between 10 and 20, and occasionally up to 30 minutes a day) where their workload could be relieved. They seemed to use the requirement to take a

form class as a kind of litmus test to measure the level of support that the school was prepared to offer them.

A number of the HODs who ran big departments did not have to take a form. Tracy, for example, had been able to negotiate not to take a form. His reason for not taking a form was one that was echoed by a number of teachers – often music was wanted at assemblies, and assemblies usually ran during the form time slot. Another reason provided by the teachers was that form time provided them with time in which they could meet up with itinerant teachers. In Darryl’s case, the requirement to take a form class had been waived for him and his colleague, by way of compensation for the time they spent on extra-curricular music activities – though in fact Darryl saw this as a very poor deal, stating that the ten minutes a day was “still only one hour per week – which is insane” (D:14).

Third year teacher Ashley, who was the sole music teacher in her school, saw the 20 minute form time at her school as one period in the day that senior staff could have used to compensate her for all of the extra work she did. This was not the case and she was required to take a form. For Jami, being given a form class was a last straw. “They gave me a form class the other week. I just about quit on the spot, because it’s the last thing they promised me I wouldn’t have when I came to this school, and they’ve taken it all away. ... I wanted to just quit on the spot” (J:45). She commented, “They won’t even meet with me. I’ve sent memos, written to them, no, not a thing. There’s just nothing done with discussion here. It’s just that; no” (J:46). This incident proved in fact to be a turning point for Jami, who said, “I’ll do one more year, but the school’s not going to get my loyalty” (J:46).

Teachers, such as Ashley and Jami, who had a form class, identified that the issue did not relate to the class itself – it related to the amount of work and pressure that the teachers felt, and to their need to find spaces during the day when they could have a break from their almost constant interaction with students.

### **9.2.3 Duty**

In most New Zealand schools, teachers are required to spend some time supervising students before and after school, and during the morning and lunch breaks. This is usually referred to as ‘duty’, and teachers are typically rostered onto a particular duty (such as ‘gate duty’ or ‘playground duty’) two or three times a week.

In some schools within the study, the music teachers were deemed to be 'on duty' in the music department before and after school and during lunchtimes, and this was considered to be their contribution to the duty roster. One very experienced teacher, for example, had 'educated' her school to this way of thinking. She stated that when she had been put down for duty, she had simply said, "I'm not doing duty. You can't do duty and be on duty in the music room as well" (N:6).

Some of the younger, less experienced, sole-charge teachers in the study were not so fortunate. Ashley, for example, who took rehearsals during her lunchtime, and had a form class, found that the school's duty roster impacted on her only 'chill-out' time in the day – morning break. She had been rostered onto duty four times in every six day cycle – twice before school from 8.20 to 8.40am, and twice during morning break. By morning break she had already been at work since 7.30am, and had usually taught two hour-long classes. On the days she had duty during morning break, she lost her opportunity to have a break during the day.

The situation with duty had underlined for Ashley the lack of understanding that other staff often had for the complexities of working in music. During a staff discussion where the weekly duty roster was changed to follow the six day teaching cycle, Ashley had explained that she couldn't do lunchtime duties if they followed the six day cycle.

I said, "Well I can't do that, because I have jazz band every Monday regardless of whether it's a day 1 or a day 6". ... And, a couple of the science teachers said, "Well can't your [itinerant] tutors take those groups? Isn't that what they're there for?" There's no understanding. ... And, so I said, "They're often there, and they help me, but no, they can't is my short answer". (A:23)

One of the music advisors summed up her estimation of the demands that daily working rhythms place on music teachers in the following comment:

An ordinary classroom teacher runs out of [energy] after a while ... and yet we expect somebody to be like that five days a week, but for more than five hours a day, including the lunchtime and morning tea time and after school as well, or before school if you're up early enough, and then go home and prep for tomorrow. (MA2:24)

## **9.3 Collegial support**

All the teachers who had classroom music colleagues considered themselves to be very fortunate. Viv, for example, stated, “We’re lucky here because I have an offsider” (V:22). Rae mentioned that, “An advantage of our school is that I’ve got four other specialist music teachers alongside me” (R:26) and Hilary, reflecting on a time when she had worked with someone else, commented, “What a joy” (H:3).

### **9.3.1 Professional isolation**

It became very apparent that every participant considered that working as a sole-charge music teacher is a difficult and taxing task, and generally one to be avoided if possible. Fran, in reflecting on her own past teaching as the only classroom music teacher, stated, “I would never do that again. I think it’s too hard; it’s just too hard” (F:28).

At heart, was the issue of professional isolation, which often brought with it some degree of personal isolation. A lack of teaching colleagues meant that teachers were unable to delegate tasks and so had to take personal responsibility for devising, teaching and administering the music curriculum throughout the school by themselves, and for managing the entire extra-curricular programme. Jami, in speaking of her situation as the sole music teacher, pointed to her own personal and professional isolation. “That’s been very difficult, mainly because there’s nobody else to talk to, really ever, about anything! ... So it makes being over in the music department quite lonely” (J:17).

One of the music advisors noted that the issue of personal isolation was particularly present in rural areas and small towns, where the size of the school meant that there was likely to be only one music teacher, who was often an early career teacher. She noted that schools can be very impersonal places. In her view there needed to be someone on the staff who kept an eye out for the music teacher – especially an early career sole music teacher – ensuring that they were drawn into the school community. Her concerns were echoed by Hilary, who added that in “the one-person department, you haven’t got the same in-house or in-school networks that you can tap” (H:33). Hilary further noted, “I think that adds immensely to the complexity of the job actually, and I think your passion and your expertise and collegiality in that is made harder for music teachers, and triply so if you haven’t got that senior management support in

there” (H:33). Her comments pointed to the significance for music teachers of senior management support, a theme which is explored later in the chapter (Section 9.3.5).

The lack of colleagues also meant that sole-charge teachers were personally responsible for all of the curriculum development in music at every class level and for all of the administration involved in running the classroom music programme. Jami summed up the personal impact of being the sole-charge music teacher in her large urban school in this way:

There’s nobody to help, and to guide, with the moderation [of NCEA assessments] and to look at class design and to bounce ideas off for the direction of the department and vision, and the sorts of goals we want to achieve. (J:17)

Jami also wondered how she might grow her department without completely burning herself out. Her question was not an idle one. A number of the teachers in the study had experienced significant burnout, and she herself owned that she was extremely tired.

### **9.3.2 Other arts colleagues**

The majority of the practising teachers commented that their potential isolation was relieved somewhat through support from other arts colleagues, and that this network had been strengthened since the introduction of the arts as one of the official learning areas. For some teachers, the support came through formally organised departments or faculties in the school. One teacher, for example, who was head of faculty, commented that in his school, teachers in the performing arts and visual arts had been grouped together as part of the same faculty. He saw this as a very positive situation. He commented, however, that when he was on the teacher reference group for the new curriculum, he had attended a two-day meeting in Wellington with multi-discipline arts people and had noticed that there were clear tensions between the visual arts and the performing arts. He observed, “Often the visual arts people are believing that they’re half of the arts rather than one of four ... but here we work collaboratively” (Identifier withheld).

Two sole-charge teachers, first year teacher Elisha and third year teacher Ashley, also did not belong formally to an arts department, but had found other arts staff with whom

they could create a supportive relationship. For Ashley, while this was helpful, it did not make up for the lack of other music colleagues. She commented:

[Name]'s the drama teacher. We work together quite closely and we sort of share kids I guess – the kids that do drama and music. But apart from that, I don't have the close colleagues. I've got, you know, good friends on the staff, but they're not someone that you can ask about, or, you know, say "I tried this and it didn't really work". (A:26)

Elisha had been pro-active in networking with other arts staff right from her first day of teaching and it was clearly paying dividends for her. She described her experience in this way:

We've made our own unofficial little 'arts' thing. Like, I was expecting an arts faculty to be in existence, but they don't – it's all very separate, the whole school's very departmentalised. So I turned up expecting to have arts department meetings, but they don't have that. So the first day I raced round the staff room going, "Where are the arts teachers? Where are the dance teachers?" ... We've made a little buddy group up together and we've all got the same timetable pretty much. So we all had the same non-contact as well, so that's good. [We can ask], "What does this mean?" When [the DP] asks for this, or asks, "What's the scheme?" You know, just all that sort of stuff, which is handy, very handy. (E:17)

### **9.3.3 Collegial role of itinerant teachers**

Without exception, the teachers spoke in positive terms of their itinerant instrumental colleagues. The management of itinerant staff did create considerable work for the teachers. However, the teachers in the study valued the itinerant teachers' input into the music department. Martin, speaking of the itinerant teachers, commented, "The team that you build around the department makes or breaks the department" (M:6).

In most schools, at least some of the students sitting NCEA performance standards learned their instruments from an itinerant teacher, and so many itinerant teachers developed a deep knowledge of the performance standards and of assessment requirements. The participants commented that they were able to seek support from the itinerant teachers when assessing performances. In some instances, itinerant teachers were invited to become a formal member of the assessment panel. In other

instances, teachers consulted itinerant staff informally, especially when assessing instruments that they were not personally very familiar with.

Conversations with the participants indicated that for sole-charge music teachers, the itinerant teachers often represented the only adult company that they saw during the school day. Pat, for example, in reflecting on his experience in a previous school, commented that he had “a wonderful loyal band of itinerant teachers, which [was] really the only adult contact, or adult musical contact, that [he] would have from one week to the other” (P:6).

Itinerant teachers often supported the music teacher through the direction of school groups – such as bands, orchestras and choirs. Itinerant staff, with specialist skills in musical direction, were often prepared to conduct a group as part of their paid time at the school. In such circumstances, the music teacher was usually still responsible for administering the groups – taking rolls, following up on absentees, providing access to repertoire, and organising playouts, concerts and trips.

#### **9.3.4 Other music colleagues**

Participants acknowledged that they often received support from music colleagues in other schools and in the wider community. Some of the support was formally organised, through local secondary music teachers’ associations, and participants living in two cities spoke positively of their experiences with a local association. They commented on the value of getting together to informally moderate NCEA performances and compositions, to share resources and create new ones, and to discuss issues of mutual concern. Cam commented, “Our subject association has great resource sharing days” (C:38). He was one of several teachers who noted that, because music teachers were so busy, there was often a small turn-out at meetings:

We had to stop scheduling meetings in the last two weeks of the term because sometimes hardly anyone turned up, maybe three or four. Or you would get a room full of ashen-faced people who are just exhausted. And that’s not very good. (C:40)

Not all of the teachers, however, reported such positive experiences. Pat, in comparing his current position where the local music teachers were ‘refreshingly co-operative’, mentioned that in a previous area, there was a “huge competitiveness between music departments” (P:6). He added, “The more successful departments tended to stick to

themselves, in fear that someone else might ... get some ideas that might make them successful" (P:6).

Teachers in small towns and rural schools, too, did not generally have access to a local association. Ashley, for example, lived some forty minutes drive to the town where the nearest secondary music association was based, and although she was able to ask members for support (which she usually received), she commented that she had given up trying to attend meetings, because by the time she arrived, the business was usually finished. She acknowledged, however, that, "although you feel isolated, you do have a sense of collegiality that you can call ... on, if you need to, within the area" (A:28).

### **9.3.5 Senior management**

Every participant in the study considered that the demands involved in running a music department needed to be acknowledged in some practical ways by senior management. The teachers perceived that the level of practical support they received was often connected with the degree to which music within the school, and themselves as music teachers, were seen, understood and valued.

There were significant variations in the kind and degree of practical support that the teachers in the study received from senior management. Every teacher's situation was different, and was a result of the unique set of circumstances which existed in their particular school. Some teachers considered themselves to be well supported by senior management. Others did not. One teacher (Ashley) was feeling so unsupported that, at the time of interview, she had already resigned from her position.

Pat considered himself to be very well supported at his current school – and this was in stark contrast to his experience in a previous school, of which he said, "Certainly, the headmaster's idea of a good music department was measured on how well [the students] sang their hymn in morning assembly. I think I started to feel very devalued" (P: 5). Of his current school he stated:

The principal of [this school] at the time had taken over the school at a time when the roll was quite low, and had managed to double it in three to four years. One of the strategies he used was a very dynamic head of music he had at the time who was very proactive in building a music programme

which became very successful and I was very fortunate to sort of dive in on her coat tails. (P:13)

Pat recounted his experience of joining the staff, commenting, "I have never struck a school which valued music and the performing arts so highly. And it, it was like walking around in a dream for quite a while" (P:14). Pat commented that he had never had a morning when he had got up and not wanted to come to school.

Another teacher who spoke in very positive terms of the support she received from senior management reflected, "I think principals are supportive if you are improving their school" (Identifier withheld). She commented that she had previously had a significant burnout at another school where she had worked "flat out [as] head of music, head of drama and year 10 dean" (Identifier withheld). She had vowed to herself never to return to the secondary music classroom, but was then head-hunted and asked to take on the position of HOD Music in a low decile school. In persuading her to take on the role, the principal had said, "Think about it and tell me how much money you want and how much time you want" (Identifier withheld). He had added, "I want you, because I know what you can do for that school" (Identifier withheld). The teacher had eventually agreed to take on the position and had set her own terms. As the teacher spoke of her experience at this school, it became very obvious that the support she was getting was based on real understanding by the principal of the role that music can play in a school, and in the role that the music teacher plays within that. When I commented on that, the teacher responded, "That's because he was an ex-HOD of Music", adding, "I think that made a huge difference" (Identifier withheld).

In reflecting on her strong sense of being valued, the teacher made the connection between being thanked and feeling valued. She commented, "But you have got to feel valued and I think that's half the battle. So to have someone on the staff that actually values you helps immensely, because you feel like you are doing something worthwhile" (Identifier withheld).

Of the teachers who were not feeling well supported by senior management, Ashley's story stood out. She was an early career sole-charge music teacher in a small provincial town. Since starting her teaching career at the school three years previously, she had given unstintingly of her time to the school. Her school day usually started around 7.30am. She had taught over-allocation in her first year to ensure that all students would have music available. She took extra-curricular groups during her lunch time, and had twice run major productions. She provided music for school events such

as open days, concerts and prizegivings. When the teacher of Māori left, she had upskilled herself so that she could run kapa haka activities. She was also participating in a trial video teaching network, through which she delivered a senior music programme to students in another rural school. In addition to her musical activities, in the year of interview Ashley had managed a school sports team, which had involved considerable travel during the weekends. When Ashley had first joined the school staff, she had lived about 40 minutes drive away from her school. Although several staff lived nearby, Ashley had been unable to car-pool with them, stating, “They’re just normal classroom teachers. They rock on up at 8.30 and leave again at 3.30” (A:22). She had decided to move to her school area, because driving home had become “kind of dangerous because you’re so tired” (A:22).

Ashley believed that she did not receive any real practical support from senior management. She commented:

I think modelling from senior management makes a big difference too. They expect you to do a lot, but in return they don’t seem to do much, you know. And maybe they do behind the scenes – I don’t really know what they do. ... You build up a bank of resentment towards the fact that you do so much and don’t even actually really get a thank you. (A:14-5)

Ashley had resigned from her position in part because she felt unseen, under-valued, and not thanked.

## **9.4 Personal impacts and subsequent decisions**

This section explores the personal impacts of teachers of the role they played within the school.

### **9.4.1 *The choice to remain***

When I explored with the participants what the satisfactions were for them in secondary music teaching and what it was that kept them there, I discovered that just as it was their passion for music that had led them into secondary school music teaching in the first place, so it was their passion for music that seemed to underpin the decision of most of the teachers to remain in the job, despite the challenges they encountered. As Ashley said, “You do it because it’s your passion and because you love to do it” (A:44).

A number of teachers commented that they gained real satisfaction from working with their extra-curricular music groups. For Leith, extra-curricular music making, in fact, was the most satisfying aspect of her job. She commented, “The thing that I enjoy doing most, is I love working with extra-curricular [groups]. Performance is my thing” (L:30). Darryl, too, commented, “The beauty of our job is that we get involved with all these wonderful students who are into music and are talented and we get to take them to competitions and see them perform and help them out. That is very thrilling” (D:27).

The teachers’ passion for music was matched by another passion – their love of, and commitment to, their students. When I asked Brook what had kept her in teaching, her response was unequivocal. “The kids, the kids, absolutely. I love it, I mean, I love the subject, but I love the contact with the kids” (B:35). Brook, who had worked as the sole music teacher in a small country school for 20 years, used to make Milo<sup>41</sup> for her music students. She reflected that it had cost her “thousands” (B:12) over the years, but that it was worth it. At the time of interview, she had chosen to step aside from teaching, and she worried about the impact on her life of her loss of contact with ‘her’ students.

All of the teachers, in fact, spoke of their love of working with music students. Leith could have spoken for every teacher when she stated, “Music kids are neat! They’re such wonderful kids and you build up such a wonderful relationship with them” (L:30). A point of difference between the music teachers and teachers in larger subject areas, was that music teachers worked with their students consistently for many years, and so could build up strong, lasting relationships. Kelly commented:

I just love the contact with students and at lots of levels. Especially [with] seniors, you’ve got an association with four or five years [and] that teacher/student relationship is definitely blurred and becomes much more personal. (K:4)

Many teachers pointed to the reciprocity in their relationships with their students – they enjoyed working with the students, and the students in turn valued their relationships with their teachers. A factor that contributed to the teachers’ satisfaction in their job was their knowledge that they could and *did* make a difference in the lives of their students. Fran commented, “You get such a buzz seeing some of these kids just achieving so well and knowing that you’ve actually made a difference. ... Especially in our lower decile [school]. You can make a *huge* difference to a student’s life in our school” (F:35).

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<sup>41</sup> Milo is a hot chocolate drink.

Reflecting on the importance of music teachers in the lives of their students, one of the music advisors commented, “They are sometimes their mum and their dad. There are many music teachers who cater for ... the whole person. And that is such a positive” (MA1:47). A further motivating factor that some of the teachers reported was their enjoyment of teaching itself. Fran commented, for example, “I love teaching. I actually really, really, really love teaching. ... I really enjoy watching the kids’ faces light up and go, ‘Oh wow!’ It’s that whole wonder thing” (F:35).

When reflecting on why he remained a music teacher, Kelly pointed to the fact that music teachers’ motivations were often deeply held, and strongly felt:

I think you get so possessive of your own department, you put a lot of blood sweat and tears into this damn thing. It’s more than just a job, yeah it is, it is. I’m going to sound really horrible and say it’s a calling, it’s a lifestyle, and it’s something you feel, it’s something that drives you and I don’t think you can be an effective head of music if it doesn’t drive you, if it’s not – if you don’t really want to push it – then you can’t be effective. (K:33)

It seemed, then, that for the music teachers, the combination of their own passion for music and music making, when set alongside of their passion for their students and their desire to draw them, too, into music making, acted as a very powerful motivation to remain a secondary school music teacher.

#### **9.4.2 *Personal impacts of music teaching***

While they could articulate the factors that influenced their choice to remain as music teachers, many teachers could also point to the tensions that their role created for them. Cam’s perception of music teachers in general, was, “They are very tired” (C.40). He gave emphasis to his comment by adding, “I think they are really tired; really, *really* tired” (C:40).

All of the teachers mentioned the impossibility of ever feeling that their work was done and of the impact of that on them. Ira expressed it this way:

It feels as though you never get anywhere like being on top, or in control of everything. ... There’s always a heap of jobs needing to be done urgently and you can’t do them. It is ... that feeling of you’re almost nearly drowning but you don’t quite. (I:8)

Even though they were faced with very large workloads, very few of the teachers indicated that they used that as a basis for limiting what they did. As Ashley said, “Let’s face it, music teachers – they’re their own worst enemy. They’ll do – they’ll do everything, you know” (A:43). Jami commented that she was a bit of a “sucker” (J:18) when it came to providing more opportunities for her students than she could reasonably manage. When I asked her why she thought it was that music teachers are bad at self-preservation, her immediate comment was “Passion” (J:32). She added, “It’s really hard to be a music teacher and not be passionate about your subject” (J:32). Jami went on to explain the bind that music teachers could find themselves in, reflecting, “The last thing we want to see is something fall over, a student not do well, a group not do well ... an opportunity missed out on” (J:32). She pointed to a common motivation for the teachers when she added, “We want them to experience everything that we’ve had, and more” (J:32).

Kelly spoke of the difficulty music teachers have in sustaining their workload. He commented, “There’s huge issues there about being the people that we would like to be and that the kids deserve, and physically being able to maintain that” (K:33). He added:

There’s always something you feel *guilty* about, things you should be doing. You know, you need to do this, [or] I need to have this admin up to date, or these kids need me to do this – and you can’t. There just aren’t enough hours. And you just sink exhausted into the chair when you go home, knowing that you brought stuff home to do. (K:32)

Sustaining a large department was, in fact, particularly difficult for sole-charge music teachers. As Jami commented:

It’s a lot on one person, and it’s very hard when you’re in that position to know how to make growth for your area without completely burning out. It’s the whole, “How much of myself do I give?” while trying to expand it and expand opportunities for those wanting to take music. (J:31)

Jami pointed out that the consequences were often that “We tend to spend the first ten days of our holidays sick, and wonder what happened to the rest” (J:32).

Another consequence of the multiple expectations that music teachers experienced was that they were juggling demands, and that these often impacted on their own personal life. One teacher’s story illustrates this point. The teacher commented that in

the week before I interviewed him he had not met the deadline date for completing his reports because he had had to prioritise more highly the transposition of two books of music for instrumentalists playing for the imminent school production. As I spoke with the teacher, it became clear that the situation of his inability to meet report deadlines, was but one expression of a much more deep-seated issue. It played into his story of himself – as someone who was constantly on the back foot, and always in the position of letting someone down, despite his best efforts. The need to juggle priorities and find time to manage the many demands of music teaching came at very considerable personal cost. The teacher mentioned that he had separated from his wife during the past two years, adding, “Probably partly one of the contributing factors to the separation would have been the hours I was working” (Identifier withheld). He commented, “What I used to do was stay very late. I was always the last car in the car park. I had a key to the gates so I could get out” (Identifier withheld).

Since the teacher’s separation, however, the decision to manage his workload, by staying late, had become problematic, as he sought to balance his priorities.

Quite often I’m leaving school nowadays much earlier than I used to. Over the last 18 months since I have separated ... I kind of have to be with the kids, and to look after myself, because I find that I am exercising now, and I never used to, and I go for a run, I like to run every day if I can. ... The only way I can get that in, is to leave school. So I might leave work undone on my desk and I know that I’m going to pay for it the next day, but I do it anyway. Or, I don’t do it and then I’m not looking after myself, or I’m late picking up the kids and the child centre people are pissed off. (Identifier withheld)

Although this teacher was very experienced, and well used to the demands of his role, he was still heavily affected by his situation. “So it just feels like – I’m kind of constantly – there’s someone that’s being made unhappy by some decision of priority I’ve had to make. It feels like that every day, and that’s kind of a big issue really. ... It actually does worry me” (Identifier withheld).

It became clear during my conversations with the participants, that the issue of burnout was very real for them. Many spoke of the dangers of burnout, and had either experienced it themselves, or seen the effects of burnout on close colleagues. Darryl commented that he and his colleague were:

Very frustrated and we are feeling that we will get burnt out. We have seen numerous teachers have been burnt out and we have had advice from

amazing teachers who have been burnt out and stopped teaching for half a dozen years, you know. ... I have seen a very important person in New Zealand music, who has been burnt out and had a melt-down 15 years ago, back in it, and had another melt down last year, you know. So he couldn't control it, because of the nature of the job. You are expected to work so damn hard. So, yes, I see that as a problem and I see it as a real worry. I mean it affects your home life and it affects your health. We have both been sick a lot more, I am certainly going grey. (D:26-7)

Fran was one teacher who had burned out. At the time, she had been working incredibly hard to build both music and drama in her school. The impact for her, and for other music colleagues had been major. She reflected, "I had a breakdown and spent the next year in recovery, and vowed and declared I would never go teaching again because it was so stressful. It was the stress. It was totally stress related" (F:2). Fran commented that at the time of her breakdown, other music teachers in the area had been galvanised into action.

They went to their principals and said, "Look what's happened to Fran. You have got to take some pressure off us. We can't do this. We need help. We need some support. We need some time, or we need somebody to help out doing admin, or whatever." So it actually was very helpful for other teachers. It was diabolical. It wasn't a very pleasant year. (F:3)

In taking up her current position, Fran had stated, "My sanity is my priority" (F:4). Although she admitted to being a perfectionist, she had been able to provide some firm boundaries around her position.

### **9.4.3 Impacts on the teachers' musical lives**

For some of the teachers, secondary music teaching had provided them with the opportunity to pursue their own musical interests. Rae, for example, in speaking of his first teaching position in a provincial town, commented that he had been able to maintain his own music through performing with his students and other musicians in the community. Pat mentioned that he had chosen to stay in a music department that "was never going to grow beyond a certain point because [senior management] didn't really want it to" (P:6), because of the opportunities it afforded him to pursue his own musical interests. "I was spending a lot of time writing musicals with a partner of mine, and I did have time to devote to that which in a much bigger and busier music department wouldn't have" (P:6).

However, the majority of the participants expressed regret at the negative impact that being a secondary school music teacher had had on their own musical life. Rae, for example, commented that while he had been able to pursue his own musical life during his early career, his current position as HOD Music in a large school made this very difficult.

In some cases, teachers spoke of their distress at not being able to maintain their own musical form, because they had neither the time nor the energy to sustain the regular practice required. One teacher commented that, despite her years of study and previous musical performance, lack of time to practise had turned her into a “hack pianist” (Identifier withheld). She commented, “I play it when I have to and I make a terrible job of it and it’s awful” (Identifier withheld).

For Cam and Leith, the impact of music teaching on their own musical life was in fact huge. Both found that it was so all encompassing that they wanted nothing further to do with music outside of the school context. Cam commented:

And I think teachers of some other subjects can shut off that they teach a subject which is text-based or skill-based and can go home at the end of the day and not be involved in it, or you can have your co-curriculum and involvement outside the classroom in something completely different. Some teach mathematics or take a soccer team or whatever, and so I think that whole idea of “it’s all about music all of the time” is really hard. And a really fascinating question I had a couple weeks ago from a teacher who teaches graphics here. He said, “Tell me what’s on your iPod?” And I said, “I don’t have an iPod”. And he said, “Well, what music do you listen to when you get home?” Actually when I get home I like to sit in silence, because I have music all day, and I’m thinking about music, and I’m arranging music, and I’m conducting music, and I’m photocopying damn music, and actually in some ways it could actually ruin your passion, because you want to go home and just not have any. I will listen to nothing in the car on the way home, or resort to a talking station, a news station or national radio or anything that doesn’t play music. So it’s kind of all encompassing. (C:41-2)

For Leith, the impact of music teaching had gone further. It had taken away her own musical passion – a situation which she was finding very difficult to come to terms with.

But the thing that music teaching has done, is I don’t do any music outside of school. I don’t do any music – and it’s a terrible admission to make. It’s

awful. I feel ashamed, but I don't listen to music. ... In fact I can't stand having music on around the home. ... I don't go to very many concerts, because I just can't. I have it all day, every day. ... So even though I'm passionate about it and I love it, it's actually taken away my passion [of] my own [music] for me. (L:30-1)

#### **9.4.4 *The decision to leave***

For some of the teachers, the tensions they encountered in their job had in fact caused them to make the decision to leave. Ashley had just resigned her position at the time of her interview. Her decision had come down to the fact that she wanted 'a life', and that she had found this to be increasingly impossible in her job. She had found, to her cost, the difficulty of being a music teacher and having a life outside of music teaching. Since leaving that position, Ashley has weighed up, "Do I want this [music teaching], or do I want to have a life outside teaching?" (A:12). Ashley decided on the latter. She is no longer a secondary music teacher.

Gene, too, had just resigned her position at the time of interview. She commented to me that her school had "swallowed [her] whole" (G:21) and that her decision to leave was because "basically I want a bit of a life" (G:21).

### **9.5 Chapter summary**

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the teachers' experiences of their role and the factors within their workplace which influenced those experiences. It has shown that the music teachers perceived the rhythms of their working lives to be more intense than the working rhythms of other teachers in their schools. In part, this intensity came from the very long hours that the teachers worked, both during the school day and after normal school hours. During the day, music teachers often missed out on the regular breaks provided by morning break and lunchtime. Additionally, not all of the teachers could count on having a compensatory respite during form time, or being exempt from regular duty. Out of school time, teachers ran rehearsals and provided music for productions, concerts and competitions, and these all in their turn increased the length and intensity of the teachers' days.

The chapter has also shown the major impact on the music teachers of collegial support, or its absence. The teachers, and in particular those who were the sole music teacher in their school, often faced a degree of both personal and professional isolation. This isolation was to some extent mitigated by relationships developed with other arts colleagues, itinerant teachers, and music colleagues in other schools and the wider community. The level of support provided to the music teachers by senior management varied considerably amongst the teachers in the study, and was considered by many to be of crucial importance to how well they fared in the school.

The final section of the chapter examined personal impacts on the teachers of their working lives and the choices that they made to remain a music teacher, or to leave. In many cases, the impulse to stay was the same impulse that had initially brought the participants into secondary school music teaching – their passion for music and music making. Teachers also identified a second passion – their love of and commitment to their students. The combination of both passions seemed to underpin the teachers' major satisfactions in their working lives. The chapter demonstrated that teaching music in a secondary school often had major impacts, not only on a teacher's personal life and wellbeing, but also on their ability to nurture and maintain their own musical passion.

## **9.6 Summary of the five data chapters**

Every participant in the study had engaged actively with music since childhood. Some had grown up within the tradition of Western art music, others in the jazz, kapa haka, or contemporary music traditions. It was their love of music, and personal knowledge of the power of music to make a difference to the lives of individuals and communities, that had provided participants with the significant motivation to become music teachers.

The participants were all primarily employed as classroom teachers. Classroom teaching was based on the ANZC, and the teachers, while applauding its broad and inclusive nature, also reported that it was at times difficult to know where to place the focus of their courses. Classroom music, with its strong practical focus, required substantial resourcing and the availability of a number of teaching spaces and these facilities varied significantly between schools.

The introduction of 'the arts' as a learning area, while offering potential collegiality with other arts teachers, also appeared to have negatively affected the time available for music and the number of students taking music in some schools. Many teachers reported that their junior music courses were short and modularised, and that learning in years 9 and 10 was often fragmented, with less time available than mainstream subjects such as maths or science. In the senior school, many teachers worked with multi-level classes. Given their students' diverse musical interests, and the range of assessment standards available through NCEA, many teachers offered their students individualised learning programmes, for all or part of their coursework. The assessment of music, and in particular practical music, through NCEA presented teachers with many challenges, and required careful management and the availability of substantial periods of time.

Beyond the classroom, the teachers were all also in charge of their school's extra-curricular music programme and the itinerant music scheme. While most were employed as middle managers, three early career assistant teachers acted as the teacher in charge of music, but without the status or recompense provided to heads of department or faculty. The management of the itinerant scheme was complex, and teachers often found the resources available insufficient to meet the needs of music students. In most cases, teachers were working either in relative isolation or with few classroom colleagues in support of the department. The degree to which teachers felt valued by senior managers made a significant difference to their ability to manage the pressures of their role.

A theme which ran through the teachers' stories was their belief that being a music teacher was 'different from the norm'. They experienced the rhythms of their working lives as being more intense than their colleagues, with few breaks available, and long hours spent on extra-curricular music activities outside of school hours. Teachers typically provided a wide range of extra-curricular activities for their students, and while such activities were a source of considerable satisfaction for teachers, students, and school communities, they nonetheless placed very heavy demands on the music teachers. The impacts on the teachers' personal lives were often significant, leading to exhaustion, loss of pleasure in their own music, and a lack of balance between their work and personal lives.

# Chapter 10

## Discussion

### 10.1 Introduction

The purpose of Chapter 10 is to provide an interpretive analysis of the teachers' reported experiences presented over the five data chapters.

This study set out to explore the experiences of nineteen secondary school music teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand, and to examine the tensions of practice that they encountered in their working lives. In keeping with the concept of interpretation as *bricolage* as set out in the methodology chapter (see Section 4.6.3), this discussion employs several *bricoles* (or tools) to elucidate meanings inherent within the teachers' experiences. It also draws on research and contextual data presented in Chapters 2 and 3. The *two worlds* metaphor, introduced in the Chapter 4 (see Section 4.6.4), also contributes to the discussion, operating at both structural and interpretive levels. At the interpretive level, the metaphor illuminates the 'big picture' of the music teachers' professional knowledge landscape, providing insight into the specific ways in which their landscape was nuanced. At the structural level, the metaphor works in conjunction with the four research questions (see Section 4.4.1) to provide an organising vehicle through which the questions are examined. The research questions are closely interconnected, and are perhaps best seen as different lenses through which to view the 'whole' of the teachers' lives. Examining the questions separately enables us to 'think the world apart' and explore in some detail the various aspects of the teachers' lives, so that we can later 'think the world together' (Palmer, 2007) with fresh insight and understanding.

Section 10.2 addresses the first research question: "What are the expectations attached to the role of secondary school music teacher?" It provides insight into the relationships between the three main features of the music teachers' landscape: the inner world of music, the outer world of the school, and the interface between the two worlds where the music teachers were positioned. The section briefly examines the nature of role expectations, and draws on research into teacher identity and motivations. It explores the expectations that the music teachers themselves brought into their role as well as the expectations of their senior managers.

The second research question: “What do secondary school music teachers perceive to be the tensions of their practice?” is addressed in Section 10.3. This deals significantly with the world of the school, drawing on Bernstein’s theories of ‘classification’, ‘framing’, ‘singulars’ and ‘regions’ to discuss the changing nature of the relationships between the three areas, or ‘categories’ of music (to use Bernstein’s language), namely classroom music, the itinerant music programme, and extra-curricular music, into which the schools structured the ‘great thing’ (Palmer, 2007) of music.

Section 10.4 addresses the third research question: “How do secondary school music teachers experience their working lives?” It examines the teachers’ experiences of connection and disconnection at the interface between the two worlds and reveals that the teachers’ experiences rested on a paradox: what was positive for them from one perspective was often also negative from another. This section also examines the teachers’ perception that ‘it’s different for the music teacher’.

The final research question: “How do secondary school music teachers go about resolving their tensions of practice?” provides the focus for Section 10.5. It outlines some of the ways that individual teachers attempted to resolve tensions within their working lives, and introduces the paradox that the fundamental way in which the majority of music teachers sought to resolve these tensions was through overwork. Theory proposed by Bartlett (2004) is used to explore why the teachers overworked.

Section 10.6 provides a summary of the interpretive analysis offered in Chapter 10.

## **10.2 What are the expectations attached to the role of secondary school music teacher?**

As Kahn et al. (1964) demonstrated, positions within institutions such as schools always involve at least two sets of role expectations: those of the employee, the music teacher, and also those ‘sent’ (Kahn et al., 1964) to them by the institutions in which they worked. The expectations of senior management are taken as being representative of the wider institutional expectations, including those of the principal, senior managers, individual students and their families, members of the board of trustees, NZQA, and the Ministry of Education.

### **10.2.1 Teachers' expectations**

Kahn et al. (1964) maintained that a person's role expectations are underpinned by "an occupational self-identity and [motivations] to behave in ways which affirm and enhance the valued attributes of that identity" (p. 17). S. J. Ball and Goodson (1985b) also noted that teachers' actions and commitments are underpinned by their identity, and by the ways in which their identity is both created and developed. Parker Palmer (2007) made the connection between teaching and the teacher's identity in his assertion that "we teach who we are" (p. 1).

An understanding of the teachers' expectations of their roles thus requires an examination of issues of identity, and an exploration of the motivations that brought the study participants into the world of secondary music teaching. This section examines first the identity of the music teachers and next their motivations for becoming music teachers.

#### **10.2.1.1 Identity**

The studies of identity outlined in Chapter 3 of this thesis (Section 3.5) suggest that a teacher's identity, or 'story to live by' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), is shaped by both personal and professional factors. According to Lofland (1969) identity is not fixed or unitary, and people can, in a very real sense, *become* the 'pivotal category' of their identity. As Elliott (1989) suggests, in the case of musicians, their involvement in the *doing* and *making* of music can determine, or at least colour, their *beingness*. Little (1995) provides further support to this idea, when she suggests that a teacher's subject matter – in this case music – becomes a fundamental aspect of their identity. Cox (1999) observed that music teachers' engagement with music is both a symbol of their creativity and a means of defining themselves.

The participants' stories in this study indicated that music was the pivotal category of their identity. In every case the teacher's identity as a musician had begun to develop during his or her formative years when enculturation through experience of music within particular musical traditions had nurtured the beginnings of a personal relationship with musical meaning. Later, the teachers received specialist instruction that enabled them to develop, to an advanced stage, their formal knowledge and understanding of particular musical instruments and cultures. Each teacher connected

with the world of music via their own particular musical 'language'<sup>42</sup>, style and culture. By the time they became teachers, all of the participants were so steeped in their actions and knowledge as musicians, that music was not just something that they merely *made* or *did*, but something that defined who they *were* as people. Music indeed had become their story to live by.

Their experiences served to provide access to an inner place of profound significance in their lives where the inner world of music opened a personal connection to an interior world of feelings, of deep meaning, and of flow. Reimer (2002b) provides a window into that inner world when he notes that:

Music serves the need for experience below the surface of the commonplace, in which deep meanings are uncovered – meanings often called sacred, or profound ... experiences of spiritual significance ... commonly believed to be among the most precious of which humans are capable. (p. 198)

The teachers' identification with the world of music and their personal experience of the power of music, pointed to a 'fundamental narrative' or 'sacred story' (Crites, 1971) which they shared in common. They did not articulate the sacred story themselves, for as Crites (1971) observes, a sacred story is hard to articulate, because such stories "lie too deep in the consciousness of a people to be directly told: they *form* consciousness rather than being among the objects of which it is directly aware" (p. 295, emphasis added).

In common with Crites (1971), I am cautious about naming the sacred story of the music teachers, for such naming "misleads as much as it illuminates, since its meaning is contained – and concealed – in the unutterable cadences and revelations of the story itself" (p. 296). Yet, in order to gain insight into the teachers' lives, an attempt at such a naming is important. For, as Crites tells us, "these are stories that orient the life of people through time, their life-time, their individual and corporate experience and their sense of style, to the great powers that establish the reality of their world" (p. 295).

The 'powers' which established the reality of the music teachers' world, and so fashioned its sacred story, are the powers of music itself: its power to signify who we are and what we connect to, and its power to transform and transcend. The teachers'

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<sup>42</sup> The use of the word 'language' to describe how music operates is contested. The use of it here merely refers to the special ways in which music communicates.

collective sacred story was not just something they ‘believed’ or ‘thought’, the sacred story was *embodied in their experience*. For “such stories, and the symbolic worlds they project, are not like monuments that men [*sic*] behold, but like dwelling places. People live in them” (Crites, 1971, p. 295). The teachers’ stories indeed revealed that they ‘dwelt’ not only within their knowledge of the ways in which music had transformed their own lives, but also within their conviction that music has the power to transform the lives of young people and the communities in which they live.

#### 10.2.1.2 *Motivation for teaching*

Palmer (2007) asserts that not only does the act of teaching itself depend on the identity of the teacher, but that the motivation to teach is also connected to personal identity. “Any authentic call [to teach] ultimately comes from the voice of the *teacher within*, the voice that invites me to honor the nature of my true self” (p. 30, original emphasis). He elucidates his concept of the *teacher within* in his statement that “the teacher within is not the voice of conscience but of identity and integrity” (p. 32).

In this study, the teachers’ identity as musicians, which embraced their connection with the world of music and its sacred story, emerges as one of two key factors that underpinned their motivation to become teachers. The second factor was their desire – which often appeared almost missionary in its intensity – to engage young people into the world of music. In these respects, the study reflects wider research into teacher motivations. Huberman (1993a), for example, identified the classic motivations of teachers as a desire for contact with young people and a love of their subject. The teachers’ desire to provide their own students with musical experiences similar to their own was in keeping with Scheib’s (2003) findings in relation to the music teachers in his study.

The participants’ desire to create meaningful relationships through engagement in music reflects the research of Cox (1999), who noted that a significant motivator for the teachers was their ability to make music in school and thereby to have a personal influence on the institution. Many of the participants spoke in positive terms of the benefits that they had personally gained from making music with others. They had discovered for themselves what St John (2010) asserts, that making music together enables us to build a community based on mutuality and respect. All knew too, of the value of music for individuals and for the development of significant interpersonal relationships and community, and of the key role that significant teachers and role

models can play in inducting young people into the world of music. This idea will be developed in Section 10.4.1.

It was their deeply felt, personal and experiential knowledge of music's power to transform and transcend mundane experience that underpinned the motivations of every teacher and fuelled their expectations that they would, through their teaching role, create the circumstances that would allow them to draw their own students into the world of music, so that they too could experience its rewards.

This examination of the teachers' identities and motivations informs part of the unique *two worlds* landscape in which the music teachers were situated. It has shown that the world of music is an interior place where personal meanings can be formed and transformed; a place of profound experience which, like love, can "temporarily transform our whole existence" (Storr, 1992, p. 4). The sacred story reveals the strength of the music teachers' connection to that world, to which the teachers' core expectations were substantially attached. But neither the inner world of music nor its unexpressed sacred story are necessarily either perceived or shared by those whose lives are not attuned to music, and this foreshadows a possible vulnerability as the teachers met the expectations of the schools.

### **10.2.2 Expectations of school management**

The teachers also held expectations of themselves in relation to the 'outer' world of the school. At a global level, these appeared to be congruent with their perceptions of the expectations held by senior managers, which are discussed in the next section. However this superficial congruence at times masked deeper conflicts, and these are explored throughout this chapter.

The fundamental expectation of teachers in New Zealand secondary schools is that they will act as classroom teachers, teaching their subject disciplines in relation to the *New Zealand Curriculum*. All of the teachers in this study stated that they were employed primarily to do this.

Studies conducted within New Zealand and other Western nations since the mid-1980s are unequivocal that fundamental changes within society and schooling have led to a significant rise in the workload of all secondary teachers. Large-scale research studies by Bloor and Harker (1995), Harker et al. (1998) and Ingvarson et al. (2005) have

found that the roles of New Zealand secondary school teachers have both expanded and intensified since the mid-1990s. The teachers' stories in this study indicated that this was also true for them.

In common with the teachers in the study by Ingvarson et al. (2005), the music teachers' classroom work was significantly influenced by ongoing changes to both curriculum and assessment. For the music teachers, much of the complexity wrought by these changes was hidden beneath the surface. Classroom music teaching, for example, had become dependent to a large extent on student learning that happened outside of the classroom (see Section 10.3.2).

In addition to their role as classroom teachers, all of the participants acted as middle managers, most holding the position of a head of department, or head of faculty. Although three of the teachers did not have the delegated status (or financial remuneration) of middle managers, they fulfilled the – at times silent – expectations of management that they would act as teachers in charge of music. Their middle management role included the leadership of the curriculum, the extra-curricular programme, and the itinerant music programme.

Previous research findings (see for example Bloor & Harker, 1995; Ingvarson et al., 2005) indicate that middle managers have been perhaps the most heavily impacted of all teachers by role expansion and intensification, and the teachers' stories in this study suggest that this was also the case for them. Furthermore, the findings of this study in relation to the TICs, who were 'HODs without being an HOD', suggest that this is a group of teachers whose teaching conditions and workload are in need of further investigation (see Chapter 11).

The participants' role as curriculum managers was large and multi-faceted. They were responsible for ensuring that their department complied with policy expectations in relation to curriculum and assessment and school-wide initiatives. They were also responsible for resources, budgets and equipment and it was their responsibility to ensure that the learning needs of their students were understood and met.

On top of the already expanded expectations of them as classroom teachers and middle managers, the music teachers were also expected to run the itinerant music scheme and manage all of the extra-curricular music activities within the school. Historical data presented in Chapters 2 and 3 indicate that music teachers have always

carried a 'dual role' (see for example Thwaites, 1998). It was clear from the teachers' stories that even though the specific details of such expectations may not have been exactly spelled out in any job description, or even held in common with senior managers, they shared management's global expectations of their roles. This finding is similar to that of Ballantyne (2001) who reported that although the music teachers in her study found their workload expectations to be high, they considered their role in the extra-curricular programme to be a part of their job. The extra expectations also constituted a significant factor underlying the claims, made by nearly every participant in the study, that 'it's different for the music teacher' (see Chapter 10, Section 10.4.4).

### **10.3 What do secondary school music teachers perceive to be the tensions of their practice?**

The five data chapters demonstrated that the teachers experienced their roles as complex, multi-layered and tension-laden. Their expectations that they would draw their students into the inner world of music were constantly challenged by the impact of wider-school structures, policies and timetables, which tended to fragment and disconnect students' learning experiences, and by the demands of NCEA which required 'objective' measurement of specific outcomes. This section examines the genesis and nature of significant tensions which the teachers encountered.

#### ***10.3.1 Primal tension of practice***

The *two worlds* metaphor provides an initial key to understanding the major tensions of practice encountered by the teachers. It portrays their landscape as comprising two very different places – the 'outer' world of the school, with its largely objective language, structures, timetables, expectations and policies, and the 'inner' world of music, with its connection to interior qualities of feeling and being. It was the music teachers' role to 'translate' the world of music into the world of the school. But music was often a very awkward fit. As Lévi-Strauss (cited in P. Ball, 2010, p. 355) observed, the inner world of music has no easy translation into the outer world. It was this requirement to translate and 'trans-locate' the world of music into the policies, structures and life of the school that constituted the primal tension of practice that the music teachers encountered. The tension was primal, both because it was of key significance, and also because other tensions of practice emanated from it.

### **10.3.2 Classification**

Bernstein's (1996) concept of the 'classification of categories' provides insight into the complex inter-relationships between aspects of their roles that the teachers experienced. 'Classification' refers to the strength of the boundary, or insulation, between two different categories. Where each category operates as a discrete entity, classification is said to be strong. However, when categories are not strongly differentiated from each other, when, for example, there is overlap in purpose or procedure, the boundaries between the two will be weaker. In such cases classification is said to be weaker.

Whereas within its own inner world, the 'great thing' of music is a unity, schools in New Zealand have traditionally broken music up into three distinct categories: classroom music, the itinerant programme, and the extra-curricular music programme. Contextual data introduced in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4) demonstrate that not only have the core purposes of each category been essentially different, but they have operated within the school in different ways, have been typically funded through different budgets and, in the case of itinerant music, have been staffed by different teachers. Thus the classification, or boundary strength, between each of the categories has traditionally been strong.

The experiences of the teachers in this study, however, suggested that, although the *structural divisions* between the itinerant programme and the music classroom had not undergone change, the *strength of the boundary* between them has profoundly changed since the introduction of the ANZC (Ministry of Education, 2000) and NCEA. A similar case could also be made, at least to some extent, in relation to the boundary strength between the music classroom and extra-curricular music activities.

When the itinerant scheme was introduced into New Zealand secondary schools in the mid-twentieth century, performance was not a component of classroom music programmes, which were academically-based. The music classroom to a large extent operated quite independently of the itinerant programme. The boundaries between the two were thus strong and the classroom teacher was firmly in control of the learning within the classroom. (The issue of control of learning is discussed later in this section, in relation to Bernstein's (1996) concept of 'framing'.)

Music performance was included in the School Certificate credential (now NCEA Level 1) in 1995. Subsequently, the ANZC (Ministry of Education, 2000) placed practical music making at the heart of classroom music, and NCEA further embedded musical performance as a key component of external qualifications. The data from this study indicate that a consequence of these changes for the teachers has been that classroom music teaching and learning have become very heavily dependent on the itinerant music programme. This was particularly the case in relation to the lower decile schools in the study, where teachers reported that their students were typically unable to afford private music lessons, and so were reliant on receiving their instrumental tuition at school. Thus the boundary between classroom music and itinerant music in the schools in this study has weakened very considerably. Since classification relates to issues of power (Bernstein, 1996), it can be argued that this boundary change has in fact shifted the balance of power between the classroom teaching context and the instrumental teaching context.

The teachers in the study reported that individual performance instruction, which constitutes a core aspect of student learning in the music curriculum, could not routinely take place within the music classroom. This meant that they often had little or no input into, or control over individual music performance, a central aspect of their students' musical learning. Moreover, when students learned their instrument not from an itinerant teacher, but from a private music teacher, this learning did not even take place in the school. Ironically, while the classroom teachers did not typically *teach* this core aspect of their students' learning, they were responsible for *assessing* it through NCEA standards.

This situation has in turn had a significant impact on the teachers' core role as classroom practitioners and has created for the teachers a complex and at times difficult situation, which is perhaps unique amongst mainstream school subjects. It has set up a triangulation involving the classroom teacher, the student, and their instrumental teacher, which required careful and often time-consuming navigation and negotiation.

A further consequence for the teachers of the weakened boundary between the music classroom and instrumental learning was that this core component of the students' musical learning was potentially highly vulnerable. Students' instrumental learning was reliant on their taking time out of regular classes to attend instrumental lessons – a situation which many teachers reported had become much more difficult since the

inception of NCEA, together with what one teacher called NCEA's 'eternal' assessment. Teachers also reported that further significant tensions were created by the fact that funding for itinerant lessons was typically insufficient to cater for the needs of their classroom music students – whom they prioritised over students who did not take music as a subject. The inadequacy of resourcing echoes the findings of a nationwide survey (MENZA, 2009) in which 88.5% of teachers reported that they were unable to accommodate all of the students wanting instrumental lessons, and an itinerant survey (Survey Group, 2009) in which teachers also reported inadequate funding. Because the funding formula is based on the whole school roll, and not on the number of students who take classroom music, the more successful the music teachers were in attracting students into their classes and creating vibrant programmes, the less able they were to provide their students with their all-important core instrumental learning.

While the change in the relationship between the music classroom and the itinerant programme affected every teacher in the study, many to a very considerable extent, their stories also indicated that the boundary strength between classroom music and extra-curricular music activities had also weakened in some schools, giving rise to its own particular tensions. Extra-curricular music has long served the mixed purposes of providing a 'public face' for the school, a private 'good' for the students, and a source of musical satisfaction to the teachers (see for example Cox, 1999; Thwaites, 1998). While the teachers' stories indicated that all three purposes still operated, they also showed that in many schools there was a much closer interweaving of classroom music and extra-curricular music.

One further boundary change is worthy of mention here, as it too added complexity to the teachers' roles. The ANZC (Ministry of Education, 2000) changed the status of music from an independent discipline within the school, which was 'strongly classified' – it operated as a discrete and autonomous subject – to one of the four disciplines within the single learning area of the arts. In Bernstein's (1996) terms, music shifted from operating as a 'singular' which is "on the whole ... orientated to [its] own development, protected by strong boundaries and hierarchies" (p. 65), to a 'region' which is "constructed by recontextualizing singulars into larger units which [operate] both in the intellectual field of disciplines and in the field of external practice" (p. 65).

This recontextualization of music from a singular to a member of the region of the arts, in fact runs counter to Bernstein's (1996) assertion that "the organization of discourse at the level of the school is firmly based in singulars, despite moves to regionalization

in higher education” (p. 66). Although the ANZC has retained each of the arts as an independent discipline, it can be argued that the adoption of the single learning area has weakened the boundaries around music as an independent subject, both in relation to the way in which music is perceived – as a quarter of a learning area – and in the way it functions in some school settings. The teachers’ stories suggested that the effects of this change are at this time contextually dependent, and still fluid. The increased pressure for schools to meet curriculum obligations in relation to all official learning areas by providing ‘tasters’ only in the junior school, might be considered as a negative impact of this recontextualisation.

### **10.3.3 Framing**

While Bernstein’s (1996) concept of the classification of categories provides insight into the impact on the teachers caused by the change of roles involving the teachers, music in the classroom, and itinerant music, his concept of framing also helps to elucidate the tensions which resulted from other significant role changes that many of the teachers in the study were facing. Framing provides insight into the relative control between students and teachers in relation to what is taught and learned. In a situation where framing is strong, the teacher retains much of the control over what is learned, and how it is learned. Conversely, when framing is weak, the student is able to exercise much more apparent control over what he or she learns.

The history of school music education in New Zealand outlined in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4), indicates that prior to the introduction of musical performance into senior music courses in the 1990s, and the adoption of the ANZC in 2002, the framing within music as a curriculum subject was relatively strong. Despite many calls for school music to take account of the rise of popular music cultures, which themselves reflect profound changes within society itself (Green, 2001) the music curriculum, to a significant extent, reflected the traditional values of Western art music, which carried with them the notion that the role of the teacher, as ‘keeper of the canon’, was to initiate students into the world of Western art music. As Drummond (2003) asserted, music educators worked hard in the mid-twentieth century to ensure that music was taken seriously as an academic subject.

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The ANZC broke the hegemony of Western art music, and ushered in the possibility for the study of music from any musical tradition, and particularly from popular contemporary cultures, which many students wear as their personal ‘badge of identity’

(D. J. Hargreaves & Marshall, 2003, p. 265). In so doing, it provided music with a much stronger practical base. The teachers' stories suggested that this curriculum change had also often led to a significant change in relation to who controlled the learning in the classroom.

In this study, changes in framing were particularly apparent at years 11, 12 and 13, when students were able to make choices about the programme of study they wished to follow. There was considerable diversity amongst the teachers in relation to the relative control that they and their students had. The pragmatic decision of many teachers, when faced with a class of students who all wanted to follow their own musical pathways, was to establish an individual programme for each student to work on independently. In such situations, it was often the students who drove their own learning agendas; thus creating situations in which the framing was weak. This solution meant that teachers were often stretched as they attempted to respond to the needs of all of the students, a situation they found to be not only exhausting, but also potentially very unsatisfying. These changes of control represented changes from stronger to weaker framing.

#### **10.4 How do secondary school music teachers experience their working lives?**

This section focuses on the position of the teachers at the interface of their two worlds, and explores in more detail the impact of the tensions on the teachers themselves. A picture emerges from the data of teachers whose lives constituted a tug-of-war between the forces of *connection* and *disconnection*. At the heart of the teachers' experience lay a paradox – what was positive for them was, too often, also negative for them. The discussion which follows explores the paradox. It examines aspects of the teachers' lives that provided them with satisfaction and pleasure and so potentially connected them to their own expectations, motivations, and ultimately their own identity. Next it explores the forces of disconnection which pulled the teachers in multiple, often conflicting directions, challenging their satisfaction as teachers, and potentially influencing aspects of their core identity. Two particular contexts which tended to exacerbate disconnections and thus make connections more difficult are discussed briefly: lack of close colleagues, and lack of recognition by senior

management. Finally this section explores the impacts of disconnection on the personal identity of some the teachers.

#### **10.4.1 Connection: *Satisfactions***

Research discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.4.1) found that teachers derive significant satisfaction from working successfully with students, from sustaining and developing their own competencies, and from working together with other members of their learning community (Dinham & Scott, 1996; Harker et al., 1998; Ingvarson et al., 2005; Sikes et al., 1985). Each of these factors was present in the lives of teachers within this study.

Many of the teachers spoke, for example, of the ‘buzz’ they derived from helping students in their classes to gain new knowledge, understandings and competencies. The teachers’ stories, however, also suggested that the wellspring of their greatest satisfaction was to be found at a deeper and more connected level than individual factors suggested. The ways in which many teachers spoke of their individual musical groups and of their departments suggested that they functioned as communities of practice (Wenger, 1998); that is, as communities in which “mutual relationships, a carefully understood enterprise, and a well-honed repertoire are all investments that make sense with respect to each other [where] participants have a stake in that investment because it becomes part of who they are” (Wenger, 1998, p. 97). Many teachers pointed to the significance of belonging to such community for their students.

Extra-curricular music groups, such as bands, choirs and orchestras and, to some extent, music departments, fitted Wenger’s description of a community of practice. Within such groups, students and teachers worked together, each making their own unique contribution and each experiencing the life and meaning inherent in the co-creation of music. The creation of such community was of great significance for the teachers. Given the teachers’ motivation to draw students into the inner world of music, which underpinned their own teaching expectations, it was not surprising to find that, for many, making music together with their students created the high points in their working lives.

Palmer’s (2007) conception of a ‘community of truth’ provides an apt image of the particular kind of community of practice created by musical groups such as choirs, orchestras and bands. Palmer described a community of truth as a group of seekers,

gathered around a 'great thing', which continually called them deeper into its secret. He maintained that, in relation to such a community:

the teacher's central task is to give the great thing an independent voice – a capacity to speak its truth quite apart from the teacher's voice in terms that students can hear and understand. When the great thing speaks for itself, teachers and students are more likely to come into a genuine learning community, a community that does not collapse into the egos of students or teacher but knows itself accountable to the subject at its core. (p. 120)

The teachers' experiences of music making with their students underline Jorgensen's (2003) assertion that "music education comes alive when it is experienced holistically" (p. 125). The satisfactions inherent in such experiences for the music teachers in this study also reflect the findings of the studies into the lives of music teachers conducted by Cox (1999), who found teachers to be motivated by love of music and their desire to engage students into music.

The teachers' stories repeatedly demonstrated the strong mutual relationships which were forged between them and their students. They highly valued the long-term and close relationships gained from working with students, often for each of the five years of their secondary schooling, and in general they spoke of their students as their 'kids', with warmth, appreciation, and insight into the mutual importance of their relationships. These findings reflected those of Sikes et al. (1985) that students appear to be the main reference group for many teachers and that it is through their students that many teachers achieve their ambitions. Some teachers' stories also resonate with van Manen's (1991) notion of the *tactfulness* of teachers.

The teachers' stories indicated that although, as the section which follows suggests, they were often personally and professionally isolated in their *teaching* roles, they were often able to create and sustain a real sense of community with their *students* both individually and collectively. At the structural level, the music department, in as much as it was the container within which music dwelt, *embodied* the subject within the school; it formed an *outer* expression of the *inner* world of music, and from the teachers' perspectives, their departments did exude their own special spirit (Little & McLaughlin, 1993) and did operate in a positive rather than negative manner, as 'microworlds' (1996) within the school – microworlds about which the teachers felt very strongly.

Poor student behaviour, which has been found to be a significant stressor for teachers (see for example Cox, 1999; Punch & Tuettemann, 1990), did not emerge as a major theme in this research. The teachers, in fact, made very few negative comments about their students. Such comments figured relatively briefly in some conversations, and tended to be in relation to specific contextual issues, such as course structures or expectations. One possible reason for this finding is that the teachers in this study appeared to have established positive relationships with their classes. Poor student behaviour in music classes has often been associated with students who did not find the music that they were offered at school particularly relevant to their own lives or musical interests (see for example Green, 2002). The teachers' stories in this study suggest that the widening of the curriculum to embrace popular musics, and increased emphasis on practical music making may increase students' engagement with the subject. Additionally, music, even in the junior school, now tends to be an option, rather than a compulsory 'core' subject.

This section has shown that the satisfactions which the teachers experienced connected substantially with their own expectations that they would engage students into the world of music in authentic and meaningful ways. As such, their satisfactions were congruent with their own strong personal identification with music, which formed a significant core of their own identity. The section that follows examines other elements of the paradox of satisfaction, and discusses the pressures and stressors which acted to disconnect the teachers from their satisfactions, motivations and expectations, and which ultimately had the potential to lead teachers to disconnect from their own personal identity.

#### ***10.4.2 Disconnection: Stressors and their impacts on identity***

Literature outlined in Chapter 3 (Section 3.4) indicates that particular stressors which impact on teachers in general include perceived lack of efficacy/achievement, inadequate access to facilities, lack of collegial support, excessive societal expectations, lack of influence/autonomy, student misbehaviour and lack of praise/recognition (see for example Punch & Tuettemann, 1990). Research specifically in relation to secondary school music teachers suggests that further stressors can be found in the high-energy practical demands of music teaching (Hodge et al., 1994); early career praxis shock (Ballantyne, 2007); and role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, underutilisation of skills, and 'non-participation' (Scheib, 2003). All of these stressors were present, to some extent, in the lives of at least some of the teachers in

the study. The teachers' stories taken as a whole, support the findings of New Zealand and international studies that found teaching to be a highly stressful occupation (see for example Harker et al., 1998; Travers & Cooper, 1996), and that the primary causes of stress are related to excessive workload and the constant changes to which teachers have been subjected during the past few decades (see for example Galton & MacBeath, 2008).

This section employs the theory of organisational role stress, propounded by Kahn et al. (1964), to provide a deeper interpretive understanding of the stress that the teachers experienced. Stress is seen as an outcome of pressures which result from conflicts and ambiguities in the roles 'sent' to the 'focal person' – in this case the teacher. In this model, role overload is considered to be a complex form of role conflict. The greater the level of role conflict or ambiguity that are both sent and received, the greater the likelihood of stress and anxiety.

In keeping with Scheib's (2003) research, the current study found role overload and role conflict to be of significance in the lives of the teachers. Whereas Scheib did not find role ambiguity to be of any real significance in his research, the present study did find some significant instances of role ambiguity. Each of these stressors can be conceptualised as exerting pressure on the teachers' lives, and ultimately their identities, in different ways. Role overload was experienced as a burden weighing them down, thus it can be imagined as a downward pressure. Role conflict had the effect of pulling teachers simultaneously in different directions, so it can be imagined as outward-focused lateral pressures. Role ambiguity, on the other hand, placed pressure on teachers to try and pull together things that did not necessarily connect – so it can be pictured as inward-focused lateral pressures. In all cases, the resultant stress impacted on the teachers' sense of personal well-being. Two particular contextual conditions exacerbated the impacts of the three sets of pressures: lack of colleagues and lack of recognition by senior management.

The section which follows examines in turn role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload. Next it discusses the two contexts that tended to exacerbate the stresses experienced by the teachers, and it finally considers the impacts of the role pressures on the teachers' identities.

#### 10.4.2.1 *Role conflict*

Before examining instances of role pressures, it is important to discuss 'boundary positions' which were introduced in Chapter 3 (Section 3.6.3). According to Kahn et al. (1964) boundary positions occur when people occupy a position *between* different organisations, or between different subgroups *within* an organisation. The significance of boundary positions is that they tend to exacerbate the stresses and tensions felt by the person at the boundary.

In the current study the concept of boundary positions operating between sub-groups *within* an organisation is particularly relevant. Music teachers occupied not one, but several significant boundary positions. Their position at the interface of the two worlds of their landscape – the world of music and the wider world of the school – constituted a fundamental boundary position. It meant that the teachers – especially those in sole-charge departments – were the main point of communication between all musical matters and senior management, external policies and credentialing, other staff, students, parents and the wider community. This finding is in keeping with the study by Scheib (2003) who found that music teachers teetered between two different worlds.

The teachers also occupied other significant boundary positions. Music within their school settings was structured into three areas, or categories (Bernstein, 1996): classroom music, extra-curricular music, and itinerant music. The music teachers, who were responsible for all of these, therefore also occupied a boundary position at the interface between each category. Given that they were also positioned between each category and the wider school, the teachers tended to receive and experience conflicting pressures at an intense and personal level.

Role conflict occurred when teachers received conflicting messages or 'pressures' from those with whom they worked, or indeed, at times from themselves. Kahn et al.(1964) categorised conflicting pressures into four fundamental types: intra-sender pressures, inter-sender pressures, role-sender pressures, and person-role pressures (see Chapter 3, Section 3.6.3). Each of these types of role pressure was apparent in the teachers' lives.

The teachers' stories contained many instances of intra-sender pressures and the mixed-messages that resulted from them. The most significant of these, experienced by every teacher in the study, was the message emanating from senior management (which, for our purposes, is conceptualised as a single sender) that music teachers

must simultaneously be responsible for music as a classroom subject, for the extra-curricular music, and also for the itinerant programme, even in the case of a sole early-career music teacher. This was in spite of the fact that each role has substantially increased in size and complexity during the past few decades.

This mixed message was typically received and experienced by the teachers as an inter-role conflict. This conflict between roles, and the tension, anxiety and overload in which it consistently resulted, was woven through the fabric of the teachers' daily lives, compromising their potential satisfactions with a seemingly endless stream of demands and dilemmas. These tugged at them from different directions, threatening disconnection, and requiring them to continually prioritise between the urgent and the more urgent. A second, significant inter-role pressure experienced by every teacher, related to conflicts between their school life and their personal and private lives.

In their classroom teaching, the teachers experienced inter-sender pressures (pressures caused by conflicting messages from different role senders), in particular with regard to their responsibility to meet the learning needs of their very diverse music classes. Many spoke of the conflict they experienced when they attempted to simultaneously meet the needs – and thus the 'sent pressures' – of junior students, whose prior learning in music was vastly different, and of senior students who wanted to explore their own preferred musical genres – which were often very diverse in nature.

Kahn et al. (1964) identified a fourth category of role conflicts as person-role pressures. These had an impact on the study participants at a personal level. Such pressures arose when the demands or messages which the teachers received from others within their working world were not consonant with their own beliefs or values. Section 10.2.1.1 has shown the close connection that the teachers had developed with the world of music. As Crites' (1971) theory of the sacred story suggested, the teachers dwelt within their own experiential knowledge of the power of music and this in turn underpinned their belief in the value of the 'great thing' of music for their students. However, music appears as a very awkward fit into the school. Thus teachers encountered constant conflicts between their core valuing of music as a powerful, meaningful unity to be accessed through authentic experience, and their daily reality of the often fragmented and disconnected context within which they worked.

#### 10.4.2.2 *Role ambiguity*

While role conflicts threatened the teachers' equilibrium by pulling them simultaneously in multiple directions, role ambiguity saw the teachers attempting to pull together and reconcile aspects of their world which at times appeared to defy connection. According to Kahn et al. (1964), role ambiguity occurs when there is a gap in information or communication. This sent pressure typically results in a lack of clarity about the communication or information in the person receiving the message.

Close reading of the teachers' stories revealed that there were significant instances of role ambiguity in relation to the core expectations sent to them by management. While management apparently valued music in their schools, at a deeper level this was often ambiguous and left the teachers feeling unsupported. This theme is further developed later in the chapter (Section 10.4.3.2).

A second area in which teachers experienced ambiguity was of major concern to them all. The ANZC made clear the responsibility of arts teachers to deliver a learning programme that was coherent, meaningful and relevant, with provision for progression:

Programmes should also recognise the spiral nature of students' learning and of their progression through the eight levels of the curriculum. As they engage with concepts and inquiry processes, over time students will demonstrate greater sophistication and depth of understanding in each arts discipline. Revisiting and building on existing skills, knowledge, and understanding reinforces important skills and concepts and ensures that students' learning is relevant, in-depth, and meaningful. (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 90)

While the sent message was that teachers must connect together the learning of their students at all levels and so create a coherent and meaningful learning pathway through the school, this took no account of the fact that many worked in contexts where this was virtually impossible. Short, modularised, fragmented junior courses did not provide adequate learning time for students, especially those with limited prior learning, to gain skills and knowledge required for NCEA level 1, which is set at curriculum level 6. The impact of this dilemma was felt, often very intensely, by the majority of teachers in the study.

#### **10.4.2.3 Role overload**

The discussion of role conflict and ambiguity demonstrates some of the pressures that resulted in role overload. Kahn et al. (1964) considered role overload to be a complex form of inter-sender role conflict, whereby a focal person is sent messages, which of themselves may be perfectly reasonable, but which, when taken together, create a workload of unmanageable proportions. This theory can be seen in operation in the music teachers' lives. In common with their colleagues, their 'core' workload as classroom teachers and curriculum managers was already made up of an array of demands. However, the music teachers' work overload was greatly increased by the often conflicting demands which were sent to them in relation to all three categories of music for which they were responsible.

Work overload is linked with early career praxis shock in music teachers (see for example Ballantyne, 2007; Kelly, 1999) and with burnout (see for example Byrne, 1999; Dworkin, 1997). Conversations with the early career teachers in the current study indicated that aspects of praxis shock were present, particularly in two of the three cases. The third year teacher had resigned her position in response to the work overload she was experiencing and has since left the profession. Several other teachers in the study reported that they had previously burned out as a result of the excessive workload they carried.

#### **10.4.3 Contexts that exacerbated pressures and stress**

The teachers' stories revealed that while the impact of sent pressures varied according to their personal and professional contexts, the degree of collegial support and recognition they received had an impact on the intensity of the experiences of those pressures.

##### **10.4.3.1 Collegial support**

Research by Punch and Tuettemann (1990) suggests that the level of collegial support, or conversely isolation, that teachers experience can be a significant factor in the occurrence of stress and burnout. The teachers' stories tended to support this finding. They indicated that one of the most significant factors contributing to a sense of relative comfort, or discomfort, within their role was whether they were the sole classroom music teacher in the school, or had colleagues on the staff who also taught music in the classroom. All of the teachers in the study perceived the sole-charge music position to be problematic.

Studies by researchers such as Little (1995) and Siskin (1994) indicate that the subject department has a strong role to play in providing secondary teachers with a community in which to work, and that it is within their departmental community that teachers find support and develop bonds of friendship. Without colleagues on the regular staff, music teachers became a department of one. This, coupled with the physical isolation of many music departments (often set away from other areas so that 'noise' wouldn't impact on others) and the fact that music teachers often worked through their breaks, meant that many felt both personally and professionally isolated in their teaching role.

Professional isolation also meant that sole charge teachers did not have colleagues to whom they could delegate. It meant too that they tended to be single-handedly responsible for the learning in music of the students at every year level. For those teachers who did not have music classroom teaching colleagues, the lack of a collegial community was to some extent mitigated by active efforts to build community with their itinerant staff and music colleagues in other schools, though this was clearly not the same as having daily communication with other classroom music teachers.

It is possible to conjecture that this lack of true teaching collegiality may have contributed to the strong sense of community that many of the teachers created with their music students.

#### *10.4.3.2 Recognition*

Kahn et al. (1964) were unequivocal about the importance of receiving adequate recognition and feedback. They commented that:

Doubts about how others evaluate us, about how satisfied they are with our performance are frequent sources of anxiety. A meaningful and satisfying self-identity rests in part on clear and consistent feedback from those around us. Thus, for many purposes, information about the interpersonal climate and about the appraisal of one's performance may be as important as knowing the specific content of the job. (p. 25)

Sikes et al. (1985) further add that "the personality, views and values of the head [teacher], and how the teacher relates to them, are profoundly important factors in a teacher's life" (p. 232). Thus receiving recognition from colleagues, and in particular the principal, is of significance to teachers.

This study strongly supported those views. The extent to which the music teachers perceived themselves to be valued was of profound importance to them all. A sense of

personal valuing generally also reflected the value placed on music itself by the principal and senior managers, and then in turn by members of the wider school community. Real valuing was reflected in tangible ways rather than mere tokens of support.

Research into subject departments in secondary schools provides some insight into possible reasons for the lack of understanding of music that teachers reported. A. Hargreaves (1994) contends that in school cultures in which the teachers' primary allegiance is to subject studies departments, they often gain little understanding of, or empathy with, teachers outside of their own department area. Little and McLaughlin (1993) add that the conditions of teaching may differ very significantly between departments. Furthermore, the *two worlds* metaphor and its sacred story suggest that a true understanding of the world of music may not be easily accessible to all. Thus unless senior managers have had direct personal experience of music as a curriculum subject, or of the transformative potential of the inner world of music, there was much less likelihood that they would understand the conditions necessary for music to thrive.

The discussion in this section has demonstrated that the music teachers' lives were made up of a multiplicity of experiences, some of which were positive for them, in that they were life-giving and connected them to their core identity as musicians and teachers, and some of which were negative, in that they caused stress and exhaustion, and so threatened to disconnect them from themselves. These findings reflect literature which shows that teachers' well-being and identity are intimately connected. Day et al. (2007), for example, assert that "teachers' sense of well-being is deeply connected with how they define themselves as professionals, and how they see their professionalism being defined by others". (p. 244). In his turn, Parker Palmer (2007) states that "*Identity* lies in the intersection of the diverse forces that make up my life, and *integrity* lies in relating to those forces in ways that bring me wholeness and life rather than fragmentation and death" (p. 14). Here Palmer equates well-being with 'wholeness' of self, which he calls integrity. The discussion likewise supports the work of researchers such as Carlyle and Woods (2002), who found that stress can cause a teacher's identity to come under attack.

The teachers' identity as musicians was fundamental to their sense of themselves, and to the expectations they brought to their teaching. Paradoxically, for some of the teachers, the stress and overload they encountered in their role threatened their very identity as musicians. Many mentioned, often with a sense of sadness or shame, that

they were too busy to keep up their own musical skills. These teachers struggled to nurture and sustain the 'life blood' that had brought them into teaching in the first place, and on which their practice was based.

These pressures also threatened their identity as capable, balanced human beings. For many, tiredness, exhaustion, and potential burnout were never far from the surface.

#### **10.4.4 It's different for the music teacher**

This section reprises a theme which ran throughout the teachers' stories that 'it's different for the music teacher'. Although the teacher's experiences were unique, and to a considerable extent context-dependent, they all appeared to share a belief that their situation, as teachers responsible for music, was both qualitatively and quantitatively different from the experiences of 'normal' teachers. This belief had the quality of a taken-for-granted assumption, one which went with the territory of being a secondary school music teacher. A full analysis of this belief is not possible in the context of this study. However, the teachers' beliefs are supported by other studies into music teaching (see for example Ballantyne, 2007; Kelly, 1999; Scheib, 2003).

Ballantyne (2001) contends that music is a unique subject area and that music education is qualitatively different from other subject areas. If we adopt the *two worlds* metaphor as being representative of the landscape of the music teachers in this study, then we can see it as being uniquely nuanced. The teachers' commitment to the inner world of music meant that their working lives were spent continually crossing the boundaries, and attempting to mediate the differences, between this abstract world and the concrete world of the wider school, in which outcomes, timetables, and structures dominated. The nature of music means that it did not fit easily into their school structures. Thus the music teachers' situation was perhaps unique to their subject, in that they were unable to teach core aspects of the students' learning, or assess some aspects, within their timetabled classes. The practical nature of music as a subject particularly set it apart from many other subjects. In this respect the findings echo those of Hodge et al. (1994).

Harvey and Beauchamp (2005) reported that the teachers in their study perceived their role in supporting the public profile of the school through musical events to be unique. Within the current study, the range and significance to the public image of the school of music activities – such as productions and concerts, prizegivings, school open days,

and major events – did suggest that the music teachers' experiences, while perhaps not unique, were substantially different from the norm.

In relation to managing the itinerant programme, the findings from this study echo those of Scheib (2003) and Harvey and Beauchamp (2005) that responsibility of the itinerant programme created a significant extra workload for music teachers and had no equivalent role within the school.

The early career teachers – described by one participant as an 'HOD without being an HOD' – experienced conditions that were very different from the norm. They struggled to get their entitlement to a 0.8 workload, and instead of being able to concentrate on building their teaching craft within a collegial departmental setting, with the support from an experienced HOD, they were faced with building their craft in isolation, whilst at the same time maintaining the extra-curricular musical life of the school, running the itinerant programme, and carrying the full administrative responsibility of a department, which was apparently small, but was in reality both large and complex. Research into early-career praxis shock in Australian music teachers (see for example Ballantyne, 2001, 2007; Kelly, 1999) suggests that the multiple demands attached to curriculum and extra-curricular music do present beginning music teachers with challenges that are specific to music.

## **10.5 How do secondary school music teachers go about resolving their tensions of practice?**

The teachers' stories indicated that their working days were often relentless, and each tried to 'create space' in their own way. They tended to look to 'discretionary' activities, such as form time and duty, as small blocks of time from which they might be granted a dispensation in compensation for their extra-curricular work. When they were not granted this time they interpreted it as a significant lack of 'seeing' and valuing. A few of the more experienced teachers were able to negotiate a lighter teaching load and/or the provision of ancillary assistance.

Ironically, the teachers responded to tensions of practice caused by role overload, by doing yet more work – and so a vicious cycle was set up. Many found it difficult to create an acceptable work/life balance. Several of the teachers subscribed to the view

that 'we are our own worst enemy', a story which suggested that they believed the balance, for music teachers as a group, was often tipped in the favour of meeting the musical needs of their school community, rather than taking care of their own personal needs.

Bartlett (2004) proposed that teachers overwork for three reasons "(1) teachers' equation of the expanded role with good teaching practice, (2) the moral imperative of teaching and (3) the desire to live up to the expectations held by themselves and their colleagues" (p. 576). The current study has shown that each of these factors was present to a significant extent in the lives of the music teachers.

The dual role already described as being carried by teachers in charge of music is embedded within New Zealand secondary schools; it is an expectation held not only by school management, but by music teachers themselves. Thus 'good practice' for the teachers in this study included not only being a good practitioner in the classroom and meeting the myriad of complex demands required of teachers at the time of the study, but also included attending to the life of music, the lives of students, and the life of the school community through extra-curricular music activities. It *mattered* to the teachers that they offered a range of different music groups for their students. It *mattered* that their students should have access to instrumental lessons. And it *mattered* that the school community would be enlivened through music.

The expectations that the music teachers brought to their role were founded not just on their thoughts or ideas, but on their core identity as musicians. The teachers lived the sacred story of the power of music to transform and transcend lives. Their commitment to the inner world of music extended to the creation and maintenance of relationships and sense of community. Paradoxically, it was this commitment that contained within it the seeds of much of their overload.

## **10.6 Chapter summary**

This section provides an extended summary of the interpretive understandings presented in Chapter 10, and serves to underline the connections between the various themes.

The *two worlds* metaphor, developed from Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) work on teachers' professional knowledge landscapes, has been central to building an understanding of the teachers' experiences in this study. In terms of this metaphor, the music teachers occupied a uniquely nuanced landscape in which they were situated at the interface between two substantially different worlds – the inner world of music, and the outer world of the school. The teachers' principal personal connection was with the world of music, which for them was like a 'dwelling place'. Their connection to the world of music can be represented as an unarticulated 'sacred story' of the power of music to transform and transcend lives. The *two worlds* metaphor elucidates the primal tension of practice experienced by the music teachers in that it was their role to connect the two worlds of their landscape and to reconcile their conflicting natures.

The expectations which the teachers brought into their teaching roles were underpinned by their identity as musicians, and by their motivations, based on their own experience of music's power to transform and transcend lives, to offer young people opportunities to access the world of music. At a superficial level, the teachers' expectations of their role were consonant with the expectations of senior management: that they would assume the traditional 'dual role' of music teachers and take charge of the music curriculum, on the one hand, and of the extra-curricular music programme and itinerant scheme on the other. But the 'great thing' of music is, by its very nature, difficult to translate into the world of the school.

The teachers' experiences at the interface between their two worlds therefore often reflected conflicting and ambiguous expectations. They can be represented as a tug-of-war between the forces of connection and disconnection. At the heart of the teachers' experience lay a paradox: that those teaching experiences they deemed to be positive were, paradoxically, often also negative. Positively, teachers derived very significant satisfaction, and personal connection, from the strong, long-term mutual relationships they built with their students. Extra-curricular music groups and to some extent music departments themselves appeared to operate as communities of practice, and the degree of community which teachers seemed to establish with their students was often in stark contrast to the level of community that (given their often isolated sole-charge position) they were able to establish with colleagues.

The theory of organisational role stress (Kahn et al., 1964) provided insight into the negative elements of the paradox. Here, teachers faced a range of pressures derived from conflicts and ambiguities within their role, and from the sheer volume of often

competing tasks that needed to be undertaken. The impact on the teachers of their conflicting roles was made more intense by the fact that they occupied not one, but several boundary positions. In terms of the *two worlds* metaphor, they occupied a core boundary position between the world of music and the world of the school. Their 'dual role' also meant that they needed to reconcile the demands of extra-curricular music and of itinerant music with the demands of classroom music.

While role conflicts had the effect of pulling the teachers in opposing directions, role ambiguity, especially in relation to their ability to create a coherent learning pathway from year 9 to year 13 for their students, left them trying to draw together and reconcile aspects of their role which often defied reconciliation. The conflicting and ambiguous nature of the teachers' work, compounded by work overload, led to significant negative stress. This was made worse when the teachers lacked close colleagues, and received inadequate recognition from the principal. The situation of early career teachers, whose leadership and management of the music programme within the school was not acknowledged in any tangible manner, was particularly acute. Although some more experienced teachers, working in contexts where they were not a sole-charge music teacher, had been able to deflect the ever present invitation to do more, the teachers' usual response to their role overload was to overwork. Bartlett's (2004) theory that teachers overwork because conceptions of their effectiveness as practitioners are tied to the expanded nature of their roles, provides insight into the reasons the teachers in this study overworked.

Stress impacted on the teachers in multiple ways, threatening to disconnect them from the aspects of their role which gave them satisfaction, and ultimately from themselves. Stress threatened the teachers' identity as capable and effective practitioners, who were able to manage the complex and multi-faceted nature of their work. This led to tiredness and exhaustion and to feelings of inadequacy in the face of too much to do. Stress also threatened the teachers' identity as musicians, resulting for some, in the loss of time, energy, pleasure and their own deep connection with the world of music. At a core level, stress threatened the ability of the teachers to function as private individuals, who were able to keep a balance between their personal and family life, and their role as school music teachers. Several of the teachers reported that they had burned out in the past, and for some, burnout loomed as a real possibility in the face of their current working conditions.

The recontextualisation of music, from a 'strongly classified', stand-alone 'singular', to a 'regional' member of the arts, while providing potential benefits for arts teachers from the establishment of stronger collegiality and potentially greater recognition of their learning area, nonetheless appeared to have compounded the historical vulnerability of music as a school subject. Teachers encountered ongoing issues with the provision of adequate time for music, especially in the junior school, where short, modularised, fragmented courses were increasing the norm.

Within the past two decades, there has been a fundamental weakening of the boundaries between classroom music and the itinerant music programme; in Bernstein's (1996) terms, the classification between the two categories has weakened. The introduction of music performance into external qualifications in 1995, and the inception of the ANZC (Ministry of Education, 2000) and NCEA, have significantly contributed to these changes. Classroom music is now dependent to a large extent on itinerant music and this, in turn, has created a range of tensions for the teachers in the study, who typically did not teach, but were required to assess, a core component of their students' learning. Instrumental learning, which now sits at the heart of the music curriculum, occupies a vulnerable position, being reliant on students attending group lessons which are timetabled against their regular classes. Managing the relationships between itinerant teachers and teaching, and the music classroom, was complex and often very time consuming. Additionally, the inadequate time allowance provided for itinerant music in the majority of schools in the study increased the teachers' sense of the vulnerability of their subject.

These changes to the relationship between classroom music and itinerant music have been mirrored in changes to framing; that is, the relative control of learning exercised by the teachers in the study and by their students. Sea-changes within society and within contemporary musical traditions have been reflected in the ANZC and these changes, coupled with the introduction of single standards within NCEA, have meant that many of the teachers in the study ran senior classes in which individual students had significant control over the direction and content of their study. This represented a break with the traditional – and hard-won – stronger framing of music as an academic subject. While the teachers welcomed the broadening of the music curriculum, and the ability of students to engage with 'their own' musical genres and styles, managing the impact of these changes was complex, and not always satisfactory from the teachers' perspective. Typically, teachers developed, to a greater or lesser extent, individual

programmes for senior students, and the challenges inherent in this manner of teaching were exacerbated for many by the requirement to teach multi-level classes.

Significantly, although much research literature suggests that poor student behaviour is a major stressor for all teachers, this did not emerge as an important theme in the current study. On the contrary, teachers spoke with almost universal warmth about their 'music kids'. It could be argued that the move within the curriculum to reorient classroom music as a practically-based subject, through which students can explore their own musical interests through performance and composition, has contributed to this situation.

The music teachers shared a belief that being a music teacher is 'different from the norm' and findings from a range of studies lend credibility to the teachers' point of view. In terms of the *two worlds* metaphor, the teachers occupied a uniquely nuanced landscape. The music teachers' position at the interface of the two worlds, and at the boundary between music within the classroom, the itinerant programme, and the wider school, created a particular set of role pressures resulting in complex, competing demands which often threatened the teachers' own connection with the inner world of music; a world of profound significance which had initially provided motivational seeds for their decision to become secondary school music teachers.

# Chapter 11

## Conclusions

### 11.1 Introduction

This study set out to examine the tensions of practice which secondary school music teachers encounter in their working lives. The research focus was on teachers who held the responsibility for music in their school. The research was guided by four questions:

1. What are the expectations attached to the role of secondary school music teacher?
2. What do secondary school music teachers perceive to be the tensions of their practice?
3. How do secondary school music teachers experience their working lives?
4. How do secondary school music teachers go about resolving their tensions of practice?

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the conclusions to the study. Section 11.2 provides a summary of the *two worlds* metaphor, and is followed by Section 11.3 which summarises the findings of the thesis in relation to each of the four research questions. Section 11.4 examines the limitations of the study. The contributions that the research makes to our knowledge of teaching, teachers' lives, and music education are considered in Section 11.5. Sections 11.6 and 11.7 discuss implications for policy and practice, and Section 11.8 gives a recommendation for further research. The thesis concludes with some brief final thoughts in Section 11.9.

### 11.2 The *two worlds* metaphor

This section reprises the *two worlds* metaphor, which served as an interpretive tool in the Discussion Chapter, providing insights that informed the discussion of the four research questions.

The two worlds metaphor:

- Was developed from the professional knowledge landscape of Clandinin and Connelly (1995);
- Related specifically to the professional landscape of the music teachers and to the dilemmas of teaching that they encountered;
- Conceptualised the teachers' landscape as comprising two separate and contrasting places – the inner world of music, and the outer world of the school – which were connected by a semi-permeable boundary, or interface;
- Positioned the music teachers, whose role it was to 'enable' music within the school, at the interface between the two worlds;
- Acknowledged the importance of music in the teachers' lives and suggested that the teachers were connected to the world of music via a sacred story (Crites, 1971) that was not necessarily either seen or understood by others.

The *two worlds* metaphor made it possible to go to the heart of the teachers' experiences. It provided insight into the fundamental tension of practice they encountered in their working lives. Their passion and identity lay with the fundamentally subjective world of music that is characterised by a sense of flow whereas their role required them to work within the structures and constraints of school systems, which typically organised music into the three 'categories' (Bernstein, 1996) of classroom music, extra-curricular music and itinerant music.

### **11.3 Research findings**

This section examines the four research questions in turn, presenting for each a summary of the findings from the data chapters and from the interpretations offered in Chapter 10.

#### ***11.3.1 What are the expectations attached to the role of secondary school music teacher?***

The expectations that the music teachers brought to their role were underpinned by two major factors: their identity as musicians and their motivation to draw students and school communities into the inner world of music. At a superficial level, the expectations of the music teachers and their school managers were much the same. The core expectation to teach classroom music, and fulfil the dual role of curriculum leader and director of extra-curricular music was shared. This was true not only for the

teachers who occupied an official middle management position as a head of department or faculty, but also for the early career assistant teachers who did not hold a middle management position, but were nonetheless – officially or unofficially – designated as the teacher in charge of music.

At a deeper level, the expectations placed on the music teachers were multi-faceted and complex. There was often a divergence between the expectations held by managers, whose concerns reflected the policies, structures and values of the wider world of the school, and the music teachers, who were connected to the world of music through an unarticulated sacred story of the power of music to transform and transcend lives.

### ***11.3.2 What do secondary school music teachers perceive to be the tensions of their practice?***

The teachers' stories indicated that they perceived many aspects of their role to be tension-laden. Within the junior classroom, one contributor to the tensions was the crowded timetable, which required the teachers to attempt the delivery of the broad and practically-based curriculum through short, modularised and fragmented courses. Typically, wide divergences in students' prior learning could mean that all eight curriculum levels of the ANZC (Ministry of Education, 2000) might be represented within one class. In the senior school, the teachers were often presented with multi-level classes within which to teach the range of possible learning experiences and of assessment standards available through NCEA. As a consequence, teachers frequently created an individualised learning programme for every student. Beyond the classroom tensions arose from the extra-curricular workload, which placed heavy and often conflicting additional demands on the teachers.

The analysis offered in Chapter 10 suggests that tensions arose as the teachers attempted to reconcile the two disparate worlds of their landscape: the inner world of music, where music exists as a powerful and meaningful unity, and the wider world of the school, which divides the 'great thing' (Palmer, 2007) into the three typical areas or 'categories' (Bernstein, 1996) of classroom music, the itinerant scheme, and the extra-curricular programme. In particular, tensions stemmed from changes in the relationships of the three categories that reflected the introduction of practical music making into both curriculum and assessment, and the recontextualisation of music from a stand-alone 'singular' subject, to a 'regional' member of the arts.

### ***11.3.3 How do secondary school music teachers experience their working lives?***

The teachers reported that their lives were complex, multi-faceted, intense and, from their perspective, different from 'the norm'. The practical nature of their teaching was demanding. Most had little respite during the day, and teachers typically spent long hours on extra-curricular music activities outside of school time. Lack of immediate colleagues meant that many of the teachers felt isolated, and lack of recognition from principals and senior managers also led to some feeling unseen and under-valued.

The teachers' lives can be seen as representing a tug-of-war between the forces of connection and disconnection. The satisfactions teachers gained from drawing students into the world of music connected them to their own identity and fostered the creation of strong student-teacher relationships. For many, their extra-curricular groups, and to some extent, their music departments, operated as a community of practice (1998), and had much in common with Parker Palmer's (2007) community of truth. Paradoxically, demands placed on the teachers by their dual role and their position at the interface of the worlds of music and the school, meant that they typically found themselves confronting forces of disconnection in the guise of role ambiguity, work overload and role conflicts (Kahn et al., 1964). Their workload often created a lack of balance between work and family life, leading to feelings of exhaustion, burnout and the loss of personal and musical identity.

### ***11.3.4 How do secondary school music teachers go about resolving their tensions of practice?***

The teachers attempted to resolve their tensions of practice in a variety of ways. Some teachers negotiated a lighter teaching load, and/or significant ancillary assistance. However, on the whole, issues of workload were intractable, and teachers responded to work overload by further overworking. To do otherwise would have meant setting their standards lower and compromising what it meant for them to be an effective music teacher.

## **11.4 Strengths and limitations of the study**

The strengths and limitations of this study relate to the constraints imposed by the research methodology, the position of the researcher, and the scope of the topic.

The qualitative interpretive methodology of this research was well suited to its aim of examining the tensions of practice encountered by secondary school music teachers. It enabled the everyday experiences of the music teachers to be examined from their own perspectives and provided interpretive understandings. It also enabled a richly descriptive text to be created as an outcome. The method of interview conversations met Goodson and Sikes' (2001) stipulation that methods should be well-suited to the research questions, which in this case sought to understand aspects of the teachers' subjective experiences.

The decision to follow one pathway necessarily denies the choice to follow another. An alternative methodology, utilising other methods, may have produced different findings and understandings. A detailed nation-wide survey, for example, would have provided statistical information from a wider sample of participants. However, statistical gains may have been at the cost of the in-depth understandings derived from the interviews. An in-depth study of one or more cases would have enabled a more detailed exploration of aspects such as teacher identity, motivations, expectations and agency. That, however, would have been at the cost of the broader picture made possible by the larger number of participants.

The decision to include in the study only secondary music teachers themselves, past and present, allowed the emergence of a detailed picture of their working lives. However, it also meant that this personal narrative was not balanced by the views of others within their work or home settings. The expectations of senior managers, for example, were ascribed to them by the music teachers. Interviews with the managers and other members of the school community, including students, may have provided a more balanced or rounded picture. However, the study sought to understand the teachers' lived experience from their own perspectives, and so the decision was made to limit interviews, and thus the point of view, to that of past and present music teachers.

Engagement with participants was limited to a single semi-structured interview conversation, and this might also be seen as a limitation of the study. As explained in Chapter 4, the original intention had been to conduct two interviews with each participant. While a second interview may have yielded greater detail, the request for two interviews may also have ruled out some of the participants, who willingly provided one interview in the middle of very busy schedules. The exploratory nature of the study,

to 'map the terrain' (Donaldson, 2005) of secondary school music teachers, also meant that the range of interview questions could be covered within a single interview. Conversely, a multiple interview study would allow for the possibility that teachers' positions might change over the course of a school term or year.

The 'insider' knowledge of the researcher may be seen as both a potential strength and limitation. From a positivist perspective, an insider position would be untenable, as it precludes objectivity. The interpretivist stance adopted in this study validated the subjective, insider position (see for example Coffey, 1999). While insider knowledge enabled the development of trusting relationships with the participants, who knew they were speaking with someone who 'understood', it nevertheless meant that the data and interpretations were filtered through a lens which had much in common with the participants' own perspectives, and such a position could be seen as lacking in balance. Furthermore, an insider perspective has the potential to lead to the 'colonisation' (Goodson & Sikes, 2001) of data. These issues were negotiated through the reflexive stance adopted as part of the methodology.

New Zealand schools have a range of demographic characteristics. These include factors such as size, location, decile, gender of students and school culture. Teachers, too, represent a range of characteristics including age, gender, ethnicity, length of service, teaching role and status. In addition, each music teacher draws on a unique mix of musical knowledge and skills. It was difficult to provide a balance of these characteristics within a sample of nineteen participants, although care was taken to include as many characteristics as possible within the sample. For this reason purposive and snowball sampling were adopted.

If the data from the nineteen participants were to be taken by themselves, and out of context, the generalisability of the study might be considered very limited, as the sample number is relatively small. However, the teachers' stories have been contextualised in terms of empirical studies and literature on secondary school music education history, policy and practice, and in relation to teachers' lives. The links to this literature, established within the discussion, enable the participants' experiences to be seen within a wider context. Thus aspects of the teachers' experience, such as the dual role they carried, can be related to the experience of teachers in other places.

A strength of the study was the inclusion of two participants who identified with the tangata whenua (the Māori people). Both had strong bicultural links within their

personal and musical background, education and teaching, and this ensured the inclusion of cultural diversity within the study. The inclusion of three early career teachers (two of whom were in their first year of teaching) also proved to be a strength. The study did not set out to explore career stages. However, the stories of these teachers had many common threads, and provided insights into the situation of beginning teachers who carry the responsibility for music in their school.

The scope of this study was very broad and exploratory. Nevertheless, there are themes related to music teachers' lives which were not explored within this thesis. Such themes include the role of initial teacher education, links between music teaching and the wider community, the impacts of technology on music education, and the position and value of arts coordinators. The decision to include or omit themes was made on the basis of the weighting given to them in the teachers' stories, and their relevance to the broader themes that emerged during the study.

## **11.5 Contributions to knowledge**

The contributions this research makes to our knowledge of teaching, teachers' lives and music education are outlined in this section. (See also areas to consider in future research which are listed in Section 11.8.)

### ***11.5.1 Knowledge of teaching and teachers' lives***

This research contributes to the body of empirical literature on the lives of teachers. In particular, it adds to our knowledge of the lives of secondary school music teachers, a field in which little previous research has been undertaken (see for example Cox, 1999). This thesis makes visible, and articulates, aspects of the lives of secondary school music teachers that are often invisible and unarticulated, and hence can be overlooked within school and policy settings. The *two worlds* metaphor provides insight into the teachers' uniquely nuanced landscape, and demonstrates that the tensions of practice experienced by music teachers have their genesis in the imperative for the teachers to draw together the inner world of music and the outer world of the school.

The study points to a strong connection between teachers' identity as musicians, their motivations to teach, their personal expectations of their teaching role, and the reasons they overwork. It endorses international studies (see for example Scheib, 2003) which

have found that secondary music teachers carry a dual role as managers of the curriculum and their school's extra-curricular and itinerant programmes. The study finds that while music teachers gain genuine satisfaction from the positive relationships they develop with students, and the musical communities they build, particularly through extra-curricular activities, their well-being is often threatened by the conflicting and ambiguous demands of work overload, by personal and professional isolation, and the degree to which they are valued by senior staff.

### **11.5.2 Music education**

There is a call within the field of music education research for more rigorous empirical studies which provide explicit details of their underpinning assumptions, theories and research processes (see for example Burnard, 2006). In providing such detail, this study makes a unique contribution to the body of well designed research within the field.

This thesis also contributes to knowledge of the place and nature of music in school settings. It echoes international studies which have found that music occupies a somewhat marginalised place in secondary schools (see for example Pascoe et al., 2005) and provides specific insights into the New Zealand setting. It documents the impacts on secondary music education of changes to policy, curriculum and assessment brought about by *Tomorrow's Schools*, the introduction of the ANZC (Ministry of Education, 2000), the inception of NCEA, and the implementation of standards-based assessment. These impacts include changes in the relationships of classroom music, the itinerant programme and extra-curricular activities.

Music educators often find it difficult to articulate the value and importance of music (see for example Allsup, 2005). Insight into this is provided by means of Crites' (1971) sacred story. This insight offers music teachers a key for developing better communication and understanding with colleagues.

## **11.6 Implications for policy**

This study finds that the financial resourcing of secondary music education requires re-evaluation in relation to two policy areas: the resourcing of curriculum staffing and of

itinerant instrumental teaching. The evidence from this study suggests that current funding formulae are not serving music, music teachers, or school communities well.

At present the Ministry of Education resources curriculum staffing in secondary schools on the basis of the number of students who study subjects at a particular level within the school (Ministry of Education, 2011a). There is no specific staffing allowance to support extra-curricular music. Funding for such activities needs to be found from within a school's operating budgets. Given that classroom music is frequently a niche area that does not attract large numbers of students, a school may be staffed with only one music teacher who, nevertheless, must meet the extra-curricular requirements of the school, even when these involve large numbers of students and many activities. Historically, this has led to the overloaded dual role which music teachers carry. The blurring of boundaries between classroom music, itinerant music and extra-curricular music, and the current significance of instrumental performance within the curriculum, have added further complexity to this situation.

The current policy context gives rise to the situation where music and music teachers are highly dependent on the relative wealth of the school and the value placed on music by the principal and governing body. As the data from this study demonstrate, conditions faced by music teachers vary enormously from school to school. The teachers who worked in high decile schools and/or within a context where music and music teachers were highly valued, typically were provided with much greater support to undertake their dual role. The evidence from this study suggests that such support should be built into teachers' roles as a matter of right. The work that teachers do in relation to 'extra'-curricular music must now be considered as part of their core curriculum role and remunerated accordingly.

The current policy in relation to the resourcing of itinerant music lessons results in a situation where music teachers and their schools are placed in a difficult practical and ethical situation. As indicated in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.4, the roll-based staffing allowance for instrumental music tuition for secondary, area, composite and restricted composite schools is calculated using the following formula:  $\text{Staffing roll} \times 0.001 \text{ FTTE}$  (full-time teacher equivalent) rounded to two decimal places (Ministry of Education, 2012a). Nearly all of the teachers in this study indicated that their itinerant resourcing did not meet the curriculum needs of their students for whom instrumental performance was an integral part of their learning.

Teachers in the study indicated that, although the board of trustees did in some cases top up itinerant funding, in many cases parents were also charged to help cover the cost of instrumental lessons. This situation echoes the findings of a secondary itinerant music survey (Survey Group, 2009) in which 39% of responding teachers stated that parents contributed financially in some way to school music lessons. However, current educational policy in relation to payments by parents of students at state schools is that: “a board of trustees may not demand a fee to cover the cost of either tuition or materials used in the provision of the curriculum” (Ministry of Education, 1998). Thus music teachers found themselves with the dilemma of either not meeting the curriculum needs of their students, or contravening regulations. The suggestion of several participants that funding for itinerant music lessons should take account of the number of students taking music as a classroom subject may go some way to easing the situation. However, any new formula would also need to embrace the original purpose of itinerant funding and not limit provision merely to students learning music as a classroom subject.

On the evidence in this study there is considerable unease amongst music educators in relation to itinerant funding, especially in the current climate where resourcing for education is already stretched, and where other arts, such as dance and drama, may look for a share of the funds allocated to music.

## **11.7 Implications for practice**

This study has implications for senior managers in secondary schools. The findings support other studies (see for example Dworkin, 1997) that principals and senior managers have a vital role to play in relation to the health and well-being of teachers. The degree to which the music teachers in this study felt personally and professionally supported was influenced by their experiences of being seen and understood by senior managers, and the principal in particular. Given that teachers within one subject area may not develop understandings of the issues confronting teachers in another discipline (Little, 1993), it is vital that senior managers and principals are provided with professional development that creates in-depth understandings of the challenges faced by secondary music teachers.

The implications of this research in relation to the dual role that secondary music teachers carry are unequivocal. On this basis, it seems reasonable to conclude that the

present situation is not sustainable. While it needs to be addressed at the policy level (see Section 11.6), it must also be addressed, with some urgency, at the level of school practice. This is particularly important for first year – and other early career – music teachers who are particularly vulnerable to feeling overwhelmed and burning out, and who find themselves carrying considerable responsibility at a time when their peers are able to focus on learning their classroom craft. There is no single, easy solution to this situation. However, it is a challenge which must be taken up by principals, boards of trustees and the Ministry of Education.

## **11.8 Recommendations for further research**

The major recommendation arising from the findings of this study is the proposal for a national review of secondary school music education with emphasis on both the situation of music educators and the position, purpose and direction of music education within the compulsory education sector. Such a review might be appropriately carried out by an organisation such as MENZA. Clearly, the review should be grounded in the practical, cultural and economic realities facing education in Aotearoa New Zealand, but needs nevertheless to enable development of a vision that can take music education forward sustainably. The current policy context prioritises the development of an adaptable workforce, skilled in technology and able to contribute to the economic development of the country (Ministry of Education, 1993) and in this context, the arts risk becoming increasingly marginalised. While the present study has concerned itself with the experiences of secondary school music teachers, its findings demonstrate that music teachers and school music education are powerfully influenced by their current position as members of the arts. A national investigation might therefore usefully be extended to cover the arts as a whole. As a minimum requirement it could examine the relationship between music and the other arts disciplines. It should also take account of findings from this study that indicate:

- Inadequate provision of time for music classes, especially in the junior school;
- Inadequate resourcing for itinerant music;
- Significant diversity of prior learning experiences amongst year 9 students;
- Limited understanding of the needs of music teachers and teaching amongst senior managers in secondary schools;
- Patchy provision of music within primary and intermediate settings;

- Lack of reality in relation to the levels at which some NCEA standards are pitched, given the basic levels of student experience at year 9, and the limited timetable allocation for music; and
- The vulnerability of secondary music teachers, particularly early career TICs, to feeling overwhelmed and burning out, and the need to protect their interests for the sake of the sustained viability of the sector.

## 11.9 Final thoughts

This thesis, as Chapter 1 demonstrated, is a product of my 'unfinished business' with secondary school music education. In these final thoughts I wish to pay tribute to secondary school music teachers, to the commitment they bring, to the unsung – and often unseen – hours of their own time they give so unstintingly to our young people. Theirs is truly a labour of love.

This week I received in the mail a beautifully made invitation to the music concert of a local secondary school. As I read it, I was reminded of Cam's words:

I think the best thing is the pure stuff which is just playing. I think the most exciting and delightful thing is when your students play music together, when they are excited about performing, when they get up there and they do a fantastic job and also when they bring you stuff that they are passionate about. I think that kind of sharing and collaboration – I think that's the best part. It comes back to the actual music for me and that's I think, the reason that I keep doing it. (C:43)

Thank you music teachers for 'keeping doing it'. I hope that this thesis, in some small way, both helps to lessen the burden and heighten the joys of being a secondary school music teacher in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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# Appendix A: Participant information sheet



## **Tensions of Practice encountered by Secondary School Music Teachers INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS**

My name is Judith Donaldson and I am a lecturer in the School of Arts, Development and Health Education at Massey University. I am enrolled in a PhD at Massey University in which I am researching the tensions of practice that secondary school music teachers encounter in their working lives.

I hope that this research will enable us to:

1. understand the expectations attached to the role of 'secondary school music teacher';
2. identify and understand the issues, challenges and constraints that secondary school music teachers experience in their daily teaching lives;
3. understand the decisions secondary school music teachers make in relation to their work both within the classroom and in the wider school context.

Because of the connection that you currently have with secondary school music education in New Zealand, I am inviting you to participate in the research. Details of the research and of what is involved for participants are outlined below.

### **Project details**

The main body of the research will involve data collected through interviews with secondary music teachers who have responsibility in music, former music teachers and those who work, or have worked, in a music advisory capacity. I will be seeking to arrange interviews during November and December of 2006 and from April to November in 2007. The interviews will be conducted outside of teaching hours at a mutually agreed time in a quiet room in your school, at my workplace or at another venue that we both consider to be appropriate.

What would your involvement be?

If you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked to:

- participate in one audiotaped interview that will be up to one and a half hours long;
- read and if appropriate amend the transcript of the tape taken during the interview.

I would also appreciate it if you could pass on to me the names of present or former music teachers who may be interested in participating in this research.

Although taking part in the study will require a commitment of time and energy, it is my hope that the process will be also be of value to you.

What are your rights?

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation.

If you decide to participate you have the right to:

- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- decline to answer any particular question;
- ask for the tape recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- view the transcript of your interview in order to verify and/or amend the material contained in it;
- withdraw from the study at any time up to the end of the data collection phase;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Confidentiality

This research aims to gain broad insights into tensions of practice for music teachers rather than seeking to report on the practices of individual schools. Every effort will be made to protect your identity, and the identity of your school, in the final research report and in publications or conference papers that are generated from the research.

In line with Massey University policy all data collected as part of the project will be securely stored for five years after the completion of my research project.

If you are happy to participate in this research project, please send me the signed consent form in the envelope provided. You are also welcome to contact me by phone or email.

My contact details, along with those for my chief supervisor, Dr John O'Neill, are set out below. You are also welcome to contact either of us if you have any questions about this project.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Judith Donaldson

**Researcher:**

Judith Donaldson  
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School of Arts, Development &  
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*This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Sylvia Rumball, Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor (Ethics & Equity), telephone 06 350 5249, email [humanethicspn@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicspn@massey.ac.nz).*

## Appendix B: Interview schedule - current practitioners



**Massey University**

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Te Kupenga o Te Mātauranga

**Tensions of Practice encountered by Secondary School Music Teachers**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE CURRENT TEACHERS**

Each interview will be prefaced by the following:

*I'm interested in finding out something of your history as a music teacher and what it's like for you to teach music at this time in secondary schools and at this point in your career. Are you happy for me to turn the tape on now? Remember that I will turn the tape off at any time you ask.*

- Can you tell me something about your own musical background?
- Can you provide me with some details of the music classes that operate in your school?
- What does your job officially involve in terms of:
  - Class teaching?
  - Curriculum leadership and management?
  - Extra-curricular leadership and management?
  - Any other aspects?
- How is that for you?
- Can you tell me about the workload involved in your job?
- What is it like for you to plan and teach the music curriculum in your school?
- What is your experience of assessment in music in the senior school?
- What do you think the experience of studying and participating in music is like for your students?
- What is the place or status of music as a subject like in your school, and within the community as a whole?
- If you were put in charge of secondary school music in New Zealand and given 'carte blanche' to do what you wanted, what would you focus on as your most important priorities?
- Is there anything else you want to say that I haven't asked you?
- Is there anything else that you want to ask me?

## Appendix C: Interview schedule - former teachers



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Te Kupenga o Te Mātauranga

### **Tensions of Practice encountered by Secondary School Music Teachers INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE FORMER MUSIC TEACHERS**

Each interview will be prefaced by the following:

*I'm interested in finding out something of your history as a music teacher and gaining your perspective on secondary music education in New Zealand. Are you happy for me to turn the tape on now? Remember that I will turn the tape off at any time you ask.*

- Can you tell me something about your own musical background?
- What has your career in music teaching involved? Can you tell me about your:
  - Class teaching?
  - Curriculum leadership and management?
  - Extra-curricular leadership and management?
- How was that for you?
- Can you tell me about the workload involved in your job?
- What was it like for you to plan and teach the music curriculum in your school?
- What was your experience of assessment in music in the senior school?
- What do you think the experience of studying and participating in music was like for your students?
- What was the place or status of music as a subject like in your school, and within the community as a whole?
- Can you tell me why you left secondary music teaching?
- From your perspective today, what do you consider to be the issues currently facing secondary school music teachers?
- How would you resolve those issues?
- What do you see as the positive things in secondary music education?
- If you were put in charge of secondary school music in New Zealand and given 'carte blanche' to do what you wanted, what would you focus on as your most important priorities?
- Is there anything else you want to say that I haven't asked you?
- Is there anything else that you want to ask me?

## Appendix D: Interview schedule - advisors



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**Tensions of Practice encountered by Secondary School Music Teachers**  
**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE PAST OR PRESENT**  
**MUSIC ADVISORS**

Each interview will be prefaced by the following:

*I'm interested in finding out something of your history as a music teacher and gaining your perspective on secondary music education in New Zealand. Are you happy for me to turn the tape on now? Remember that I will turn the tape off at any time you ask.*

- Can you tell me something about your own musical background?
- What has your career in music teaching involved? Can you tell me about your:
  - Class teaching?
  - Curriculum leadership and management?
  - Extra-curricular leadership and management?
  - Music advisory role?
- What has your experience of the different roles been like?
- In what ways has secondary music teaching changed since you first engaged with it?
- From your perspective today, what do you consider to be the issues currently facing secondary school music teachers?
- How would you resolve those issues?
- What do you see as the positive things in secondary music education?
- If you were put in charge of secondary school music in New Zealand and given 'carte blanche' to do what you wanted, what would you focus on as your most important priorities?
- Is there anything else you want to say that I haven't asked you?
- Is there anything else that you want to ask me?

## Appendix E: Participant consent form



**Massey University**

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Te Kupenga o Te Mātauranga

### Tensions of Practice encountered by Secondary School Music Teachers

#### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time up until the end of the data collection.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.  
I wish/do not wish to have my tapes returned to me.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

.....

**Full Name - printed**

.....

**Contact details:**

## Appendix F: Access letter



**Massey University**  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
Te Kupenga o Te Mātauranga

22 November 2006

The Principal

**Re: Tensions of practice encountered by secondary school music teachers**

Dear

My name is Judith Donaldson. I lecture in music education at the Massey University College of Education and I am enrolled in a PhD at Massey University. I am interested in researching the stories of secondary teachers who have a music leadership role in their schools. Although these teachers have a unique perspective on the value and place of music in schools, there has not been any attempt up until now to document their stories in a systematic way.

The body of my research will involve the collection of data through interviews with practising secondary music teachers, former music teachers, and those who work, or have worked, in a music advisory capacity. The research aims to gain broad insights into tensions of practice for music teachers and is not seeking to report on the practices of individual schools.

I am seeking your permission to approach [teacher's name], who I understand is the teacher in your school with responsibility for music, about his possible participation in the project. This will take the form of a single interview, held outside of class time, either in a quiet room at the school, at my workplace, or at some other mutually agreed venue. I am enclosing for your information, a copy of the information sheet and interview schedule for current practitioners.

If you consent to my approaching [the teacher], please could you send me written confirmation to this effect, and give the enclosed information pack to [the teacher]. You are welcome to reply by returning a signed copy of the attached form letter in the envelope provided, or by sending an email to [j.donaldson@massey.ac.nz](mailto:j.donaldson@massey.ac.nz).

Please feel free to contact me, or my chief supervisor Dr John O'Neill, if you have any questions or concerns, or if you wish to discuss this request further.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this request.

Yours sincerely

Judith Donaldson

## Appendix G: Access consent form



**Massey University**

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Te Kupenga o Te Mātauranga

### Tensions of Practice encountered by Secondary School Music Teachers

#### ACCESS CONSENT FORM

Dear Judith

With regard to the above research project, I give permission for you to approach [the music teacher at \*\*] College. I understand that we are able to contact you or your chief supervisor for information and clarification about the project.

**Principal's signature:**

**Date:**

**Full name - printed**

## Appendix H: Transcriber confidentiality



**Massey University**

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
Te Kupenga o Te Mātauranga

School of Arts, Development and Health Education  
Tensions of Practice encountered by Secondary School Music Teachers

### TRANSCRIBER'S CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I ..... (full name – printed) agree to transcribe the tapes provided to me.

I agree to keep confidential all the information provided to me.

I will not make any copies of the transcripts or keep any record of them, other than those required for the project.

I also agree not to discuss, share or distribute the transcripts or anything else to do with the audiotapes in this study with any other person.

I agree to keep the audiotapes and the transcripts in a safe and secure place so that others do not have access to them while they are in my possession.

I agree to delete the computer files after the data has been returned to the researcher on the completion of all transcription.

#### **TRANSCRIBER**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Full Name - printed**

Judith Donaldson

j.donaldson@massey.ac.nz



## Appendix I: Example of an Evidence Table

Section	Subhead	Point	Comment	Participant	Ref Nviv	Quote
Teacher's personal beliefs, values and philosophies	Personal values in relation to music education	Stays because of the relationships with the students	Relate to Hargreaves' motivations for teaching	Kelly	PC	So why have I stayed? Um, I like, I just love the contact with students. And at lots of levels, you know they do become, especially seniors, you've got an association with for four or five years, that teacher – student relationship is definitely blurred and becomes much more personal and that's a nice thing to help with. So that's a major one.
Teacher's personal beliefs, values and philosophies	Personal values in relation to music education	Stays because of the relationships with the students	Motivations	Brook	Wkload/ Worklife [WW]	The kids, the kids absolutely. I love it, I mean, I love the subject but I love the contact with the kids
Teacher's personal beliefs, values and philosophies	Personal values in relation to music education	Stays because of the relationships with the students	This is a lovely quote. Need to use it.	Leith	PC	Well, it's hugely – it's – music teaching is one of the most frustrating jobs I have ever done. Well it's all I've actually ever done but it can be hugely frustrating and the kids sometimes drive me nuts but at the end of the day it's fantastic when they achieve and you see them achieve and the light goes on and they – they become passionate about it as well. And, you know, music kids are neat.
Teacher's personal beliefs, values and philosophies	Personal values in relation to music education		Similar to statement by Cam. Both male teachers.	Darryl	Stud	But the beauty of our job is that we get involved with all these wonderful students who are into music and are talented and we get to take them to competitions and see them perform and help them out. That is very thrilling.